

Readings Monthly

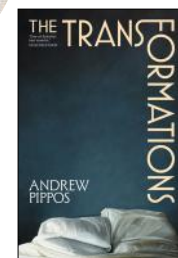
FREE | SUMMER 2025–26

Celebrating The Readings Prize 2025 winners

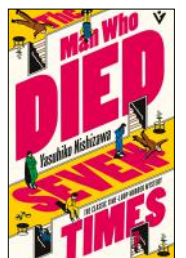
pages 6 and 7

Our booksellers' picks of the year

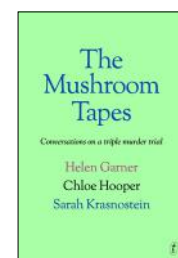
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ANDREW
PIPPOS
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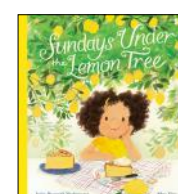
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NISHIZAWA
& JESSE
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HELEN GARNER,
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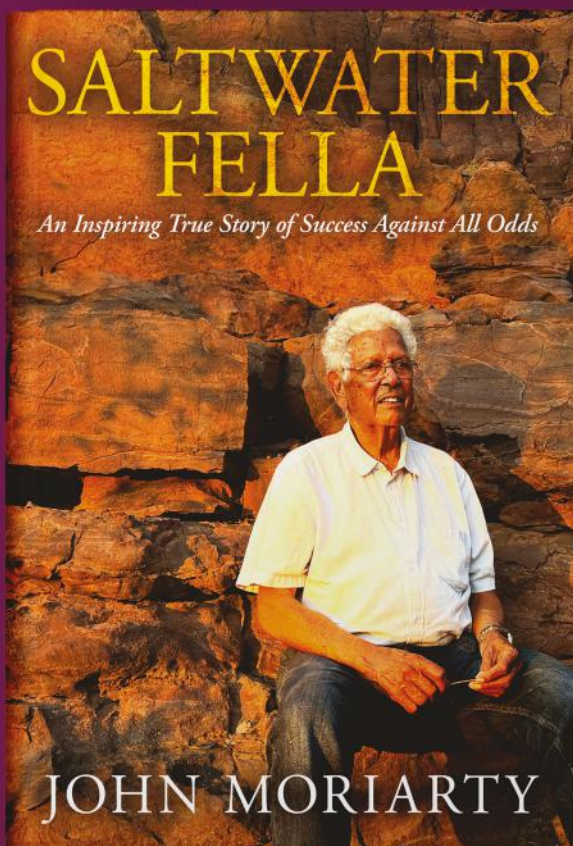
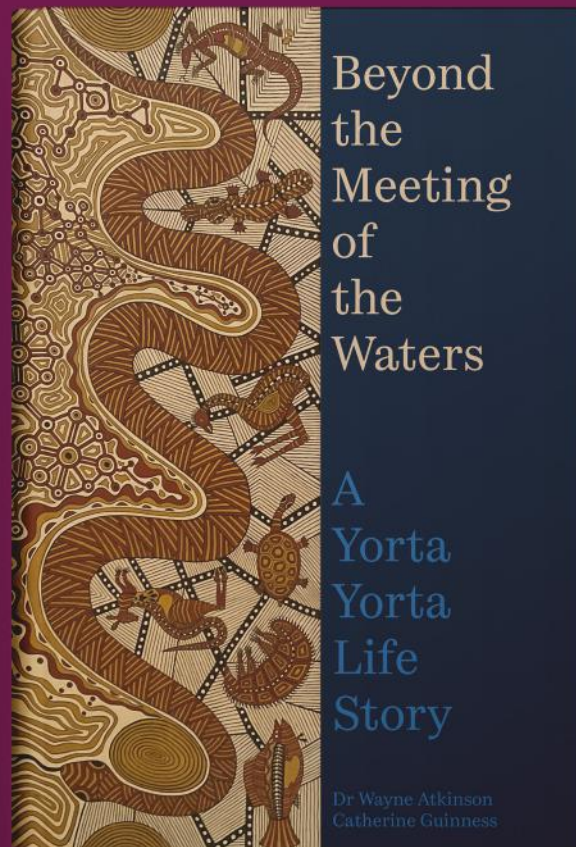
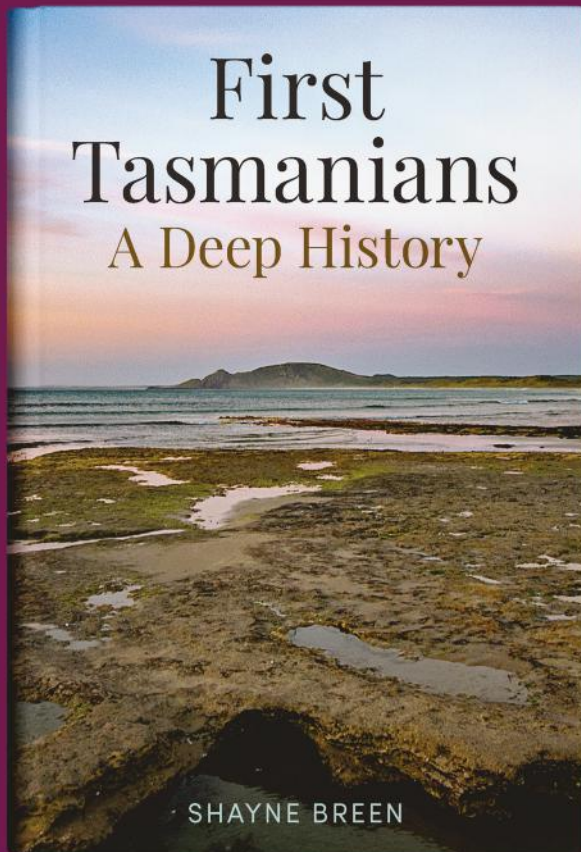


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BUSUTTIL
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News

Get ready for Christmas

Shop early and shop local at Readings this festive season! Our shops are full of new releases, and our booksellers are ready to help you find everything you need. You'll find plenty of ideas throughout this edition of the *Readings Monthly*, as well as in our annual *Summer Reading Guide*, on our website and in our e-news. If you are shopping online, please place your orders for in-stock items by midnight 4 December for NT, TAS and WA, and by midnight 14 December for the rest of Australia for timely delivery before Christmas.

Summer reading with Readings

This summer edition of the *Readings Monthly* is designed as a companion to Readings' annual *Summer Reading Guide*, the comprehensive gift and holiday guide available in all our shops and online. In this *Readings Monthly*, we share highlights from our reading year: there's a Vox Pop among Readings booksellers on their favourite books of the year on page 4; in-depth highlights and recommendations from senior book buyers Danielle Mirabella (cookbooks) and Zoë Croggon (art and design) on page 14; a preview of the podcast interview between Readings chairman Mark Rubbo and the Fiction Book of the Month author Andrew Pippas, who is also a past winner of The Readings Prize for New Australian Fiction, on page 5. Relatedly, you'll find the 2025 winners of The Readings Prize on pages 6 and 7. Elsewhere, as always, you'll find an abundance of new releases and Readings staff reviews, with recommendations to keep you reading right through the warmer months ahead.

The Readings Prize 2025 winners

We are delighted to announce the winners of The Readings Children's Prize, The Readings Young Adult Prize, The Gab Williams Prize and The Readings New Australian Fiction Prize for 2025. To find out which books our judges chose and hear from the judges and winners, head to pages 6 and 7.



Podcast

with Chris Gordon



Sometimes I think we have all become addicted to the sound of other people's voices. Everywhere I go now, people have their headphones on and are listening to political take-downs, true-crime scenarios, ancient history, gossip, medical issues, pop culture debates, and even birth stories. It's no longer possible to journey without someone talking in your ear.

However, to save you from having to jump from one podcast to another on any long trips you might be taking, or while you anchor yourself to the kitchen bench to peel your bodyweight in potatoes or prawns for a certain festive lunch, consider queueing up The Readings Podcast. We cover all the above areas, and more.

Each week we record or interview a local or international author about their new book. Subjects covered this year include – but are by no means limited to – women's pleasure, the delight of a good heist, single mothers, and country fires. Coming up over our summer months we have podcasts containing such extraordinary topics as friends who buy a town (what could possibly go wrong?!), the Antarctic, poetry that's political and lyrical, hidden Australian histories – and then there are the love stories, of course. We are all heart over here at Readings.

What I love most of all about The Readings Podcast though is that anyone can listen for free and usually each episode highlights one title so that, after listening, you'll know whether that book is for you. Clever, right? We also feature book event recordings (particularly helpful if you couldn't make it or want to relive it!), booksellers chatting about their favourite reads, industry insights, and more. The Readings Podcast: every week, here for your listening and reading pleasure.



To find out more about The Readings Podcast or to listen to new episodes and our extensive back catalogue, scan the QR code or visit readings.com.au/the-readings-podcast



"Excuse me, that's just for staff use."

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 summer *Readings Monthly* cover features artwork by Kaylene Whiskey, *Seven Sisters Song*, 2021. Water-based enamel on road sign, 120×180×3 cm. Photo by Luis Power, courtesy of NGV and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery. Featured in *The Art of Kaylene Whiskey* edited by Natalie King and Iwantja Arts from publisher Thames & Hudson Australia.

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 are correct at time of publication, however prices and release dates may change without notice. Special price offers valid until 31 January 2026. 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

Readings booksellers' favourite books of 2025

Flesh by David Szalay | Jonathan Cape. PB. \$34.99

My favourite book this year is the one that has stuck with me the longest. The one that I'm still carrying around. David Szalay's *Flesh*. Szalay has achieved something very special here. His protagonist, István (just 15 when we meet him) is carried along by events that seem to be happening beyond his control, disconnected from his body, barely able to articulate what it needs. *Flesh* is very coolly composed, dispassionate even, but Szalay is reckoning with something huge about difficult aspects of masculinity and who they really hurt. By its final pages I was quite bereft, stunned by everything this masterful novel made me feel.

Joanna Di Mattia is from Readings Carlton

Good and Evil and Other Stories by Samanta Schweblin & Megan McDowell (trans.) | Picador. PB. \$29.99

In such an incredible year for books, I still can't stop thinking about *Good and Evil and Other Stories* by Samanta Schweblin. Across its six tales, Schweblin wields an incredible level of craft and careful restraint to paint these enchanting and heartbreaking portraits of loss, grief and regret. She already proved her skills at dreamlike horror with the excellent *Mouthful of Birds*, but here she only uses the barest touches of surrealism and strangeness to punctuate otherwise grounded familial narratives – it's all still just as haunting, but the prevailing feeling is less dread and more devastating gut-ache. Transcendent stuff!

Joe Murray is from Readings Kids

The Transformations by Andrew Pippas | Picador. PB. Was \$34.99 **\$29.99**

I adored *The Transformations*, and the more I think about this wonderful book, the more I love it. Andrew Pippas is a star. One of my favourite books of the year.

Alison Huber is the head book buyer

The Wolf Who Cried Boy by Mark Mupotsa-Russell | Affirm Press. PB. \$34.99

When I think of the best books released this year, *The Wolf Who Cried Boy* by Mark Mupotsa-Russell sticks clearly in my mind. It is a beautifully heartbreaking story of a young boy who has created a fantasy world in his mind to explain why he and his mother are on the run from their father, showcasing a child's wonder and innocence in difficult situations. It is a fast-paced, shocking thriller that deeply preserves the serious nature of the story at its core, bringing to attention many societal and systemic issues from a child's perspective. I cannot recommend it enough.

Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

Wait Here by Lucy Nelson | Summit. PB. \$32.99

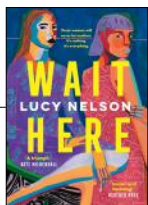
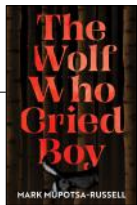
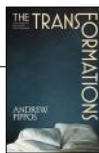
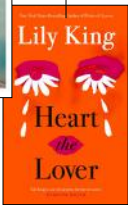
Wait Here is an incredible selection of short stories, all about women who don't have children, either by choice or circumstance. Both heartbreaking and affirming, fragile and firm, this book is centred on women and their agency – or lack thereof – in their lives; how they feel about their bodies and what they do with their feelings about not being able to, or choosing not to, have children. Beautifully written and spanning a variety of experiences, this is a stellar collection worth devouring.

Pauline Hopkins is manager of Readings Hawthorn

Eurotrash by Christian Kracht & Daniel Bowles (trans.) | Serpent's Tail. PB. \$26.99

Eurotrash is a wild ride: a Swiss *Thelma & Louise*-style road trip between a son (an author named Christian Kracht) and his 80-year-old mother who has just been released from a psychiatric hospital. Wealthy and awful, the two commandeer a cab and attempt to go on a spending spree to unload a hefty portion of her ill-gotten gains. Amidst their constant bickering and upper-class histrionics, mother and son are thrust back into the dark truths of their family's history and, unexpectedly, brought closer together. *Eurotrash*'s humour is irreverent and dark but, ultimately, it is the unexpectedly tender denouement which elevates this novel to one of the best of the year. I loved it!

Justin Avery is from Readings Warehouse



Heart the Lover by Lily King | Canongate. PB. \$32.99

Heart the Lover follows the narrator's experiences with love and literature at college. Usually, I don't like unnamed narrators (give me someone to get to know), I don't read anything set in America (fascism), and I don't read romance (really fun person), but King's subtle depth and her gut-punch emotional writing make for a happy exception to the rule.

Her characters are pretending to be adults in a college world, talking about Proust and Greek mythology when they're thinking mostly about kissing and student debt. You can read this without the predecessor, *Writers and Lovers*, but you will get more out of it as a companion. I feel like I waited all year for a book like this.

Grace Gooda is from Readings Chadstone

The Art of Kaylene Whiskey by Natalie King & Iwantja Arts (eds) | T&H. HB. Was \$90 **\$74.99**

The Art of Kaylene Whiskey is pure joy. I keep going back to this book to pore over the vibrant artworks and read about Kaylene's life, dreams and words of wisdom. I can't fully express how much I love this book and the warmth it brings me. It might be the antidote to my pre-bedtime doomscrolling, and even just for that reason alone I cannot recommend it highly enough.

Rosalind McClintock is head of marketing

Mother Mary Comes To Me by Arundhati Roy | Hamish Hamilton. PB. \$36.99

This is a memoir of epic proportions and fans of Arundhati Roy's fiction will not be disappointed. It's equal parts rage and heartache – two women, two very different paths, and, ultimately, two legacies shaped by each other.

Danielle Mirabella is the senior book buyer at Readings Hawthorn

The Correspondent by Virginia Evans | Michael Joseph. PB. \$34.99

There have been so many fantastic books this year, but my favourite was *The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans. Anyone who loves Ann Patchett, Fredrik Backman or Elizabeth Strout should give this a go. You are in for a real treat! Sybil appears to be a prickly older lady who takes great delight in her daily letter correspondence. Through the course of these letters and responses the reader is soon exposed to a very full life as she tries to make sense of it all. This was a five-star for me – it was a true delight, deeply emotive and life-affirming. Look past the cover on this one and just trust me on how special this book and character is.

Melanie Barton is from Readings Carlton

Little World by Josephine Rowe | Black Inc. PB. \$27.99

Josephine Rowe's *Little World* is a little miracle – sparse yet brimming with razor-sharp pathos, I picked up this novella a few days after it was released and didn't put it down until I'd devoured it whole. Following an incorruptible teenage saint on her undying journey across the globe, Rowe spins pure poetry out of the horrific and the mundane without becoming burdened by the weight of all the saint's years and miles. Out of all the brilliant Australian titles I've been lucky enough to read this year, *Little World* has stayed with me the longest for its quiet empathy and keen intelligence.

Gene Pinter is from Readings Chadstone

Pan by Michael Clune | Fern. PB. \$34.99

Michael Clune paints the blurred edges of reality with bright, clear prose, bringing into focus on the page parts of the mind so rarely pinned down in any art form. Brilliant, unsettling – this is what figurative language is for.

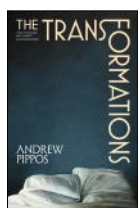
Molly Smith is from Readings Emporium

Not Quite White in the Head by Melissa Lucashenko | UQP. HB. Was \$39.99 **\$34.99**

Melissa Lucashenko's first nonfiction collection spans time, place and theme, but every piece holds its own. Ranging from essays to speeches and across two decades, this is a moving and essential read for fans of personal essays, political journalism, cultural and literary criticism and, of course, Lucashenko's writing in any form. It's also a particular treat for anyone keen to gain insight into backstories behind her award-winning novels.

Elke Power is the editor of *Readings Monthly* **R**

Mark Rubbo and Andrew Pippas on *The Transformations*



The Transformations

Andrew Pippas

Picador. PB. Was \$34.99

\$29.99

Available now

The Transformations is our Fiction Book of the Month.

You can find Alison Huber's review on page 8.

To celebrate the release of Andrew Pippas's brilliant second novel and the announcement of this year's winners of The Readings Prize, Readings chairman Mark Rubbo interviewed past-winner Pippas for The Readings Podcast. Enjoy a preview of their interview here.

MARK RUBBO Andrew, it's great to see you again. It's been some years since you won The Readings Prize [for *Lucky's*] and I remember you coming down for the celebration and us all loving that book. Tell us what you've been up to in the years since we saw you last.

ANDREW PIPPAS Thank you, Mark, it's great to see you again. That was a really lovely time we had having lunch and chatting about the book. Oh, The Readings Prize, I think that might be the only prize I've ever won in my life! It was a very special, very special moment. Since then, I've been working very hard on my next book, *The Transformations*, and trying to juggle work on the book with academic work at UTS [the University of Technology] in Sydney.

MR As we get into talking about the book, it might help people to know a bit about your background – we could do a sort of backwards CV.

AP So, I'm currently a lecturer in creative writing at UTS. Before that, I was a casual tutor at UTS. And then I was doing my PhD in creative writing there. And then before that period, I was a subeditor at a number of different publications. I worked at *The Independent* and *The Guardian* in London. So, I had a few years in London ... And I also worked at *The Australian* newspaper as a subeditor in the days when *The Australian* was a different newspaper, I think. There was a monthly literary review supplement. The books pages were extensive. Lenore Taylor and George Megalogenis were the political reporters. So that was *The Australian* that I knew. I left to do a PhD, which I always knew that I would do.

It was funny, I got caught in newsrooms for a little while ... In newspapers, I suppose I was something of a misfit – and the misfits in newspapers are often found on the subeditors' desk. And that was my home. So that's really the work history that is pertinent to *The Transformations*, which is a novel largely set in a newsroom.

MR It is. And yes, I guess that's why I wanted to find out. Because I've been talking about the book with my colleague Alison, and I have to admit, we're both besotted with this book. And one of the things Alison pointed out was just the depiction of the newsroom – all the things that were going on with it were so alive and real. And it's sort of like a microcosm of this world, isn't it? In your novel, I guess, the newsroom – everything comes out of that.

AP Well, it is interesting to think about the origins of this book and how it's related to *Lucky's*. The workplace is also really important to *Lucky's*. And the café-milk-bar world of *Lucky's* was an institution of its time. They were popular restaurants, particularly in New South Wales and Queensland. In country towns in those states, they were a social hub. They were an institution. And they became obsolete and were replaced by a restaurant culture that's more like the one that we have today. And that café world represented, I guess, an early phase of multiculturalism as well. That's another thing that I was trying to do with *Lucky's* and with *The Transformations*. Again, you have this workplace, this social institution. In the case of *The Transformations*, it's a newspaper. The everyday work was important to the representation of that setting. And I know that a lot of novels set in newsrooms often have this one story that the reporter follows, almost like a detective story. That's not what I wanted to do with this novel. I wanted to have lots of different stories. I wanted to show the way that every day is at a newspaper; every day these people in this room begin again in their work of describing the world, describing the city, describing the country.

MR And in the book, I was interested in how you're talking about the Greek regional restaurants, the cafés. The backdrop to the newspaper is that we're all aware this is a dying institution, although

there's an owner who professes that he's not going to let it [the newspaper] die. I won't tell what happens, but you also tackle some really big themes, a lot of themes, in the book. [There are] societal changes going on; there are relationships, different kinds of relationships; there's sexual abuse; there's a lot of luck going on – I think it's amazing that you've actually pulled it off and it really is coherent. What were you trying to do in introducing all those different themes?

AP I think the main theme is one that crosses all the various storylines of the novel. The way that I think of it, I have this primary plotline, the love story between George and Cassandra, who both work at the national newspaper. And then two subplots: one is to do with a teenage girl called Elektra, who is George's daughter, and the story about the fate of the national newspaper is the other subplot. And I guess the theme of change, the theme of endings and beginnings, crosses all of those plotlines.

MR Yeah, there's all these things going on and you think, *this is disastrous*, but it's a very positive book in many ways, I found. Did you want to write a positive novel?

AP I did, I did, I wanted to. I wanted to write something that did explore some of the darker elements of life – grief, the effects of really malignant personalities on people; greed; the extraordinary cost of living, in all of its senses, in Australian cities. But to me, there's something about the sort of love between the characters that I always gravitated towards. That sort of kindness and grace, it just seemed like a natural ending for the characters.

MR Well, you know, we're living in what appear to be such dark times. It would have been easy to be sucked into presenting a very bleak situation.

AP I mean, there is quite a lot of darkness in this book. And ultimately – again, like *Lucky's* – it's about these institutions in quite steep decline. And that is a world that isn't in the world of *Lucky's*. Of course, [in *Lucky's*] those institutions were replaced by other institutions that were just better suited to the times in Australia. Whereas what we're seeing now is the degradation of institutions like newspapers, various publications, universities – we could keep going with this list of institutions that are being threatened, but they're not being replaced. They're being broken, but there's nothing replacing them. That is a real concern and that's something the book doesn't solve. It doesn't try to solve grief or the tragedy in the book either, but the characters do learn to survive the bad stuff and enjoy the good stuff in life, all the same.

MR That's a really interesting take on it. I hadn't sort of seen it that way. I sort of saw it as positive, you know, that there was some redemption. I mean, the other thing I thought was rather beautiful about it was the developing relationship between George and his daughter. She was the product of a brief sort of affair when both parents were very young and he hadn't much contact with her. But she moves back to Sydney and they develop this, what seems to me, a very beautiful relationship.

AP Yeah, that was a lot of fun to write, that relationship. And Elektra, in fact, was the first character that I thought of in this book, even though she's not one of the main characters. I knew she would be a secondary character. There was this sort of part of me that thought, *Oh, I would like to play with the Elektra myth in this book the same way that I did with the Achilles myth in Lucky's*. So that element of it amused me. But I hope that I managed to make it work dramatically, all the same. That relationship is born out of need.

To listen to the rest of the interview (which we highly recommend!), scan the QR code, visit readings.com.au/the-readings-podcast or search for The Readings Podcast on SoundCloud, Spotify or iTunes.



Mark Rubbo is the chairman of Readings.

Andrew Pippas is an acclaimed Australian writer and academic. His debut novel, *Lucky's*, won The Readings Prize for New Australian Fiction in 2021 and was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Literary Award and the Prime Minister's Literary Award for Fiction in the same year. *The Transformations* is his superb second novel and it's already a Readings favourite. **R**

The Readings Prize 2025 winners

It's that time of year again! Our tireless Readings staff judges have read over 100 submissions, shortlisted 18 books and now it's time to celebrate the winners!

First presented in 2014, The Readings Prize continues to support outstanding new Australian voices across three separate categories of fiction: Children's, Young Adult and New Australian Fiction.

The Readings Prize is unique in the Australian literary landscape as the only prize currently run by an independent Melbourne bookshop, and specifically supporting emerging local voices.

Each year, the three prizes are awarded by teams of Readings staff and reflect our judgement of the works that have attained the highest literary merit in their category – and of course they're always great reads, too! The Readings Prize offers \$16,000 in prize money, which is distributed evenly to the winners of each category (\$5,000 per category winner), plus \$1,000 to the winner of The Gab Williams Prize, which is awarded in memory of our much-missed former colleague and chosen from the Young Adult Prize shortlist by The Readings Teen Advisory Board (TAB). The board members are all teens, and all read the books shortlisted for The Readings Young Adult Prize, after which they come together to choose their favourite as the winner of The Gab Williams Prize.

Angela Crocombe is a senior children's book buyer and The Readings Prize and The Readings Foundation coordinator

Hear from all the winners on The Readings Podcast

The Readings Prize 2025 winners have been interviewed on The Readings Podcast – here's a tiny taste!

- *I Want Everything* author Dominic Amerena discusses the fraught history of Australian literary hoaxes and culture, masculinity, ethics and ambition, and his writing process with Readings Carlton's Teddy Peak;
- Raidah Shah Idil shares sandwich-generation writing tales with Readings Kids manager Tamuz Ellazam and also gives some context to the fabulous food descriptions in *How to Free a Jinn* that captivated the Children's Prize judges and made them so hungry;
- *Aisle Nine* author Ian X. Cho talks post-apocalyptic fiction, portals to hell in retail settings, a pesky Black Friday apocalypse, teens and hope in a dumpster-fire world, and the cinematic dream that started it all with Readings Doncaster's Fiona Hardy;
- and Emma Clancey explains to Angela Crocombe (extensive byline to your left!) and The Readings Teen Advisory Board (TAB) the difficulty of choosing an ending – which was another thrilling plot twist for the TAB, several of whom thought the ending was possibly the most amazing part of *This Dream Will Devour Us*, and teases the possible publication of the letters alluded to in the book!



Listen to the full interview with the authors on The Readings Podcast on all the usual podcast platforms, including SoundCloud, Spotify or iTunes. You can also find out more about our podcast by scanning the QR code or visiting readings.com.au/the-readings-podcast

The Readings New Australian Fiction winner

The Readings New Australian Fiction Prize for the best new contribution to Australian fiction.



I Want Everything
Dominic Amerena
Summit. PB. Was \$34.99
\$29.99

Teddy Peak, chair of judges, on the winner:

The unnamed narrator of Dominic Amerena's delightfully satirical *I Want Everything* is an ambitious writer, with the skills but without the story to write his novel. Everything changes for him when he meets the famous and mysterious author Brenda Shales, who hasn't been heard from since the controversies that surrounded her cult feminist novels decades earlier. Through a lie (although only one of omission, as the narrator repeatedly reminds us!), the narrator breaks into her inner circle, mining her story for one of his own. In this novel, Amerena is asking numerous questions, including: Who owns stories? What does it mean to tell them? What stories do we tell about ourselves? And what is the difference between a story and a lie? This is a story of literary fraud, yet it cannot help but remind us of the Australian nation – a nation in which people seek wealth through mining of and extraction from land that is not their own. What stories is so-called Australia invested in telling about itself?

Judging for The Readings New Australian Fiction Prize was incredibly challenging, and all the submissions were so fantastic, but it was *I Want Everything's* reflections on Australian fiction itself that made it unforgettable. Funny, tense, and always dazzling, this book also has the honour of being the first fiction acquisition by Summit Books Australia, a new imprint from Simon & Schuster. We are so excited for readers to be blown away by the subtlety, campiness, tension, humour, and absolute fun of this book.

Author Dominic Amerena said of his win:

What a brilliant, thrilling surprise this was. Writing can be a lonely process, and it's such an honour to have my work read and recognised, no less by Readings, the absolute best in the business. I'm so thankful for their support and the help getting *I Want Everything* into readers' hands. I'm still buzzing.



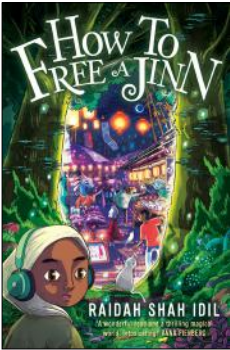
Dominic Amerena

'Writing can be a lonely process, and it's such an honour to have my work read and recognised'

Our staff judges for 2025 are **Teddy Peak** (chair of judges, Readings Carlton), **Thomas Busse** (Readings Doncaster), **Chris Gordon** (Readings Events) and **Pauline Hopkins** (Readings Hawthorn).

The Readings Children’s Prize winner

The Readings Children’s Prize for the best new contribution to Australian children’s literature.



How to Free a Jinn
Raidah Shah Idil
A&U. PB. \$17.99

For ages 10+

Tamuz Ellazam, chair of judges, on the winner:

While the 2025 judging panel has incredibly diverse tastes, it was clear from the beginning that the heartfelt and cinematic *How to Free a Jinn* was our undeniable winner. This joyful debut from Raidah Shah Idil felt like the perfect meal – full of variety and richness, both satisfying and refreshing. With lush descriptions of Malaysian food, landscape and culture, all told through the compelling voice of protagonist Insyirah, Shah Idil emerges as a fresh new perspective, blending modernity and tradition in culture and storytelling.

Insyirah loves her life in Sydney with her mum, but everything changes when they realise her *nenek* (grandmother) isn’t managing well on her own. Suddenly, Insyirah is moving countries *and* schools, and as if that wasn’t enough change, she’s started to notice that her *nenek*’s stories about *jinn* might not just be scary ghost stories, and their family’s connection to paranormal realms may be closer than she thinks – and certainly closer than her mum is comfortable with. As well as the new friends Insyirah is making at school, there’s a compelling spectre she just can’t stop thinking about, and both her mum and *nenek* are definitely not telling her the whole story. Full of faith, food, culture, family and fantastical worlds, *How to Free a Jinn* is a unique, thoughtful and deeply enjoyable read for ages 10+.

Author Raidah Shah Idil said of her win:

I’m so honoured and grateful that *How to Free a Jinn* won The Readings Children’s Prize! I wrote this book as a love letter to complicated Muslim families, while pregnant and raising small children of my own ... not knowing that it would ever find its way to publication. Having my book so celebrated by such an incredible Aussie institution is so healing to my first-generation migrant 12-year-old Malay Muslim and neurodivergent inner child.



‘I wrote this book as a love letter to complicated Muslim families’

Raidah Shah Idil

Our staff judges for 2025 are **Tamuz Ellazam** (chair of judges, Readings Kids), **Bernard Caleo** (Readings Carlton), **Kim Gruschow** (Readings St Kilda), and **Celeste Perry** (Readings Emporium).

The Readings Young Adult Prize winner

The Readings Young Adult Prize for the best new contribution to Australian Young Adult literature.



Aisle Nine
Ian X. Cho
HarperCollins. PB. \$19.99

For ages 12+

Fiona Hardy, chair of judges, on the winner:

Teenagers are aware of everything in the world so much more than ever before, and we can’t control everything they see. But when it comes to books, it was such a relief for our judges to read through so many funny, thoughtful, thrilling, deep, and entertaining books by a wide variety of Australian authors, and to know that young adults are in good hands.

Our Young Adult winner – constantly described as ‘fun’ by all four prize judges – is the post-apocalyptic-in-a-retail-setting *Aisle Nine* by Ian X. Cho. It’s just before Black Friday, and Jasper can’t actually remember life before the portals appeared all over the world, brimming with demons barely held at bay by the soldier-lite Vanguard. Now, he wakes every day in his empty home, goes to work, avoids the horrors in aisle nine, and tries not to fall in love with Vanguard Kyle, who hates him. Jasper’s almost mundane existence falls apart when he gets a vision that the world is going to end – even more than it already has – and he’s got to step up.

While *Aisle Nine* is a take on consumerism, politics, control, and much more, it’s also a straight-up blast. There’s fighting, explosions, guns and a talking stuffed cat (*Aisle Nine* merchandise is coming when, HarperCollins?); there’s joy and fear and a whole lot of courage. This is a vibrant, imaginative read we can’t wait to share with our young adult readers – and beyond.

Author Ian X. Cho said of his win:

I am beyond thrilled to have won The Readings Young Adult Prize! *Aisle Nine* is a story about two teens who are trying to avert a Black Friday apocalypse and live their best lives. It’s a weird book. The type of misfit book that can sometimes get lost in the shuffle. Which is why I’m so appreciative of the support and recognition from an establishment like Readings. Thank you!



‘It’s a ... misfit book that can sometimes get lost in the shuffle. Which is why I’m so appreciative of the support’

Ian X. Cho

Our staff judges for 2025 are **Fiona Hardy** (chair of judges, Readings Doncaster), **Lucie Dess** (Readings Marketing), **Miranda La Fleur** (Readings St Kilda) and **Kate O’Mara** (Readings Hawthorn).

The Gab Williams Prize winner

The Gab Williams Prize honours the contribution of Gabrielle Williams, a young adult author and past manager of The Readings Prize.



This Dream Will Devour Us
Emma Clancey
A&U. PB. \$24.99

For ages 14+

Annalisa Chen, chair of judges, on the winner:

Over the past few months, the TAB has had the absolute pleasure of reading six shortlisted novels that were all remarkable and fabulously different in their own ways. After much consideration, we are excited to announce that Emma Clancey’s debut novel *This Dream Will Devour Us* has clinched the prize!

This Dream Will Devour Us is a beautifully thought-out urban fantasy with a well-paced, intriguing plot that weaves together fantasy, mystery, romance, and action. It has a little something for everyone. From the start, it captures the attention and has a little something for everyone. The moments of realisation for the characters and us are absolutely delicious.

Our most beloved part of the book, however, must be the world itself. Through a unique and well-fleshed-out pharmacology-based magic system, Clancey explores how advantages, such as a miracle drug, shape society through the inevitable inequalities it produces. We particularly enjoyed the protagonist Nora, who is cleverly ambitious and gives sharp, perceptive social commentary, even when she becomes embroiled with the sinister world of the powerfully wealthy.

Nora is surrounded and supported by a diverse cast of characters who feel so alive in their emotions and complex, realistic relationships. The love-triangle romance underpinning the main plot further raises the stakes, and Clancey delivers a conclusion that left us enthralled and desperately wishing for more.

Author Emma Clancey said of her win:

I’m beyond thrilled to be this year’s recipient! I can’t thank Readings enough for the incredible work they do to champion Australian authors, and for all the support they’ve shown my debut. And to The Readings Teen Advisory Board – it means the world to me that you connected with Nora’s story. I’d also like to acknowledge Gab Williams and her profound contribution to our literary community. Receiving this prize named in her memory is an enormous honour.



‘Receiving this prize named in [Gab’s] memory is an enormous honour.’

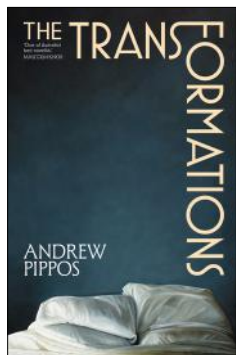
Emma Clancey

Our TAB judges for 2025 are **Annalisa Chen** (chair of judges), **Jessie Buckley**, **Henry Burgess**, **Freddie Breen**, **Kainaath Dhuna**, **Grace Golder**, **Elsie House**, **Audrey Kwek**, **Ashley Liu**, **Tina Nguyen**, **Lydia Pinchas**, **Klara Schmidt**, **Camryn Small**, **Esther Thunig-McGregor** and **Daniel Won**. **R**

Fiction

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Australian Fiction



The Transformations
Andrew Pippas
Picador. PB. Was \$34.99

\$29.99

Available now

R I have such a strong memory of reading an advance copy of Andrew Pippas's debut novel, *Lucky's*, in the middle of the difficult year that was 2020. It picked me up by the bootstraps and reminded me during those rough days that it is books like this that make me love my job. That brilliant, warm, epic piece of writing went on to win The Readings New Australian Fiction Prize in 2021, and was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Award of the same year, and was embraced by our judges, staff, and customers alike. We have all been waiting to see what Pippas does next, and here it is: *The Transformations*. Friends, this is a truly superb second novel which cements Pippas's reputation as one of our most exciting chroniclers of the Australian experience and psyche and all its foibles, a storyteller of the highest order. I have fallen for *The Transformations* in a big way: it's *that* good.

The novel is set in and around the newsroom of a fictional daily newspaper, *The National*, at a time of rapid change in the print media industry during the 2010s. George Desoulis is a subeditor in his mid-30s. He keeps to himself, admires his colleagues, believes in his work and the labour of the journalist's calling. A late-night encounter with a colleague, Cassandra, marks a turning point in his life, as he finds an unexpected but intense connection with this woman who has children and a marriage and an agreed set of parameters with her husband around non-monogamy. George knows this is tricky – could it ever work? Is it wise to try to find out? – but he's drawn, seemingly beyond his

control, curious to see what happens. This is progress though. George has been alone, closed off; we soon learn his youth and innocence was cut short at an early age, by grief, by abuse suffered at the hands of a trusted teacher, and then by a relationship in his late teens and twenties that resulted in a daughter, who is now a teenager and lives with her mother. Might this relationship hold the promise of George's becoming?

The characters in *The Transformations* are so clearly imagined, and the attachment I developed for them is one of the reasons I couldn't put this book down: they're flawed and lovable and affecting in ways that are familiar and emotionally charged, while Pippas's particular skill for capturing the nuance of Australia's migrant experience through the generations is again on show here. If the human condition is marked by the commonality and inevitability of change – one kind of transformation to which the book's title alludes – then Pippas has found a way to describe and illuminate how this is felt by his characters. It's a wonderful feat, arresting these moments on the page, as time moves on: the transformational affect, the feelings between the before and the after find their language in this book. The past, in its recurrence through memory and the traces it leaves in the mind and the body, is never too far from the surface, influencing thoughts, feelings, becoming the reason for change itself; the intimate and the monumental, the personal and the cultural, always in tension, and always on the way to somewhere or something else. There are some brilliant descriptions of the workings of the newsroom and print media too that I won't soon forget, now experiences largely consigned to history I'm sure, but here is a record of how the end days of print media played out, amid the everyday lives of the people who worked in it and for it. And at the end of it all – as it is in life and as it was in *Lucky's* too – is love. One of the great books and reading highlights of my 2025: I hope you'll fall for it too.

Alison Huber is the head book buyer

on a page but as fully realised people. The novel brims with deep relatability, particularly in its portrayal of queer experience, a subject often overshadowed in fiction. Gray approaches it with nuance and care, never shying away from complexity, and the result is both moving and profoundly authentic. I was a huge admirer of Gray's debut, *Green Dot*, and it's clear she has carried all the brilliance of that first novel into *Chosen Family*, but with even greater assurance. The writing feels sharper, the emotional stakes deeper, and the growth between works is remarkable. I'm pegging this novel as a 'Chosen Family Summer'. A book to savour slowly, share in conversation, and carry with me into the warmer months.

Thomas Busse is from Readings Doncaster

Else
Rose Michael

Spineless Wonders. PB. \$29.99

Available 1 December



Leisl and her daughter Else have their own language – exchanging facts 'like a frontier trade'. As the country is reclaimed by rains they escape the city, returning to their family home on a distant peninsula. Seasons become extreme. Else adapts, thriving in the wet and warming world. In Else, Leisl sees herself – her father, his mother – as the past becomes present, and present: past. But flash floods are followed by more weather events, and the pair are forced further and further down the 'Ninch'.

The Hiding Place
Kate Mildenhall

Scribner. PB. Was \$34.99

\$29.99

Available now



R Kate Mildenhall's latest novel, a crime story, is completely and utterly outrageous. I read it in one sitting.

The premise of the novel begins when a group of city friends decide to purchase an entire mining town, which is deserted and located in the bush. For each member, this is their opportunity to do something good: something for their kids, for the environment, to reconnect by disconnecting, and because a grand statement feels possible and important right now. Make no mistake, Mildenhall is poking fun at us left-leaning readers with this wild, wonderful novel.

Think of it as a portrait of any of us who enjoy a statement or two about how we could make our world a better place. The characters in this novel are known to me immediately. I understand their politics, their intentions, and, most of all, their conduct. You will as well. They are good people living their lives with purpose and gravitas. They have all known each other for years, travelled through various time periods and life phases together – they are forever friends. The novel is set during the friends' first weekend together in their own town. Everything that could go wrong does. And what happens next will blow your mind.

There are clues within these questions for you to ponder: Can you take the person out of the inner city and make them understand the country? Do you support hunting animals that are a problem? Can you teach teenagers responsibility, and not be liable? Does having watched a

lesson in butchering on YouTube mean you can kill an animal?

Reading this novel was a delight. I laughed aloud several times. I appreciated the compunction of these characters, and the consequences of their behaviour. I found the ending to be gloriously gratifying – the most pitch-perfect conclusion I have read for a long time. It made me love this story even more. I can already see how this novel will become a classic.

Chris Gordon is the community engagement and programming manager

Eros: Queer Myths for Lovers
Zoe Terakes

Hachette. PB. \$29.99

Available now



R A vivid, confident and mesmerising debut from rising star actor, activist and now author Zoe Terakes (they/he), *Eros* retells (or restores) classic myths into timeless and timely queer tales. Both epic and intimate, these five stories span time and place, from ancient Crete to 1990s Kings Cross, echoing the soul of their inspirations while carving new paths into the bedrock of this ancient storytelling tradition. Much like the myths from which *Eros* springs, Terakes does not pull any punches, vividly portraying both the loving intimacy and cruel violence that are such hallmarks of Greek mythology.

There's the great pleasure of the new in *Eros*, but also a feeling of restoration – a sensual mosaic put back together to fill in the gaps left by censorship and shifting social attitudes. Most of Terakes' queer characters exist in an internal world without prejudice – while their world may not accept them, they accept and relish themselves.

Terakes' ancestral homeland of Crete is as much a character in these stories as any speaking player. Like a long-awaited homecoming, the stories are full of the fertile senses of food and landscape and language and earth that are undeniably nostalgic. And like a holiday to the homeland, the stories then yearn to return to the land of migration. Terakes weaves the unique sensations of recognition between children of migrants through their characters, pulling them in tight like a net until the school of fish reveals a face we all know – a story we've heard before but didn't recognise under the Akubra and zinc. While some characters will be familiar, Terakes places mothers, migrants and queer elders in their rightful place among this pantheon. With language that oscillates between epic splendour and modern vernacular, *Eros* captures all time and this moment.

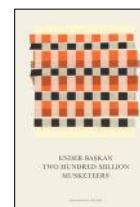
Tamuz Ellazam is the manager of Readings Kids

Australian Poetry

Two Hundred Million Musketeers
Ender Başkan

Giramondo. PB. \$27

Available now



R Full disclosure: Ender Başkan is a colleague of mine, and there's no doubt one of the pleasures of reading *Two Hundred Million Musketeers* is feeling like I've been deep in one of

Anthologies

Where Light Falls: An Anthology
RMIT Professional Writing and Editing (PWE) Students

RMIT. PB. \$24.99

Available now



Light reflects, absorbs and refracts. It casts shadows, shaping our social and emotional landscapes. It is tint, tone and shade, the difference between cerulean and indigo, the shift between a kind of

blue and blue-sky thinking. This vivid anthology brings together 63 diverse pieces of fiction, nonfiction and poetry. It explores light and dark – and a myriad nuances of blue. *Where Light Falls* was written and produced by final-year students of RMIT's Associate Degree in Professional Writing and Editing.

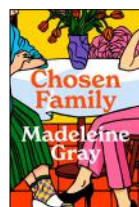
Australian Fiction

Chosen Family
Madeleine Gray

S&S/Summit Books. PB. Was \$34.99

\$29.99

Available now



R From Sydney-based writer-critic Madeleine Gray comes an unforgettable exploration of the bonds that shape us. Spanning 18 years, *Chosen Family* chronicles the lives of Nell Argall and Eve

Bowman, two brilliant, quirky misfits whose chance high-school friendship transforms into a complex tapestry of love, rivalry, co-parenting, and queer family dynamics.

Reading *Chosen Family* is an absolute pleasure. Gray writes with a rare blend of tenderness and precision, rendering her protagonists not as mere characters

our wide-ranging, free-wheeling chats. But I suspect that's going to be one of the pleasures of *Musketeers* for any reader. Başkan's lively, conversational poetry invites anyone and everyone to pull up a stool and join in the yarn.

He certainly has the knack – common to all good writers – of finding the universal in the specific, so while this collection is deeply personal, his ability to tease out the connections between the micro and the meta gives it resonance for all of us.

He sees the existential in the everyday: 'some things that aren't punk that aren't rock'n'roll might be/revolutionary'. 'The Erotics of Bookselling' hilariously elides the relentless courtesy required by retail work with the unflagging equanimity that being a husband and father demands. And while much of this might have the feel of spontaneous outpourings – Başkan is a master of stream-of-consciousness and word association – the rollercoaster energy belies the structure and control that make his work so satisfying. Mood and pace are carefully managed, not just within each poem but across the collection. A long, intense, passionate piece precedes a simple, funny slice of life. Every now and then the work pops with a surprising rhyme. He combines a forensic eye for the absurd (much of *Musketeers* is very funny) with real passion and, sometimes, rage. Parts are intensely political. And he knows to a nicety how to land a killer blow. Pieces meander along and then – wham. The closing lines of 'Kadikoy' left me reeling; the closing lines of 'Here Is The Shirt...' left me in tears. This is poetry to get your heart rate up: exhilarating, exuberant, and always entertaining.

Melinda Houston is from Readings Carlton

beautiful changelings
Maxine Beneba Clarke
Ultimo. PB. \$29.99
Available now



R I showed my mum the poem 'i want to grow old' from Maxine Beneba Clarke's new collection *beautiful changelings*, a poem not simply on aging but also a manifesto on how to grow old, lovingly, joyously and purposefully. I showed my mum, and I was surprised to see, after making her a cup of tea, that she was still reading, having gone on to the next poem. Her eyes had lit up. The power in Beneba Clarke's poetry is how it resonates with people, even self-described not-poetry-people like my mum. It grips you and you keep going and going and going.

Beneba Clarke has also written across genre and for all ages. Her work with children's picture books and children's poetry is incredibly accomplished and she has written memoir as well as fiction. But her poetry, in particular, demonstrates a love and attention to language, not just as it is written but also as something spoken, full of the rhythms, stresses and pauses of speech. Beneba Clarke doesn't seem to set out to break apart language, rather to bring it together in new and interesting ways. *beautiful changelings* is a tour de force of her writing, each poem purposeful and charged, speaking to the experiences of being a woman, a mother, of aging, of racism and of feminism.

The collection is assembled in eight main sections. 'the sirens' retells fairytales, but from the perspective of the people overlooked, such as in 'spindle', one of my favourites, which

sheds a different light on *Sleeping Beauty*, tracing the logics of class, race and power. And then there's 'women's work', which calls on women's overlooked and undervalued role in getting the world through the recent pandemic. There's also 'major complications', an incredible section, which speaks to race and White feminism's failure to champion Black women. These feel like poems to be spoken out loud; to be felt in your bones. I can't wait to share this collection with as many people as I can.

Stephanie King is from Readings Emporium

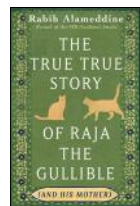
Best of Australian Poems 2025
Nam Le & Jill Jones (eds)
Puncher and Wattmann. PB. \$34.95
Available now



Best of Australian Poems is an annual anthology collecting previously published and unpublished poems to create a poetic snapshot and barometer of the year that was. Capturing the richness and diversity of Australian poetry across a timeframe of 1 July 2024–30 June 2025, the series, now in its fifth year, explores how poetic responses to the contemporary moment develop with each passing year. This year's editors are award-winning and highly respected poets, authors and editors, Nam Le and Jill Jones.

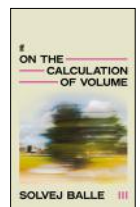
International Fiction

The True True Story of Raja the Gullible (and His Mother)
Rabih Alameddine
Corsair. PB. \$34.99
Available now



In a tiny Beirut apartment, 63-year-old Raja lives with his mother, Zalfa. A beloved philosophy teacher and the 'neighbourhood homosexual' he loves books, order and solitude, while Zalfa needs to know everything about his life. When Raja is invited to a writing residency in America it offers peace and quiet away from his mother and the heartache of Lebanon. But it soon leads Raja to recount and relive the disasters and betrayals he wishes to leave behind. A tragicomic tale of love, mistakes and self-discovery.

On the Calculation of Volume: Book III
Solvej Balle, Sophia Hersi Smith & Jennifer Russell (trans)
Faber. PB. \$26.99
Available 18 November



Tara Selter has lived the 18th of November 1,143 times when she notices a change: a man has replaced his shirt. The man is Henry Dale, and he remembers all the days that have come before. With time out of joint, they are trapped together sharing their present and small battles against it. Henry sees things differently to Tara: he doesn't believe time will fix itself or that the future will come around, but he helps her realise she has changed and that there may be others to find within the fault in time.

'Hilarious and devastating ... This book is everything to me.'
SIANG LU

Chosen Family
Madeleine Gray
Bestselling author of *Green Dot*

A sexy, romantic, queer, epic literary novel by the award-winning author of *Green Dot*.

Summit Books

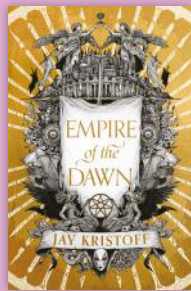
'Grabs you with both fists and doesn't let go. Eerie, tense, fabulous.'
JANE HARPER

KATE MILDENHALL
THE HIDING PLACE

A RAZOR-SHARP LITERARY THRILLER ABOUT HOW FAR PEOPLE WILL GO TO PROTECT WHAT THEY FEEL THEY DESERVE...



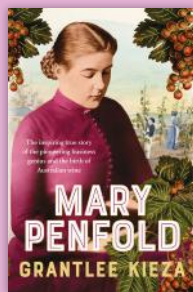
Come along for the ride of a lifetime in this heartwarming Japanese bestseller, a story about recognising opportunities, embracing happiness, and discovering what true fulfilment looks like.



From *Sunday Times* bestselling author of *The Nevernight Chronicle*, Jay Kristoff, comes the epic conclusion to the #1 internationally bestselling series.



From international bestselling cookbook author, Donna Hay, comes *Sunshine, Lemons and Sea Salt* – a celebration of modern coastal Australian home cooking.

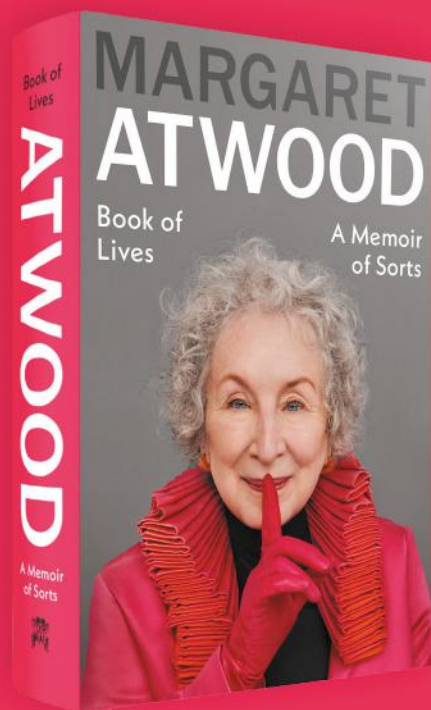


The inspiring story of Mary Penfold, the mother of the Australian wine industry – a self-taught vintner and business genius.

OUT NOW



OUR GREATEST STORYTELLER WRITES HER OWN LIFE



'She's taken our times and made us wise to them'

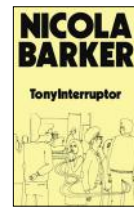
ALI SMITH



TonyInterruptor Nicola Barker

Granta. PB. \$29.99

Available now



R *TonyInterruptor* tears along with effortless bravado, a virtuoso display from an author at the top of her game. About halfway through, we discover a new word:

'Sprezzatura ... a special Italian word to describe the act of creating something superlative but with no apparent effort'. Of course, anyone familiar with Nicola Barker's backlist will know that a book barely over 200 pages will actually have taken her enormous effort. Her best books usually sprawl and meander and tangentialise, but *TonyInterruptor* is focused and tight.

A free jazz concert is interrupted by a performance-art heckler. It's an intervention inadvertently captured on an audience member's phone, as is the ensuing inter-band-member discussion and argument. Said inadvertent film goes viral. What follows is a simple story of improv jazz, architectural hair, calculated heckles, intellectual property and social-media shame. It's a love story (possibly two love stories) and coming-of-age story. It asks the question of art and soul and social media journalism, 'Is this honest?' and correctly, gloriously, heartbreakingly and heartwarming answers, 'Who cares?'.

And if this sounds like fragmented, hard-to-follow, hard-to-swallow, over-worked confection ... well ... sprezzatura!

Mark Luffman is from Readings Hawthorn

Girl Dinner Olivie Blake

Mantle. PB. \$34.99

Available now



The House is the most exclusive sorority on campus, its alumni are beautiful, high-achieving and respected. Sophomore Nina Kaur knows being accepted is a step to a bright future. Adjunct professor Sloane Hartley is struggling with new motherhood and a distant husband. Invited to be The House's academic liaison she craves its collective perfection. As Nina and Sloane are each drawn deeper into its arcane rituals, they must decide just how much they can stomach in the name of solidarity and power.

My Brilliant Friend: The Four Volumes

Elena Ferrante &

Ann Goldstein (trans.)

Europa Editions. HB. \$89.99

Available 18 November



When Elena Ferrante set out to write the story of Elena and Lila, she conceived it as one single work of fiction, one expansive novel that would capture the reality and ambivalence of female friendship, motherhood, marriage, class and adolescence. 2025 marks 10 years since publication of the quartet was completed. To celebrate this anniversary, as well as honour and acknowledge the author's original conception, Europa

Editions are releasing the four novels in one special volume.

Lightbreakers

Aja Gabel

Fleet. PB. \$34.99

Available now



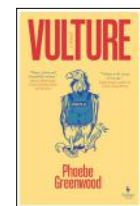
Maya and Noah are happily married. But beneath the surface is a third rail: Serena, the lost child that Noah had with his ex-wife. When Noah gets a call from an eccentric billionaire asking him to participate in a project aiming to unravel the secrets of time and consciousness, the couple agrees to relocate to the Janus Lab, and Noah finds himself drawn into a kind of time travel that could result in seeing Serena again. But Janus lab is not what it seems, and soon Noah and Maya are drawn into its dangerous web.

Vulture

Phoebe Greenwood

Europa Editions. PB. \$34.99

Available now



R Phoebe Greenwood's *Vulture* is a darkly satirical and unflinching debut that dissects the moral rot at the heart of war journalism. Set during the 2012 Gaza-Israel conflict, the novel follows Sara Byrne, an ambitious young British journalist desperate to make her name as a foreign correspondent. She's stationed at the Beach Hotel, a bizarre sanctuary for the world's press amidst all the devastation. Sara's story is both a critique of media voyeurism and a character study of ambition untethered from empathy.

The Beach Hotel, with its buffet breakfasts and sea views, stands as a grotesque symbol of privilege against the destruction just beyond its walls. It's where reporters trade gossip over cocktails while locals lose everything. Sara's fixation on securing a front-page story leads her to manipulate her fixer, Nasser, and take reckless risks with Fadi, a young man from a militant family, setting in motion events that spiral far out of her control.

Greenwood's background as a journalist gives the novel its sharp realism. She captures the absurd logistics of war reporting – the scramble for Wi-Fi, the moral detachment behind casualty counts, and the competition for the 'juiciest' story. Yet beneath the satire runs a deep unease: that those tasked with documenting suffering often exploit it instead. Sara's descent into paranoia and moral decay feels both exaggerated and chillingly plausible.

While the novel's tone shifts from razor-edged humour to bleak despair, the transition feels earned. War, Greenwood suggests, strips everyone bare – reporters and victims alike. *Vulture* doesn't offer redemption or clarity, but it does force readers to confront the complicity of media spectacle.

Timely, provocative, and painfully relevant, *Vulture* is an uncomfortable but essential read. Greenwood skewers the self-importance of Western journalism while reminding us of the human cost it so often glosses over.

Nicole Vasilev is from Readings Emporium

Helm**Sarah Hall**

Faber. PB. \$34.99

Available 2 December



Helm is a ferocious, mischievous wind who has blasted the sublime landscape of the Eden Valley since the very dawn of time. This is Helm's life story, formed from the chronicles of those the wind enchanted: the Neolithic tribe who tried to placate it, the Dark Age wizard priest who wanted to banish it, the Victorian steam engineer who attempted to capture it – and the farmer's daughter who fell in love. But now Dr Selima Sutar, alone with her measuring instruments, fears the end is nigh.

Heap Earth Upon It**Chloe Michelle Howarth**

Verve. PB. \$34.99

Available now



R Rural Ireland, 1965. The four O'Leary siblings turn up in the small town of Ballycrea, each haunted by their past. This is all we know. The rest of *Heap Earth Upon It* has Chloe Michelle

Howarth drip-feeding us fragments of crucial information from the perspectives of Tom (the eldest and desperate to please), Jack (isolated and grieving), and Anna (scornful and overwhelmed). They are all anchored by little Peggy – only nine years old and growing up without parents. As the family's friendship with locals Bill and Betty Nevan sparks connection and work opportunities for the family, who are all desperate for belonging, it also sees obsessions begin to simmer.

Howarth has created a formidable, Gothic-style novel, and with great success. The style is tight and incisive, while maintaining a slight mystifying tone across the novel with first-person insight from Betty and the siblings. I found it like experiencing a very vivid dreamscape. The story is well-grounded, but with enough unknowns referenced that you never truly feel as though you know what is going on – somewhat reminiscent of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*.

Heap Earth Upon It is an engrossing tale of broken families and passion that doggedly paces along the edge of violence. Howarth has somehow managed to give us a book that is one big, sustained sinking feeling, full of complex family dynamics, all-consuming sapphic desire, and small-town tensions. You are privy to every neurosis that each sibling tends toward and every uncharitable thought they have – as well as every proclamation of grief and bid for hope. I, for one, hope there is another book in the works for Howarth, and that it is as good as her first two.

Ruby Grinter is from Readings Carlton

Queen Esther**John Irving**

Scribner. PB. \$36.99

Available now



John Irving revisits the world of *The Cider House Rules* in *Queen Esther*. Born in Vienna, 1905, Esther loses both parents to anti-Semitism and is taken in by St Cloud's orphanage in Maine. Dr Wilbur Larch

knows it won't be easy to find a Jewish family to adopt her. When Esther is 14, he meets the Winslows, who provide foster care for unadopted orphans and despise anti-Semitism. A profound exploration of identity, belonging, and the enduring impact of history on our personal lives.

The Matchbox Girl**Alice Jolly**

Bloomsbury. PB. \$32.99

Available now



Adelheid Brunner does not speak. She writes and draws instead. Her ambition is to own 1,000 matchboxes and she will stop at nothing to achieve her dream. Then Adelheid meets Dr Asperger, who invites her to live at the Vienna paediatric clinic. But Vienna in 1938 is a place of fear and violence. When the Nazis arrive, difficult choices must be made. Why are the clinic's children disappearing and where do they go? Adelheid starts to suspect that some of Dr Asperger's games are played for the highest stakes.

Great Eastern Hotel**Ruchir Joshi**

Fourth Estate. PB. \$36.99

Available now

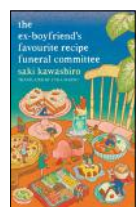


August 1941. The world is at war. At Calcutta's Great Eastern Hotel there is feasting, dancing and laughter. The city stops the day poet Rabindranath Tagore dies, and mourners line the streets including: a student Communist Party volunteer, the English daughter of a Raj official, a painter and a pickpocket. Their lives intertwine with those at the hotel: an American soldier, a French chef, an heiress and a group of military officers. An epic tale of belonging, love, art and history on the brink of India's independence.

The Ex-Boyfriend's Favourite Recipe Funeral Committee**Saki Kawashiro & Yuka Maeno (trans.)**

S&S. PB. \$29.99

Available now



Twenty-nine-year-old Momoko has been dumped by her boyfriend at a love hotel. Heartbroken, she gets drunk, passes out and wakes up in a cafe. She pours her heart out to Iori, the manager, and Hozumi a monk in training. When Momoko cooks her ex's favourite dish at the café she realises the combination of cooking and sharing has stopped her tears. Inspired, Iori has a brilliant idea. And so, an unconventional therapy group, the 'Ex-Boyfriend's Favourite Recipe Funeral Committee' is born.

The Lucky Ride**Yasushi Kitagawa &****Takami Nieda (trans.)**

HarperCollins. PB. \$27.99

Available now



What if a single journey could change everything for you? In this charming story, the unluckiest man in Japan is given a chance to flip his fortunes when a mysterious driver appears, offering him the

opportunity to seize a new path. Life's setbacks can often feel overwhelming, but in *The Lucky Ride*, you'll embark on a journey of self-growth that shows us that luck isn't something you're born with – it's a result of the choices you make and the positive energy you bring into the world.

The Silver Book**Olivia Laing**

Hamish Hamilton. PB. \$34.99

Available now



September 1974. Two men meet by chance in Venice. One is a young English artist, and the other is Danilo Donati, the designer responsible for realising the visions of Fellini and Pasolini. Donati is in Venice to produce sketches for Fellini's *Casanova*. A young apprentice is just what he needs. He sweeps Nicholas to Rome. Then in the spring, the lovers move to the set of *Salò*, Pasolini's horrifying fable of fascism. But Nicholas has a secret and in this world of constant illusion, his real nature passes unseen.

The Woman Dies**Aoko Matsuda & Polly Barton (trans.)**

Europa Editions. PB. \$29.99

Available 2 December

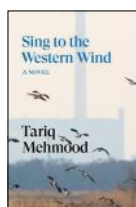


Piercing, inventive, and darkly humorous, the 52 stories in Aoko Matsuda's *The Woman Dies* explore the persistent and pervasive sexism faced by women in modern-day Japan. Blending humour, surrealism and social critique stories include: the normalisation of violence against women on screen and in the media, while others invest inanimate objects with their own perspectives, examine the aesthetics of technology, and use clever wordplay to riff off the absurdity of contemporary life.

Sing to the Western Wind: A Novel**Tariq Mehmood**

Verso. PB. \$26.99

Available now

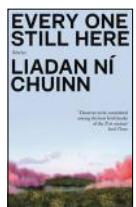


Seventy-year-old atheist Saleem Khan is carrying a suicide bomb through Manchester, along with a cache of vivid, haunting memories. In the 1960s he left his home in rural Pakistan and emigrated to Bradford, where he faced racism. He found a job in a mill, became a trade unionist, and later drove a taxi. Impelled to return to Pakistan Saleem is drawn into war-torn Afghanistan. There among Russian soldiers and Mujahadeen, he meets Gulzarina, a woman whose story promises to make sense of his own tortuous history.

Every One Still Here: Stories**Liadan Ní Chuinn**

Granta. PB. \$29.99

Available now



A young girl spends her days on a double-decker bus. A bride-to-be prays to Saint Valentine's bones. Bouquets are found all over a museum. Teenagers gather to dissect a human body. Brimming with

compassion and thrumming with energy, these stories are scrupulous in their attention to detail and epic in their scope. In this bravura debut collection from a stunning new voice in Irish literature, Liadan Ní Chuinn delivers a consummate blend of the personal and the political.

The Emergency**George Packer**

Picador. PB. \$34.99

Available now



An empire has collapsed from boredom and loss of faith in itself. In the Emergency that follows, youth rebellions of urban Burghers and rural Yeomen embrace radical new ideas of humanity.

Doctor Hugo Rustin is increasingly estranged from his city and his family. When an incident at the hospital leads to Rustin's disgrace, he seeks redemption in a quixotic and dangerous journey into the countryside, with his teenage daughter as his companion, just as the conflict between Burghers and Yeomen is reaching a crisis.

Workhorse**Caroline Palmer**

Fourth Estate. PB. \$34.99

Available 25 November



Editorial assistant Clodagh Harmon wants nothing more than to rise through the ranks at a prestigious fashion magazine, but she doesn't have the right pedigree. A 'workhorse' in a world of well-connected 'show horses' it seems Clo's fortunes will never change. Until she meets Harry Wood, a reporter with visions of his own media empire and the person who might be Clo's ally in gaming the system. As Clo begins to wade across boundaries, she takes ever greater and more dangerous risks to become who she wants to be.

Sympathy Tower Tokyo**Rie Qudan & Jesse Kirkwood (trans.)**

Penguin. PB. \$26.99

Available 25 November

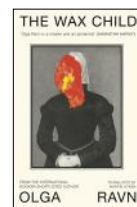


Welcome to the Japan of tomorrow where radical sympathy toward criminals has become the norm. Architect Sara Machina has been tasked with designing a grand skyscraper in Tokyo which will house the wrongdoers but a terrible crime she experienced as a young girl has her riven with doubt and thinking against the grain of her time: could it be that criminals deserve the punishment and disdain of the past? In search of solace and in need of creative inspiration, Sara turns to the knowing words of an AI chatbot.

The Wax Child**Olga Ravn & Martin Aitken (trans.)**

Viking. HB. \$35

Available now



R The stage for Olga Ravn's latest work is the town of Aalborg, in 1620s Denmark. Our strange narrator is a doll made of wax, with strands of human hair pressed into the soles of its feet. This

wax child recounts the goings-on of its surroundings as told to it by birds, by the soil, by the teeth in the King's mouth. Ravn has created an entrancing voice in this narrator, so inhuman in its point of view and yet so humane in its observations.

Most of all, the wax child concerns itself with its mistress, Christenze, and the women she loves. As the fist of Christianity tightens around Denmark, Christenze and those like her struggle to reckon with a narrowing culture: 'Is that what harmful magic is? Was that heresy? ... Forgive us. We knew so little about the devil in those days, now everyone knows so much about him.'

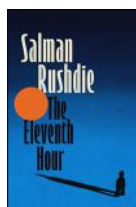
Written in parallel with a play by the name of *HEX*, the novel is based on an infamous set of witch trials in Denmark's history. The author pays tribute to these women, using their true names and archival research to weave together something of who they were. They are revived with captivating prose that reads as much like an incantation as it does a story. The novel's relation to the theatre is hard to miss – it is almost a shame not to hear some passages read aloud – but it is no less powerful on the page.

Ravn brings to life a time long past, where witchcraft appeared as much a daily reality as carding wool or carpentry, but it seems no mistake to offer us this story in our current moment, where rumour and heresy are treated as real once more.

Molly Smith is from Readings Emporium

The Eleventh Hour Salman Rushdie

Jonathan Cape. PB. \$34.99
Available now



The five works of fiction in Salman Rushdie's new short story collection move between the three countries he has called home – India, England and America – and explore what it means to

approach the eleventh hour of life. In these stories Rushdie ponders life and death, legacy and identity with the insight and imagination that have made him one of our era's most celebrated writers. They are the reckoning with mortality we all must one day make and speak deeply to what he has come from and through.

Lowest Common Denominator (The Helsinki Trilogy, Book 1)

Pirkko Saisio &
Mia Spangenberg (trans.)
Penguin Classics. PB. \$26.99
Available now



Writing after her father's death, the narrator of Pirkko Saisio's autofictional novel transports us to 1950s Finland where she navigates life as an only child of communist

parents. Convinced she will grow up to become a man, a young Pirkko keeps trying to meet the expectations of the adults around her. Saisio captures the intensity of childhood as each formative experience drives her further from her family and others. Struggling to understand her place in the world it's in language that she discovers a refuge and a way to be seen.

Mona's Eyes

Thomas Schlessler &
Hildegard Serle (trans.)

Europa Editions. HB. \$39.99
Available 2 December



Fifty-two weeks is all Mona has left to learn about beauty before she loses her eyesight forever. Fifty-two works of art. Every Wednesday, Mona's grandfather picks her up after school and takes her

to see a great artwork at Paris' museums. Together Mona and her grandfather will experience enchantment and sadness. They will grow closer and learn to lean on each other. From Botticelli to Basquiat, Mona will discover not only the power of art, but also the meaning of generosity, doubt, melancholy, and loss.

Service

John Tottenham

Tuskar Rock. PB. \$34.99
Available now



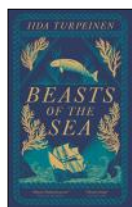
What's this book about? Is there a restroom? Do you work here? The worst thing about a bookshop is the customers. Then there's the gift-wrapping, the invoicing, the stock takes.

The reviews that inevitably contribute to self-loathing. In his late 40s, Sean is a frustrated bookseller who should have already written a novel. Instead, he spends his days drowning in his overwhelming sense of contempt: for LA, for its readers, for its casual disdain for service. And what, or whom, is he serving anyway?

Beasts of the Sea

Iida Turpeinen &
David Hackston (trans.)

MacLehose. PB. \$29.99
Available now



1741. The crew of *Vitus Bering* are shipwrecked off a remote, uncharted island. They have no hope of rescue but manage to survive when they discover the flesh of a huge marine mammal. 1859. The

Russian colony of Alaska is on the brink of collapse. Governor Furuholm takes solace in the quest for a complete skeleton of what is known as Steller's Sea Cow, thought extinct. Even extinct, the sea cow continues to shape lives and destinies. A stunning debut that melds natural history, human endeavour and the extinction of species with compelling storytelling across centuries.

The Dinner Party Viola van de Sandt

Tinder. PB. \$34.99
Available now



R Warning: this read may make you feel anxious. Imagine you are a vegetarian, with no funds of your own, and your husband-to-be – the one who says he loves you and all that you do – wants you

to cook a celebratory dinner for his work colleagues. He wants you to cook rabbit. It's hot and the fridge has broken. You do your best, but the heat is stifling. The cat keeps jumping up onto the bench. You are running out of time to produce a meal.

You do not enjoy cooking; it is not your thing. You are alone, brought to England from Amsterdam on a whim, really, by your fiancé. The guests include an unexpected surprise: a past lover, someone you thought was your one, true soulmate – until he left you. Another of the guests becomes violently ill. The heat is unbearable, and the conversation is pompous. Too much wine has been consumed by everyone at the table. And there is a sharp knife within easy reach. Good lord, how could this dinner party possibly conclude?

You do find out as the novel moves from past to present and the protagonist, Franca, reflects on what happened that night – and even imagines what could have happened – with her therapist. This is a nightmare of a book: a hot, fever-dream type of novel. It created in me that feeling you get when you wake in the night after too much red wine and cheese.

This book is reminiscent of the great feminist tale by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Reading this compelling novel elicited a visceral reaction in me. It is damning and enlightening, and forces conversations about power, privilege, and despair. And do not forget that knife with its sharp, pointed edge ...

Chris Gordon is the community engagement and programming manager

The Sad Part Was Prabda Yoon & Mui Poopoksakul (trans.)

Tilted Axis. PB. \$29.99
Available 1 December



In these witty, postmodern stories, Prabda Yoon riffs on pop culture, experiments with punctuation, flirts with sci-fi and, in a metafictional twist, mocks his own position as

omnipotent author. Highly literary, his narratives explore the bewildering disjunct and oft-hilarious contradictions of a modernity that is at odds with many traditional Thai ideas on relationships, family, school and work. *The Sad Part Was* offers an oblique reflection of contemporary Bangkok life.

Science Fiction & Fantasy

The Strength of the Few (Hierarchy, Book 2)

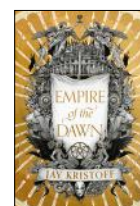
James Islington
Text. PB. \$34.99
Available now



The Hierarchy still call me Vis Telimus and believe they know who I am. But after I won the Iudicium, I lost everything, and now, impossibly, I have been replicated by an ancient device, across three worlds: in Obiteum, Luceum, and Res. Three different bodies and lives. I must hide; fight; play politics; train; trust; lie; kill; heal; and keep proving myself. I am loved, hated, and entirely alone but I must find the answers to what has happened to me because the Cataclysm is coming and I might be the only one who can stop it.

Empire of the Dawn (Empire of the Vampire, Book 3)

Jay Kristoff
Voyager. PB. \$35.99
Available now

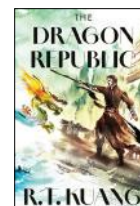


Gabriel has lost everything – his family, his faith, and the Holy Grail, Dior. With no desire left but vengeance, he and his loyal brothers journey to the Augustin Empire to kill the Forever King.

Unknown to the Last Silversaint Dior still lives, speeding towards Augustin's besieged capital in the hope of ending Daysdeath forever. But treachery awaits within the halls of power, and the Forever King's legions close in. Gabriel and Dior must face a final battle that will shape the Empire's fate, but who is left to trust?

The Dragon Republic (Collector's Edition)

R.F. Kuang
Voyager. HB. \$52.99
Available now



Rin is on the run. Haunted by the atrocity she committed to save her people, addicted to opium, and driven by the murderous commands of Phoenix, the vengeful god who has blessed her with fearsome power. Rin's only reason for living is to get revenge on the Empress who sold her homeland, Nikan, to her enemies. Out of choices Rin joins forces with the Dragon Warlord, who has a plan to conquer Nikan, unseat the Empress, and create a new Republic. She throws herself into his war. This is all she knows.

Here and Beyond

Hal LaCroix
Bloomsbury. PB. \$32.99
Available now



After the collapse of life on Earth, 600 people are selected for passage on *Shipworld*, a spacecraft charting a 360-year voyage to a new planet. Their mission will see generations born, living

and dying on board – until one day their descendants step foot on the 'Super Earth' that might offer the last chance for humankind's survival. *Shipworld* promises a harmonious system free of class distinctions and wealth, yet with each new generation comes daunting challenges to the future of their civilisation.

As Many Souls as Stars

Natasha Siegel
Bloomsbury Archer. PB. \$32.99
Available now



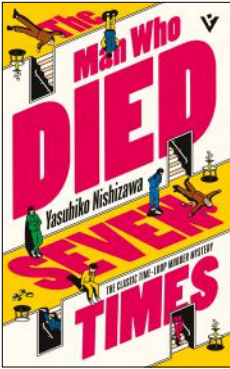
1592. Cybil was born under cursed stars, destined to bring disaster to those around her. Miriam is a creature born of shadow, consumes souls, and is doomed to exist for eternity. Miriam offers

Cybil reincarnation and the chance to change her stars in exchange for her radiant soul. Thus begins a dance across centuries as Miriam seeks Cybil in every lifetime to claim her prize. But Cybil isn't inclined to play by the rules. As the two women circle each other the bond forged between them grows stronger. **R**

Crime

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Crime



The Man Who Died Seven Times
Yasuhiko Nishizawa & Jesse Kirkwood (trans.)
Pushkin Verigo. PB. \$32.99
Available now

Yasuhiko Nishizawa’s whodunnit is one you’ll wish had been translated sooner. It’s a sharply constructed puzzle-box of morality and greed, where every revelation deepens the absurdity of human ambition. Clever, cruel, and darkly funny, it’s a reminder that time may repeat itself, but our worst impulses rarely change.

Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

R First published in Japan in 1995, *The Man Who Died Seven Times* is a genre-defying crime thriller of murder, greed, and fractured family loyalties.

Hisataro has been born with a curse. At any point, and beyond his control, Hisataro will be stuck in a time loop, forced to relive the same day nine times. As if that wasn’t trouble enough, Hisataro is also the youngest member of the wealthy Fuchigami family – a family constantly bickering and competing with each other as their patriarch, Hisataro’s grandfather Reiji Fuchigami, remains flippant about choosing an heir to inherit all his wealth.

So when Reiji is found murdered on New Year’s Day, one day after announcing he has chosen his heir, Hisataro sees his curse as a blessing. He must solve his grandfather’s murder in nine days before the loop ends, or he may never discover which of his family members is a murderer.

Groundhog Day meets *Succession* in this inventive and unsettling mystery, at once darkly humorous and uncomfortably plausible. Many novels explore the strength of family bonds against any adversity, but when wills and inheritance are mentioned, nothing can split a family apart more quickly. Beneath the novel’s twists and revelations lies a sobering inquiry into the nature of loyalty and the corruptive influence of wealth, asking just how thick blood really is when it comes up against money, and how far one can drive the other, even to the point of death.

With an eccentric cast of characters, shocking secrets and backstabbing, and an unexpectedly clever ending,

Benbecula
Graeme Macrae Burnet
Text. PB. \$32.99
Available now



R After having spent a few years experimenting further with ‘false true crime’, and inhabiting the French detective Georges Gorski, Graeme Macrae Burnet has turned his attention towards

his native Scotland with his new novel *Benbecula*, which is part of UK publisher Polygon’s *Darkland Tales*. Other instalments from this series include Jenni Fagan’s *Hex* (about the North Berwick witch trials) and *Queen*, Val McDermid’s own take on *Macbeth*’s Queen Macbeth.

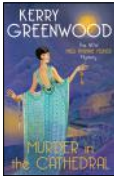
Taking its name from the small island in the Outer Hebrides where Jacobite Flora McDonald spirited away Bonnie Prince Charlie to exile after the Battle of Culloden, *Benbecula* revisits another, considerably darker, chapter in Scottish history, when in July 1857 Angus MacPhee bludgeoned his parents and aunt to death. He was later committed to an asylum for the criminally insane for the remainder of his life. The echoes of this crime, and the lingering effect on the surviving family members, are at the heart of this novel. In a wonderfully haunting first-person narrative, Angus’s older brother Malcolm recounts the period prior to, and after, the murders.

As the novel progresses, Angus’s own decline intensifies until he snaps and commits the murders. But it is in the aftermath that Malcolm’s own bleak circumstances become more apparent. Ostracised for his relationship to the triple murderer, and with his two other siblings gone, life becomes much, much harder for Malcolm. His inexorable decline is as much about his own sense of self as it is about his tenuous position in the community.

One aspect of Macrae Burnet’s brilliance as a storyteller here is the brevity with which he’s homed in on the complexity of Malcolm as a character. Like Claire Keegan, he doesn’t waste words, and as a writer he places great trust in readers’ intelligence to see beyond the words and lines, and peer much deeper into the psyche.

Julia Jackson is from Readings Carlton

Murder in the Cathedral
Kerry Greenwood
A&U. PB. \$34.99
Available now



When Phryne Fisher travels to Bendigo for her friend’s investiture as Bishop, she doesn’t expect murder. Along with the local police, she must investigate the death of a deacon with a nose for trouble. Murky layers of church politics, social scandals and business scams soon reveal blackmail suspects. Will Phryne find proof before the murderer strikes again?

The Long Night
Christian White
Affirm Press. PB. Was \$34.99
\$27.99
Available now



Em has lived a quiet life with her complicated mother, Jodie, until she is kidnapped one night. Jodie has been trying to forget a troubling time, but then her daughter is kidnapped. It will take everything they have to escape this night, and the past, alive.

For more great crime fiction, pick up a copy of our Summer Reading Guide at our shops or read it online. **R**



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

THE COMPLETE CAMBRIDGE JANE AUSTEN



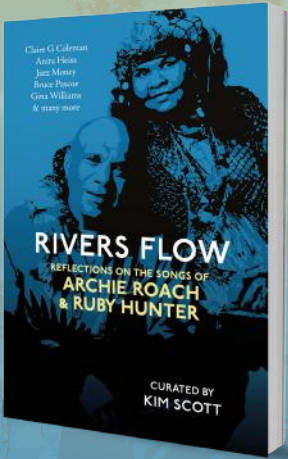
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2025 food & art favourites

Cookbook highlights with senior buyer and foodie Danielle Mirabella

At the beginning of every new year, like many other people, I will often declare, 'I don't need any new cookbooks this year!' You know the drill. And during January and February, this mantra is easy to follow as we generally see an influx of healthy lifestyle cookbooks. However, by March and April, autumn settles in, along with a new year in cookbook publishing, and these lofty intentions are soon abandoned – we don't stand a chance.

Australian cookbook publishing is considered world leading and 2025 has proved no exception. Not only is this country lucky enough to be the home of many talented chefs and cooks, but we also have brilliant publishers, photographers and designers who all collaborate to bring us these stunning publications.

Naturally, cookbooks often follow trends, which we know as we've all stood in line at our local artisan bakery or patisserie! *The Baker's Book* is the perfect collection of recipes gathered from many of these bakeries (30, in fact!). Ruby Goss encourages you to skip the queue and attempt one of your faves at home, and with an introduction by Natalie Paull and treats from the likes of Rosemary Andrews (Mietta) and Charlie Duffy (Small Batch), how could you not give it a go? For gardeners, art lovers and Melbourne-history buffs, *A Heide Harvest* by Alice Crowe and Maximilian is a lovely collection of seasonal recipes, again from leading Australian chefs with the ever-evolving backdrop of the Heide Kitchen Garden.

Pranzo by graphic designer and cook Guy Mirabella is a colourful feast of simple, seasonal Sicilian recipes with a distinctly Australian twist and it's also a stunning object that captivates the senses. Guy being my father, I was enlisted in the endless recipe-testing process and for those of you who are, like me, fiercely opposed to chicken in pasta, the roast chicken linguine will make you reconsider. Seriously.

Other fabulous offerings from local chefs and cooks that draw from their heritage include *What We Call Masala* by Sarina Kamini, *Lankan Filling* by O Tama Carey and *Thai Anywhere and Everywhere* by Nat Thaipun. Kamini's domestic ayurvedic approach to cooking is a heady exploration of Indian spice wisdom. *Lankan Filling* is Carey's second cookbook with Australian accents on classic Sri Lankan dishes, including her famous hot-butter jaffle and other standout dishes from her popular Sydney restaurant. *MasterChef* winner Nat Thaipun's debut cookbook *Thai: Anywhere and Everywhere* is an accessible collection of Thai recipes in a very cool-looking package. Another highly visual feast is *Secret Sauce* by Melbourne-based star chef Rosheen Kaul, and it's exactly what it says and what we all need: 'crazy delicious' condiments and the easy meals to bring them to life.

Australian cookbook queens Emiko Davies and Hetty Lui McKinnon both have offerings in 2025. Italy-based Japanese-Australian cook and food writer Davies' *The Japanese Pantry* is a follow-up and

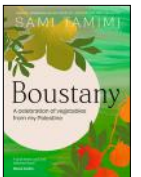
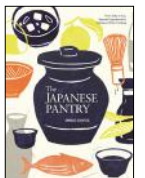
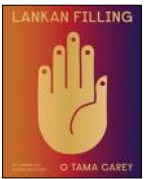
companion to last year's *Gohan*. It's a tribute to her mother and childhood food, and an indispensable guide to Japanese pantry essentials. *Linger* is Lui McKinnon's sixth cookbook, focusing on the shared eating experience and the art of lingering together – perfect for this celebratory time of year.

Another standout vegetarian release is *Boustany* by Sami Tamimi, co-author of *Ottolenghi*, *Falastin* and *Jerusalem*. Tamimi's first solo book is a deeply personal celebration of Palestinian recipes and heritage. Helen Goh is another with a debut solo cookbook. She's a fellow Ottolenghi recipe contributor (*Sweet and Comfort*), stalwart *Good Weekend*, *The Guardian* and *Observer* columnist, and a London-based Australian pastry chef – her book is the pick of the year for many of my colleagues. In *Baking & the Meaning of Life*, Goh shares 100 of her favourite sweet and savoury bakes, beautifully entwining personal stories throughout.

Finally, I could continue but must wrap this up with new books from two notable international authors embraced with enthusiasm by Australian home cooks: Alison Roman and Samin Nosrat. *Something from Nothing* is a collection of what Roman does best – using staple ingredients from a well-stocked pantry to create delicious recipes from 'basically nothing'. Following her *Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat* fame, Nosrat brings us *Good Things: Recipes and Rituals to Share with the People You Love*. And, really, this is what it's all about, isn't it?

Danielle Mirabella is the senior book buyer at Readings Hawthorn

Details of the 2025 cookbooks mentioned: *The Baker's Book* edited by Ruby Goss (Murdoch, PB, \$45); *A Heide Harvest* by Alice Crowe & Maximilian (T&H, HB, \$64.99); *Pranzo* by Guy Mirabella (Hardie Grant, HB, \$60); *What We Call Masala* by Sarina Kamini (Murdoch, HB, \$49.99); *Lankan Filling* by O Tama Carey (Hardie Grant, HB, Was \$55 **Now \$49.99**); *Thai: Anywhere and Everywhere* by Nat Thaipun (Hardie Grant, HB, \$50); *Secret Sauce* by Rosheen Kaul (Murdoch, HB, \$39.99); *The Japanese Pantry* by Emiko Davies (Smith Street, HB, Was \$55 **Now \$44.99**); *Linger* by Hetty Lui McKinnon (Plum, PB, Was \$44.99 **Now \$39.99**); *Boustany* by Sami Tamimi (Ebury, HB, \$59.99); *Baking & the Meaning of Life* by Helen Goh (Murdoch, HB, Was \$55 **Now \$49.99**); *Something from Nothing* by Alison Roman (Quadrille, HB, Was \$49.99 **Now \$39.99**); and *Good Things* by Samin Nosrat (Ebury, HB, Was \$65 **Now \$54.99**).



Art and design highlights with visual arts buyer Zoë Croggon

In the rich field of art and design publishing, 2025 offers a strong line-up that reflects not only technical and aesthetic excellence but also a deep cultural resonance. It demonstrates that in a culture saturated with fleeting digital content, the printed art book remains a vital medium. Cherry-picking a small handful of highlights is no easy task, but one of the most vibrant contributions this year is *The Art of Kaylene Whiskey: Do You Believe in Love?* edited by Natalie King and Iwantja Arts. This vivid and joyfully defiant book is the first major monograph on the Yankunytjatjara painter, whose work layers Anangu symbolism and traditional stories with pop symbolism (think Dolly Parton, lollipops, Wonder Woman and Coca-Cola bottles) in a playful declaration of cultural hybridity. This striking monograph foregrounds the importance of remote community art centres such as Iwantja Arts in shaping contemporary Indigenous expression. Another standout is *Textiles x Art* (Ramona Barry and Beck Jobson), an ambitious global survey of 44 artists who use thread, fabric and fibre to weave stories of resistance, memory and culture. This publication challenges archaic hierarchies in art discourse, elevating textile practice as fine art while honouring tactile storytelling. *After the Rain: 5th National Indigenous Art Triennial* (edited by Tony Albert and Sally Brand) is a landmark publication. Rather than offering a single narrative, the triennial's publication invites multiple perspectives, reflecting

the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences and practices across generations. This volume speaks to the resilience of Indigenous knowledge systems, postcolonial critique, and the healing power of cultural continuity. Penelope Jackson's *Unseen: Art and Crime in Australia* takes a sharp investigative turn. This provocative book explores the dark intersections between art, legality and ethics – from art thefts to forgeries and controversial censorship cases. Jackson's approach is probing yet nuanced, reminding readers that the art world is not immune to the power dynamics and transgressions that mark broader society.

A personal favourite from the author who brought us *The Story of Art Without Men*, Katy Hessel's *How to Live an Artful Life* bridges the personal and the philosophical to propose a more inclusive, enriching relationship with art in everyday life. Hessel's meditation on creativity extends beyond the gallery walls in a manifesto that celebrates curiosity, observation, and engagement as essential tools for living meaningfully.

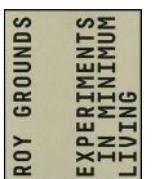
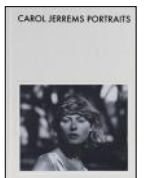
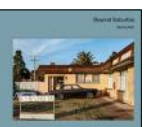
In photography, *Beyond Suburbia* by Warren Kirk continues his beloved exploration of working-class Melbourne suburbs. In a time of increasing urban homogenisation, *Beyond Suburbia* functions both as a cultural record and a gentle resistance. *Carol Jerrems: Portraits* revisits the seminal work of the late Australian photographer, which gains new relevance in an age of heightened visual

documentation and identity politics. From a veteran of American documentary photography, Sally Mann's *Art Work: On the Creative Life* is a sparkling reflection on the endurance and complexity of artistic pursuit.

In architecture, *Bush Modern* by Jessica Lillico and Sean Fennessy explores the intersection of Australian modernism and rural architecture. Surveying 23 homes on Melbourne's outskirts, *Bush Modern* pays homage to a hybrid architecture born of necessity, beauty, and climate, repositioning the bush not as a nostalgic frontier but as a living landscape of innovation. Through lush photography and thoughtful design, they capture how design sensibilities adapt to, and are enriched by, the Australian landscape. *Roy Grounds: Experiments in Minimum Living* by Tony Lee uncovers the architect's lesser-known small-scale works, revealing a deep commitment to functional elegance. Meanwhile, *The Architect's House* by Stephen Crafti offers insider access to the personal homes of contemporary Australian architects – spaces that act as testing grounds for design and self-expression. Finally, *Australian House: The Robin Boyd Award for Residential Architecture Since 1981* presents a comprehensive overview of the evolution of domestic architecture across four decades. It positions the home as both an architectural and cultural artefact, reflecting shifts in environmental thinking, aesthetics, and urban living.

Zoë Croggon is the visual arts buyer at Readings Carlton

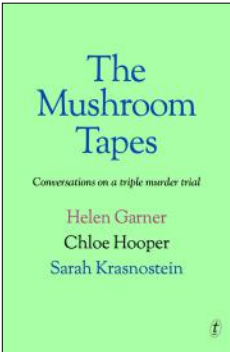
Details of the 2025 art and design books mentioned: *The Art of Kaylene Whiskey* by Natalie King & Iwantja Arts (eds) (T&H, HB, Was \$90 **Now \$74.99**); *Textiles x Art* by Ramona Barry & Beck Jobson (T&H, HB, Was \$69.99 **Now \$54.99**); *After the Rain* edited by Tony Albert & Sally Brand (National Gallery of Australia, HB, \$69.99, available 1 December); *Unseen* by Penelope Jackson (Monash University Publishing, PB, \$39.99, available 1 December); *How to Live an Artful Life* by Katy Hessel (Hutchinson Heinemann, HB, \$36.99); *Beyond Suburbia* by Warren Kirk (Scribe, HB, \$49.99); *Carol Jerrems: Portraits* by National Portrait Gallery (The National Portrait Gallery of Australia, HB, \$65); *Art Work* by Sally Mann (Particular Books, HB, \$55, available 20 January); *Bush Modern* by Jessica Lillico & Sean Fennessy (T&H, HB, \$85); *Roy Grounds: Experiments in Minimum Living* by Tony Lee (Kerritone, HB, \$65.99); *The Architect's House* by Stephen Crafti & Nicole England (photog.) (Quadrille, HB, \$65); and *Australian House: The Robin Boyd Award* by Royal Australian Institute of Architects (T&H, HB, \$120). **R**



Nonfiction

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Australian Studies



The Mushroom Tapes:
Conversations on a triple murder trial
Helen Garner,
Chloe Hooper &
Sarah Krasnostein
Text. PB. Was \$36.99
\$29.99
Available now

then the focus becomes the words of our guides, each unique, honest, and unmistakable in their personalities. They cover all the questions of ethics and purpose we might all wish were answered about this crime and all true crime writing. There is nothing gawkish or gratuitous about this book (or, as Garner fears at one point, they're not 'perving'). Its register is inquisitive, reflexive, curious, cautious, a cultural inquisition with psychological heft, always mindful of the lives affected and lost following the terrible event of that infamous beef wellington lunch, and interrogative of the collective interest in the gloom. I couldn't stop reading this book, told as it is in a series of transcripts of two- and three-way conversations, sometimes in the car or over the phone or over lunch during breaks in the court proceedings, which had been destined for a podcast of its own that didn't eventuate, but instead we – lucky readers, all – can gulp down, right to its final beautiful paragraph, after which I audibly sighed, 'wow'.

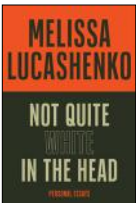
Alison Huber is the head book buyer

R Clear your diaries, because *The Mushroom Tapes* is categorically a must-read, diary-clearing kind of book: the hotly anticipated literary engagement with the infamous and internationally compelling Erin Patterson triple murder trial that we've all been waiting for, and undoubtedly the nonfiction book of the season. Written by three of the best writers in the business – Helen Garner, Chloe Hooper, Sarah Krasnostein – who joined forces and interests to follow the trial together, and create something they could not have done alone, this book is, as we who know these writers' works individually have hoped, greater than the sum of its parts, their collaboration supercharging their insights, concerns, expertise.

But enough of the hype, and first, a confession: I'm not a true crime kind of gal. I have listened to no podcasts (of any kind), and was only moderately interested in the 'mushroom trial' (as it has come to be known), as part of the background news feed that is part of one's daily life: I was not trawling the internet for clues of my own, hypothesising, or otherwise obsessed with this case, as interesting and unusual as it is. If you are one of these types, you'll know much of the factual material that the book conveys, but, like the authors, you might not have been quite sure what to do with all the pieces of this very public puzzle, and were looking for a way through the evidence that builds up and leads, inevitably, to Patterson's guilty verdict, seeking the answer to the pressing question, 'why?'. Here, Team Mushroom shows you a way. But for those of us without this depth of detail, there is enough here to get us up to speed (and to leave us suitably aghast), and learn about the distinct personalities both inside and outside the courtroom and the terrain of its Gippsland location, but

Australian Studies

Not Quite White in the Head:
Personal Essays
Melissa Lucashenko
UQP. HB. Was \$39.99
\$34.99
Available now



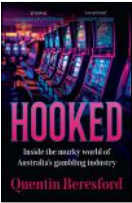
R Just recently, another book which will sit in our 'Australian Studies' section was published, and it came with the subheading 'How an ancient land became a great democracy.' When the author of that book was elected Prime Minister of said ancient land, in his first year he repealed the carbon price, abolished the renewable energy target, and approved expansion of a coal terminal next to the Great Barrier Reef. So, forgive me if I don't quite trust him on the 'great democracy' front either. However, in Melissa Lucashenko's words from her new book: 'It's time Reader, for a very deep breath: Aborigines invented democracy.'

This is the first time Lucashenko's nonfiction work – which contains essays like 'The First Australian Democracy' – has been brought together in one accessible

volume. We are treated to essays about her own writing, a love letter to her literary hero, speeches that have thankfully been preserved, and poignant interviews. While the works were produced across time and place, they can be read comprehensively together (always a worry with essay collections). There is something for everyone; you needn't have read her fiction, although learning about the motives behind her famous titles will make you want to. As Lucashenko says, 'you don't need to be Indigenous to engage with First Nations mobs ... you simply need to be a decent, mindful human who cares about your neighbours and the earth.' In the essay 'On Keri Hulme', Lucashenko says she first discovered her hero's work at age 22, 'a very good age to read a powerful and angry novel.' No matter your age, now is a very good time to read this powerful collection of essays, which contains, yes, anger – but also hope, honesty and bloody good journalism. Sometimes, nonfiction can be daunting, but Lucashenko's experience in fiction means she writes compelling stories regardless of the genre. She gives voice to numerous people, mostly Indigenous and mostly women, who can tell us the real story of 'Australia' and how its great democracy is playing out.

Grace Gooda is from Readings Chadstone

Hooked: Inside the Murky World of Australia's Gambling Industry
Quentin Beresford
NewSouth. PB. \$39.99
Available now



Australians lose around \$32 billion on legal forms of gambling each year, the most of any country in the world, while the industry earns \$244 billion through poker machines, lotteries, casinos and soaring sports betting. In *Hooked*, Quentin Beresford explores how gambling expanded into a mega industry. He asks, what's the balance between entertainment and social harm? What does the crisis reveal about the troubling intersection between business and politics? And, finally, how can the gambling industry be reined in?

First Nations Writing: Meanjin 1977 to Today
Jeanine Leane & Dan Bouchier (eds)
MUP. PB. \$34.99
Available now



First Nations Writing: Meanjin 1977 to Today captures Aboriginal and Torres Strait writers who have shaped the national conversation across peoples, place and time. It showcases a richness of First Nations writing and ideas that reflect on the past and imagines a future built on respect, fairness and truth. The collection includes work by poets, public intellectuals, writers, philosophers, social commentators and critics that show what it is to be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person in Australia, then and now.

EXCLUSIVE! Dispatches from The Paris End
Cameron Hurst, Sally Olds & Oscar Schwartz
Giramondo. PB. \$34.95
Available now



A few years ago, Cameron Hurst, Sally Olds, and Oscar Schwartz decided to start a newsletter. It would be called *The Paris End*, after the aspirationally cosmopolitan hilltop at the eastern end of Melbourne's city centre, and publish hyperlocal, irreverent, long-form literary journalism. This book brings together a selection of 18 lively essays from the newsletter's first years taking you into art fairs, court rooms, micro-dairies, corset-making studios, apartment developments, university pubs, biohacking spas, and more!

Circus Oz: From the Pram to the World Stage
Jesse Jensen-Kohl
Melbourne Books. PB. \$59.99
Available now



With its roots in both the New Wave theatre movement and the traditional circus form, Circus Oz, one of Australia's most iconic performing arts institutions, has played a foundational role in the development of contemporary circus in Australia and internationally. From the origins of Circus Oz in the 1970s, through to the company's

current success, *Circus Oz* details political, social, innovative, design, and aesthetic changes across the history of the company, and looks forward to what the future might bring for circus in Australia.

Quarterly Essay 100: The Good Fight – What Does Labor Stand For?
Sean Kelly
Black Inc. PB. \$29.99
Available 17 November



In the 100th issue of Australia's leading agenda-setting journal of politics, culture and debate, Sean Kelly considers the enigma of the Albanese government. With wide yet shallow support, will it change the country? Does it have big ideas, or is it content just to become 'the natural party of government'? Kelly gives a definitive account of Albanese's political style and shows what lies behind it, exploring whether Labor is still up for the good fight.

The Shortest History of Australia
Mark McKenna
Black Inc. HB. \$39.99
Available now



R E.H. Carr's highly influential 1961 lecture series-turned-monograph *What is History?* submitted a relativist's answer to its titular question: that history, in the form we commonly understand it, is an endless dialogue between historians and the facts of the past. This isn't to say that there's such a thing as a singular 'true' set of events behind any given version of history; instead, the process through which history is made is a complex game of telephone stretching back to the very first fireside stories. Black Inc.'s popular *Shortest History* series takes this millennia-long collect call and condenses it into snappy chunks without sacrificing the nuance of a lengthier tome. From India to Scandinavia, music to AI, the *Shortest Histories* have sparked curiosity on a diverse range of countries and topics. Now, after 13 years of publication, the series is homeward-bound with Mark McKenna's *The Shortest History of Australia*.

Divided by theme rather than recounted chronologically, McKenna's approach to writing the past, present and future of Australia is deeply considered and precisely crafted. Where a weaker version of this book would shunt Indigenous voices and histories into a single self-conscious chapter, McKenna demonstrates that the violence of colonialism and the endurance of the world's longest continuous cultures are foundational to our modern national narrative. Undoubtedly there are people, places and events McKenna compresses or skips entirely; the beauty of a *Shortest History* book, however, is its ability to encourage its readers to embark on their own research journey. With academic rigour and storytelling flair, McKenna's accessible volume braids infamous and little-known threads of the continent's vast historical landscape into an intricately detailed unfinished tapestry – and leaves just enough for us to tug on and unravel for ourselves.

Gene Pinter is from Readings Chadstone

The Australian Wars: The Truth About the Bloody Battles Fought to Establish a Nation

Rachel Perkins, Stephen Gapps, Mina Murray & Henry Reynolds (eds)
A&U. HB. Was \$59.99

\$ \$49.99

Available now



It is estimated up to 100,000 people died in the frontier wars that raged across Australia for more than 150 years. But there are few memorials marking these first, domestic wars. This is the first book to tell

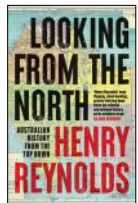
the story of the continental sweep of massacres, guerilla warfare, resistance and the contests of firearms and traditional Aboriginal weaponry as Indigenous nations resisted colonial occupation of their lands, territory by territory. At stake was the sovereignty of an entire country.

Looking from the North: Australian History from the Top Down

Henry Reynolds

NewSouth. PB. \$34.99

Available now



Henry Reynolds turns Australian history on its axis with an exploration of colonisation north of the Tropic of Capricorn. He tells the stories of the European, Chinese, Japanese and Pacific Islander people who were vital to the settlement of the north. Along with the experience of First Nations peoples, Reynolds shows how the colonisation of the north, officially beginning in 1861, was a very different venture to settlement in the south. He argues that it provides profoundly important lessons for the world we live in today.

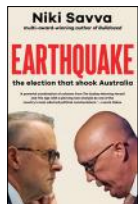
Earthquake: The Election That Shook Australia

Niki Savva

Scribe. PB. Was \$36.99

\$ \$29.99

Available 24 November



Labor's landslide 2025 victory wreaked havoc across the political landscape. It triggered ministerial assassinations, trashed reputations, destroyed careers, fractured the Coalition, and threatened to fracture it again. It took the Liberal Party to the brink of extinction and turned Anthony Albanese into a Labor hero. In her highly popular columns, Niki Savva captured all this and more and provides a detailed, considered analysis of what went on behind the scenes of an election that transformed Australian politics.

The Dark Prince of Melbourne: The Short, Flashy Life of Squizzy Taylor and the Birth of Organised Crime in Australia

Ian W. Shaw

ABC Books. PB. \$35.99

Available 25 November



Gangster Joseph 'Squizzy' Taylor, charming, ruthless and willing to consider any crime, graduated from teenage pickpocket to adult murderer, from organising raids on jewellers to corrupting

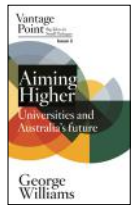
juries and suborning witnesses. He was nothing if not newsworthy. For more than a decade he evaded the law, the police unable to pin over a dozen major crimes to him. But his life ended violently in a Carlton boarding house. This biography explores the life and legacy of Australia's most infamous standover man.

Aiming Higher: Universities and Australia's Future (Vantage Point, Issue 3)

George Williams

Australia Institute. PB. \$19.99

Available now



Decades of policy decisions have made access to higher education harder and less accessible. Public trust in universities is at an all-time low and political sentiment has shifted due to sector missteps such as staff

underpayment, restrictions on free speech, and campus safety failures. Underfunded unis have been forced into corporatisation, drifting away from their public mission. Professor George Williams outlines necessary changes to tackle the issues within their control and replace self-interest with a genuine commitment to putting their students and communities first.

Biography

Book of Lives: A Memoir of Sorts

Margaret Atwood

C&W. HB. Was \$69.99

\$ \$52.99

Available now



R Margaret Atwood has lived a huge life, full of nature, travel, love, challenge, birds and writing. Much of her fiction and poetry has been semi-autobiographical, but it is a privilege to be given such an intimate and direct insight into her life in the form of this memoir. *Book of Lives* is exactly that: the telling of her life, beginning before her birth and taking us through its many chapters. I have wanted to know this kind of detail since I first 'discovered' Atwood and this memoir has met the brief. My curiosity has been rewarded with these 620 pages, opening a door to see into the life that shaped this exceptional writer.

Atwood began writing at a time when Canadian writers and publishing were under-acknowledged and under-supported and where opportunities were scarce. Thankfully, she and others saw this as an opportunity to fill the space. *Book of Lives* not only tells the story of Atwood's personal life, but also of her life as a writer at such a pivotal time.

At first resistant to writing a memoir, the suggestion lingered in the background for a long time. As time passed and Atwood grew older, she saw the opportunity to reflect on and examine the many images of herself that have been presented to the world. There is a freedom that comes from writing a memoir after 85 years of life. Atwood has had so many experiences in her lifetime, obviously not all good, but she is both honest and respectful in recounting these.

As a reader and a bookseller, it is a great joy to know that others will also be welcomed into her life. This was always going to be a somewhat biased review, given my admiration for the author, but I

genuinely feel that even casual readers of Atwood, or appreciators of a well-written, entertaining and witty memoir, will find this hard to put down.

Megan Wood is from Readings Emporium

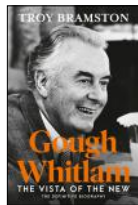
Gough Whitlam: The Vista of the New – The Definitive Biography

Troy Bramston

HarperCollins. HB. Was \$55

\$ \$44.99

Available now



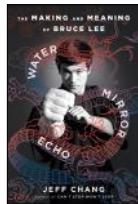
Gough Whitlam was a charismatic, inspirational and visionary leader who ushered in a reform revolution to modernise Australia, which endures to this day. Drawing on newly discovered archives and interviews with over one hundred people, Troy Bramston gives the most comprehensively researched account of Whitlam's life and career ever published providing an unvarnished analysis of his achievements and failures, how he governed, and the story of his dismissal on Remembrance Day, 1975. Fifty years later, it could not be timelier.

Water Mirror Echo: The Making and Meaning of Bruce Lee

Jeff Chang

HarperCollins. PB. \$37.99

Available now



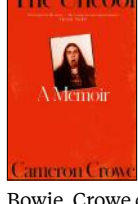
More than a half-century after his passing, Bruce Lee is still a towering global figure. He popularised martial arts in the West, was a bridge to people and cultures from the East and helped shape Asian-American identity. Drawing on interviews, personal documents, and featuring photos from the family's archive, *Water Mirror Echo* reveals the man behind the enduring iconography tracing his journey from segregated San Francisco and war-ravaged Hong Kong to Hollywood and beyond.

The Uncool: A Memoir

Cameron Crowe

Fourth Estate. PB. \$36.99

Available 25 November



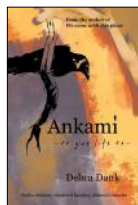
Cameron Crowe's memoir traces his unlikely rise from a rock'n'roll-banned household to becoming a *Rolling Stone* journalist at 15. Going on to interview and tour with icons like Led Zeppelin and David Bowie, Crowe charts the path that led him to writing and directing some of the most beloved films of the past 40 years, including the real-life events that became *Almost Famous*. It's a joyful dispatch from a lost world and a journey filled with music legends as you've never seen them before.

Ankami: Stolen Children, Shattered Families, Silenced Histories

Debra Dank

Echo. PB. \$32.99

Available now



From award-winning author Debra Dank comes an exploration into her family history and the discovery that four of her grandmother's 10 children were taken, shattering all she knew about her family

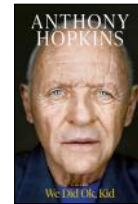
and her past. Written from the perspective of those left behind, *Ankami* is a searing, unforgettable and deeply human account of sorrow and incomprehensible loss, silence, yearning, the essential power of memory and the legacy of the Stolen Generations.

We Did OK, Kid: A Memoir

Anthony Hopkins

S&S. HB. \$55

Available now



Born and raised in Port Talbot, Wales, amid war and depression, Sir Anthony Hopkins grew up surrounded by men who were tough and avoided emotion. Struggling at school, he was thought a failure with no future, but a chance viewing of a film adaptation of *Hamlet* sparked a passion for acting which changed his life. With candour and vulnerability, Hopkins recounts his career milestones and reflects on his personal life. Having come so far from the anxious child he once was, he can't help but say to his young self, 'We did OK, kid.'

Joyride: A Memoir

Susan Orlean

Atlantic. PB. \$34.99

Available now



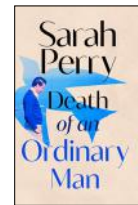
Susan Orlean is one of the greatest practitioners of narrative nonfiction of our time. *Joyride* is a magic carpet ride through Orlean's life and career, where every day is an opportunity for discovery and every moment holds the potential for wonder. Throughout her storied career, her curiosity draws her to explore the most ordinary and extraordinary of places. Infused with her signature warmth and wit, this is a must-read for anyone who hungers to start, build and sustain a creative life.

Death of an Ordinary Man

Sarah Perry

Jonathan Cape. PB. \$36.99

Available 2 December



Sarah Perry's father-in-law David died in the autumn of 2022, only nine days after a cancer diagnosis. Until then he'd been a healthy and happy man. He was in some ways a very ordinary man, but as he began to die, it became clear how extraordinary he was. *Death of an Ordinary Man* is an unforgettable account of this universal aspect of life. It is not a book about grief: it is a book about dying, and it is a book about family, and care and love.

Fiery Tales: The Correspondence of Gwen Harwood and Larry Sitsky

Ann-Marie Priest (ed.) &

Peter Goldsworthy (foreword)

Monash University Publishing. PB. \$39.95

Available 1 December

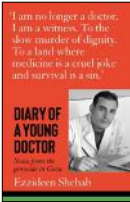


This lively correspondence between celebrated poet Gwen Harwood and renowned composer Larry Sitsky, covering their creation of a series of acclaimed and at times controversial operas, gives

an insight into a unique collaboration between two highly gifted Australian artists in the second half of the 20th century. It brings to life the formation of six groundbreaking operatic works while giving a fascinating glimpse into the very different lives of two important Australian cultural figures.

**Diary of a Young Doctor:
Notes from the Genocide in Gaza**
Ezzideen Shehab

Readers and Writers Against Genocide.
PB. \$24.95
Available now

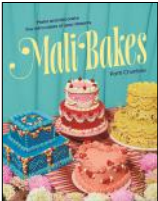


Five days before 7 October 2023, newly qualified doctor Ezzideen Shehab returns to Gaza from studies abroad. Days later, 42 of his extended family members are killed in an airstrike. For more than eight months, he volunteers at the Indonesian Hospital in appalling conditions and under constant IDF fire. Following the hospital's destruction, Dr Shehab co-founds Al-Rahma Medical Clinic, which is itself forced to close in mid-2025. Displaced five times, this is Dr Shehab's deeply moving and unforgettable testimony of survival, humanity and the devastation of a shameful period in recent history.

Cooking

Mali Bakes: Make and Decorate the Retro Cakes of Your Dreams
Patti Chimkire

Smith Street. HB. \$59.99
Available now



Embark on a journey through cake making, the Mali Bakes way. This beautiful book is your ultimate guide to baking and decorating the cakes of your dreams! Start your adventures with simpler cakes like the Thai tea chiffon cake, before progressing to layer cakes in uniquely delicious flavour combinations such as a Buttermilk vanilla cake with brown butter custard. Along the way, you will explore different cake-making methods and decorating finishes to learn how to make and pipe perfect buttercream decorations.

**Lucky Dragon Supper Club:
Asian-inspired Dinner Party Ideas for Home Cooks**
Stephanie Feher

Murdoch. HB. \$39.99
Available 2 December



Stephanie Feher created the social media account Lucky Dragon Supper Club during Covid to share her culinary adventures with loved ones online. Since then, the brand has evolved to inspire people to eat good food and celebrate both community and the fun of entertaining. These 88 recipes reflect Feher's creativity, her Chinese-Hungarian heritage and her love of cooking. From crowd-pleasing bites to share plates and mains, you can mix and match recipes to suit the occasion or use her themed menus to guide you.

Cultural Studies

No Is Not a Lonely Utterance: The Art and Activism of Complaining
Sara Ahmed

Allen Lane. HB. \$55
Available 2 December



Sara Ahmed dissects the anatomy of a complaint, revealing how institutions create hostile environments that stigmatise complainers, and charts a way we can listen to grievances with 'feminist ears'. Blending diverse testimonies Ahmed shows us what we learn about the ways institutions exercise their power when complaints are raised, and indeed what we learn about our capacity to collectivise and create social bonds through complaint. In doing so, she inspires us to create better environments for our life's work.

Attention: Writing on Life, Art and the World
Anne Enright

Jonathan Cape. PB. \$36.99
Available now



For 30 years, Anne Enright has been paying attention: casting her lucid and distinctive gaze across the world, literature and her own life, gifting us with her precise insights. *Attention* brings her wide-ranging cultural criticism, literary and autobiographical writing together for the first time. In Enright's fiction, speech can transform, rupture, enliven and liberate. In these essays, she speaks to us directly. Electrifying, probing and exuberant, this is a defining collection from one of our most distinguished literary voices.

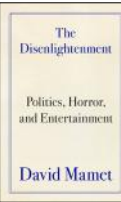
Every Day I Read
Hwang Bo-reum & Shanna Tan (trans.)
Bloomsbury. PB. \$24.99
Available now



Why do we read? In this gentle, philosophical collection of essays celebrating books, reading, language and life, Hwang Bo-reum doesn't just tell us, but shows us what living a life immersed in reading means. She provides many moments for introspection and reflection and encourages book lovers to explore what reading means to each of us. While this is a book about books, at its heart is an attitude to life – one outside capitalism and climbing the corporate ladder – interwoven with a treasure trove of book recommendations.

The Disenlightenment: Politics, Horror, and Entertainment
David Mamet

HarperCollins. PB. \$34.99
Available now



David Mamet's *The Disenlightenment* fearlessly tackles topics from war to love, success to death, offering a fresh perspective on the human condition. His observations, ranging from the carnival-like nature of politics to the power of language, reflect a society where traditional values

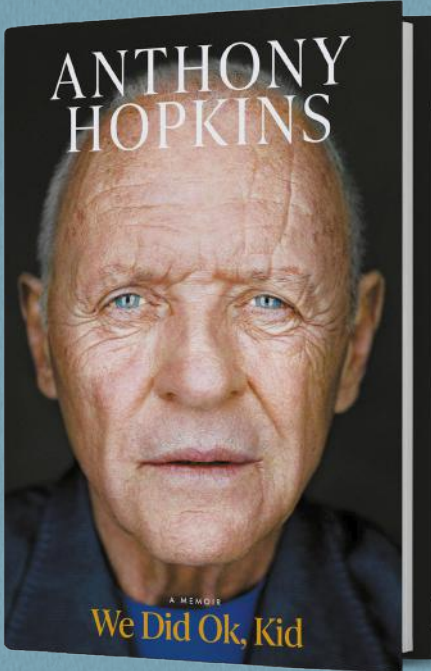
Ita on life, leadership,
and living with meaning



A compelling and enlightening book by
our most celebrated journalist, Ita Buttrose



Anthony Hopkins Tells His
Story for the **First Time**

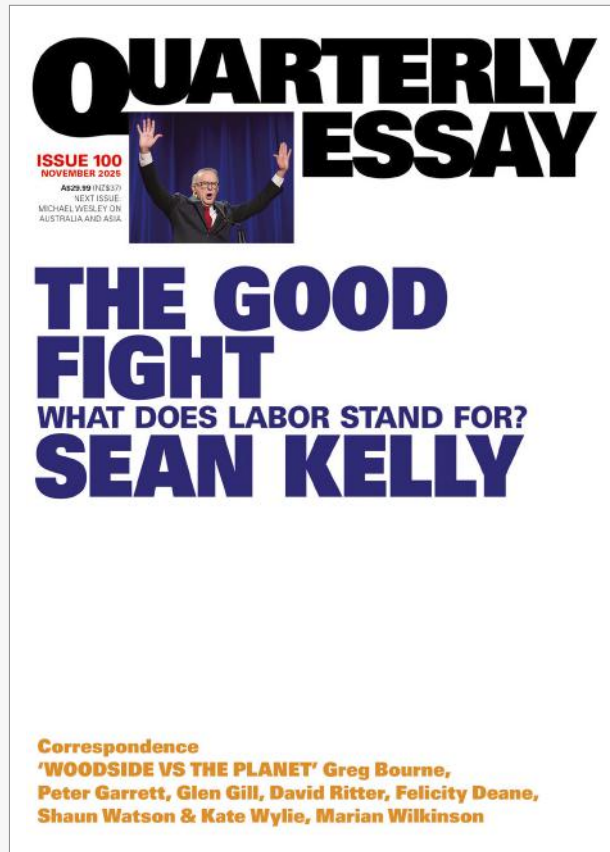


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QUARTERLY ESSAY AT 100

The 100th issue of Australia's leading agenda-setting journal of politics, culture and debate



In Quarterly Essay 100, Sean Kelly considers the enigma of the Albanese government. With wide yet shallow support, will it change the country? Does it have big ideas, or is it content just to become “the natural party of government”?

In this subtle and brilliant essay, Kelly explores whether Labor is still up for the good fight.

QUARTERLY ESSAY

Australia's leading journal of politics, culture and debate

are under siege. This book is an opportunity to engage with one of the most provocative and insightful writers of the modern era and promises to challenge your perceptions, stimulate your mind, and perhaps change how you view the world.

The Slicks: On Sylvia Plath and Taylor Swift

Maggie Nelson

Fern. PB. \$22.99

Available 18 November



The Slicks is a celebration of two of the most famous female writers of all time and an inspired essay on female ambition. Maggie Nelson positions culture-dominating pop superstar Taylor Swift

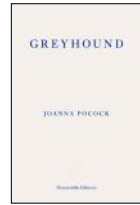
and feminist cult icon Sylvia Plath as twin hosts of the female urge toward wanting hard, working hard, and pouring forth – and as twinned targets of patriarchy's ancient urge to disparage, trivialise and demonise such prolific, intimate output. A heady, rallying and unexpected melding of popular culture and literary criticism.

Greyhound

Joanna Pocock

Fitzcarraldo. PB. \$32.99

Available 25 November



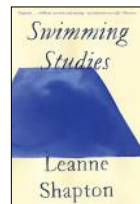
Joanna Pocock undertakes a bus journey across the US she originally took in 2006. She revisits the same cities, edgelands, highways and motels inspired by the women writers who chronicled their own road trips. Exploring memory and place, and the privatisation of public space, Pocock focuses on the built environment. Combining memoir, reportage, environmental writing and literary criticism, *Greyhound* is an immersive book that captures an America in the throes of late capitalism with all its beauty, horror and complexity.

Swimming Studies

Leanne Shapton

Daunt. PB. \$29.99

Available now



R I somehow missed this poignant, lyrical memoir, first published in 2012, but I am grateful to have discovered it now. This new edition is just as fresh as if it were written yesterday, and includes a wonderful foreword by Rita Bullwinkel.

Yes, it is a book about swimming, so those of us who have spent thousands of hours clocking up laps will be familiar with the language and practices of swim training ('Let's go on the top') but it is a book that has something for everyone. The first three words drew me in – 'Water is elemental' – but to call it a swimming memoir is to do an injustice to what is a series of reflections and vignettes on life that will speak to all readers about the entanglements of family relationships, the idea of specialness, the value or otherwise of stoicism, and the challenges of redefining yourself when you leave behind what you are good at.

Leanne Shapton recalls aspects of her early years as a competitive swimmer, how its routines and regimes defined her life, punctuated by rigour, deprivation,

obedience to rules and dedication to winning. In her adult life, she realises, with some shock, that for others, life is actually something to enjoy.

She observes the changes in herself as she moves from competitive swimmer to recreational swimmer. Yet she doesn't leave the precision and exactitude of swim training behind altogether: in one chapter, trying to capture the taste of a cake she ate in London, she painstakingly tries to re-create it. The end result is 'Close, but off', a result that reflects her view on her own swimming career, managing to make the Olympic trials for Canada but never quite getting close enough to make it to the Olympics themselves.

And then there is her taking up of art, where to excel, like swimming, requires repetition, practice, rigour. Her paintings of swimmers and pools are included, plus a section on her swimsuits, which are the mileposts of her life, like the vintage cotton blue and white suit, first worn in the pool where her husband proposed.

Her acute skills in observation translate magically to the page, whether describing the women in the 14-degree water of the ladies' pond at Hampstead Heath or the silent night swims in Switzerland.

Swimming Studies is also about bodies and the physical form. It is about colours and shapes – of bodies, pools, oceans, swimsuits and skies. She describes the Barbados sky as 'optical glucose': well, her wonderful book is my literary glucose. This is a sugar hit to indulge in.

Pauline Hopkins is the manager of Readings Hawthorn

Dead and Alive: Essays

Zadie Smith

Hamish Hamilton. PB. \$36.99

Available now



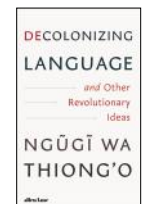
Zadie Smith brings her unique skills as an essayist to bear on a range of subjects which have captured her attention in recent years. She reflects on artists including Toyin Ojih Odutola, Kara Walker and Celia Paul, the film *Tár*, walking down Kilburn High Road, mourns literary giants, and explores changes of government on both sides of the Atlantic. Smith shows us once again her unrivalled ability to think through critically and humanely some of the most urgent preoccupations and tendencies of our troubled times.

Decolonizing Language and Other Revolutionary Ideas

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o

Allen Lane. HB. \$45

Available 18 November



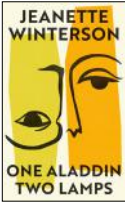
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o presents a series of essays that build on his extensive work on language and its role in national culture, history, and identity. Nuanced and accessible, it reaffirms the revolutionary power of African languages to fight back against both the psychic and material impacts of colonialism, past and present. With relevance to our present moment, this book is a distillation of the enduring themes of Ngũgĩ's work and a vital addition to the library of one of the world's greatest and most provocative writers.

One Aladdin Two Lamps

Jeanette Winterson

Jonathan Cape. HB. \$39.99

Available 18 November



R Jeanette Winterson’s latest book is an essay of sorts: a wonderful dissertation about empathy and the call of imagination. She argues that love is not the great link in our lives, but rather the ability to imagine is our greatest strength. To illustrate her point, Winterson introduces us to Shahrazad, the storyteller in *One Thousand and One Nights*. And the essay turns. This is a story of a woman fighting for her life, but it is more than a feminist fable. This is the story of how we read, why we read and what we can take from reading, but again, it is more than a book about storytelling. This is the story of happenstance and hope. It is a story about where to find the truth.

Winterson searches in other people’s stories. Here, she has taken the well-known tales from *One Thousand and One Nights* and turned them into modern reflections. For example, the story of Aladdin becomes a question of illusion – or is it a story of greed and ego? Who, or what, is to be trusted? Is this snake oil or is it medicine? What is counterfeit? What is authentic? I don’t know of better questions for our own time.

I love everything Jeanette Winterson writes. I love the way she pulls stories apart, looks at them from different angles, from various reference points (the Bible, Shakespeare, Rowling, Collins and so many more), reflects on her own life (her own mother, the local library, the schoolyard), and then puts it all together again to ask us: who are you when you read? Her logic is this: when we see ourselves in fiction, we can change our own story. And if we can change our own story, imagine what we can do for others.

This book is the year’s most compelling and important read.

Chris Gordon is the community engagement and programming manager.

History

Empires of Violence: Massacre in a Revolutionary Age

Philip Dwyer, Barbara Alice Mann, Nigel Penn & Lyndall Ryan

Bloomsbury Academic. PB. \$34.99

Available 2 December



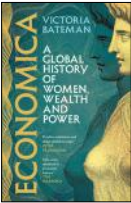
Violence was a constant on all colonial frontiers, from the British expansion into the Australian and African continents, to the expansion of the United States and the Napoleonic Empire’s many incursions into Europe. Yet how did the forms of violence perpetrated in these four corners of the world compare? In *Empires of Violence*, four experts specialising in different regions come together to interrogate the violence committed against Indigenous peoples between 1780 and 1820. It shows how race, othering and fear were maintained and buoyed by violence, despite prevailing discourses on humanitarianism, civilisation and progress.

Economica: A Global History of Women, Wealth and Power

Victoria Bateman

Headline. PB. \$34.99

Available 25 November



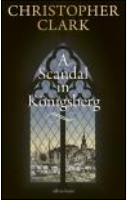
Humanity’s journey from poverty to prosperity is filled with men who have become household names. But how many female entrepreneurs, merchants and industrialists can you name? Offering a more inclusive account of global economic development *Economica* places women at the centre of economic growth. Starting in the Stone Age and continuing to the present day, it takes the reader through the key economic milestones of the past 12 millennia all told through the experiences of women as well as men.

A Scandal in Königsberg

Christopher Clark

Allen Lane. HB. \$49.99

Available 25 November



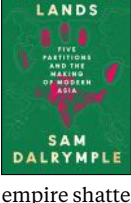
Once a quiet Prussian town Königsberg was famous for being the residence of Immanuel Kant. But in the late 1830s accusations were bandied about implying dark erotic currents and betrayals of trust – a sort of moral collapse. Christopher Clark explores this unsettling period in the aftermath of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, set in the seemingly tranquil Biedermeier era, where spiritual hunger, vanity, professional rivalry, sexual incontinence, naivety and human waywardness threatened to tear a city apart.

Shattered Lands: Five Partitions and the Making of Modern Asia

Sam Dalrymple

HarperCollins. PB. \$39.99

Available 25 November



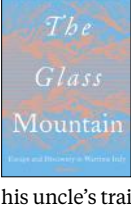
In 1928, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal, Bhutan, Yemen, Oman, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait were bound under a single imperial banner, the Indian Empire. Then in the space of 50 years the empire shattered. Five partitions tore it apart carving out new nations, redrawing maps, leaving behind a legacy of war, exile and division. Using archival research, private memoirs and interviews *Shattered Lands* tells the story of how the Indian Empire was unmade. Thought-provoking history at its best.

The Glass Mountain: Escape and Discovery in Wartime Italy

Malcolm Gaskill

Allen Lane. HB. \$55

Available 2 December



Malcolm Gaskill knew little about his great-uncle Ralph’s wartime activities other than he’d been a prisoner in Italy and cut his way out of a train with cutlery. When a chance conversation set Gaskill on his uncle’s trail he discovers much more than the family myth: fighting in the desert, dramatic escapes, a new life and identity in Alpine Italy. Not just about war *The Glass Mountain* is also a moving exploration of what it means to encounter the past, and how we remember, forget and recover it.

Atlantic Furies: The Women Who Risked Everything to be the First to Fly

Midge Gillies

Scribe. PB. \$37.99

Available now



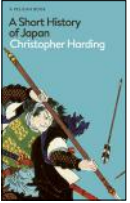
In the early 20th century, the dream of crossing the Atlantic by air was as potent as putting a man on the moon would be 50 years later. But many people believed women too fragile and lacked the skills to endure the gruelling conditions of flying long distances. In *Atlantic Furies*, Midge Gillies uncovers the stories of Elsie Mackay, Lady Anne Savile, Frances Grayson, Ruth Elder, Amelia Earhart, and Mabel Boll. These courageous, rule-breaking women risked everything to prove that women could fly the Atlantic.

A Short History of Japan

Christopher Harding

Penguin. HB. \$45

Available 2 December



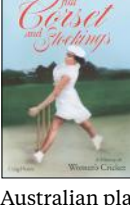
In this introduction to a remarkable country, Christopher Harding traces Japan’s rich history over several millennia. Beginning with its earliest coastal communities through to the spread of Buddhism, the rise of the warlords, the promise and menace of the West, and Japan’s own empire-building, Harding explores how a distinctly Japanese society and culture was forged. Drawing on the latest scholarship, *A Short History of Japan* moves beyond traditional clichés to consider Japan’s own view of its past, values and culture.

Full Corset and Stockings: A History of Women’s Cricket

Craig Horne

Melbourne Books. PB. \$39.99

Available now



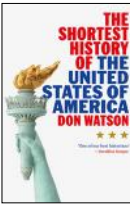
Full Corset and Stockings details the history of women’s cricket in England and the game’s evolution as it moved to Australia, sharing the unknown stories of professional English and Australian players such as Emily Whatman (mother and childhood trainer of men’s cricket legend Don Bradman) and the author’s own mother Nesta Williams. From the 1800s through to the Great Depression and the re-emergence of women’s cricket in the 21st century, Horne shines a light on the influential women of a historic Australian sport.

The Shortest History of the United States of America

Don Watson

Black Inc. HB. \$39.99

Available 18 November



When Britain’s 13 American colonies declared their independence on 4 July 1776, the United States of America was born. But it was hardly united. In this book, Don Watson traces how the central conflicts of the United States – those over freedom, race, frontiers, enterprise, religion and violence – play out through its history: a

country at war with itself in the 1860s, the leader of the free world less than a hundred years later, and a nation beset by wild division and turmoil in the 21st century.

The Breath of the Gods: The History and Future of the Wind

Simon Winchester

Fourth Estate. PB. \$37.99

Available now



Extreme weather events – hurricanes, tornadoes, fires – are increasing, driven by winds which are expected to strengthen in power, speed and frequency in the coming years.

Sounding an alarm for governments, citizens and scientists, the winds are a boon for the energy industry providing ‘safe’, clean power. Between these two poles lies a world of history, literature, science, poetry, and engineering which Simon Winchester explores with curiosity and vigour. An urgently needed portrait across time of an unseen force.

Interior Design

Bush Modern: Hand-crafted Homes on the Edge of the City

Jessica Lillico & Sean Fennessy

T&H. HB. \$85

Available now



In the north-east of Melbourne a unique architectural aesthetic emerged in the post-war years. Built ‘of the land’ using mud bricks and recycled timber, it reimagined the ideals of modernism and captured the mood of those searching for an alternative way of life close to nature. Popularised in the ‘60s and ‘70s the style subsequently lost its appeal but is now being revived. Through photography, personal stories and architectural insights, *Bush Modern* explores the timeless appeal of these character-filled homes: tactile, grounded and deeply in tune with their environment.

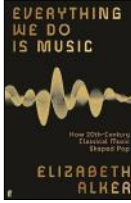
Music

Everything We Do is Music: How 20th-Century Classical Music Shaped Pop

Elizabeth Alker

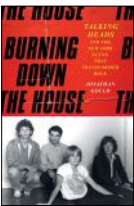
Faber Music. PB. \$34.99

Available 2 December



The worlds of pop and rock owe a much greater debt to the classical canon than we realise. *Everything We Do is Music* highlights the innovators of classical music and their fans and collaborators in pop who challenged the notion that such musical worlds were mutually exclusive. Alker shines a light on the rich tapestry that exists between their borders through exclusive interviews with Sir Paul McCartney, Steve Reich, La Monte Young, Nils Frahm, The Blessed Madonna, Soweto Kinch, Jean-Michel Jarre and more.

Burning Down the House: Talking Heads and the New York Scene That Transformed Rock
Jonathan Gould
HarperCollins. PB. \$37.99
Available 25 November



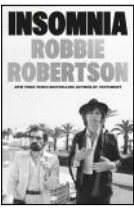
On the 50th anniversary of Talking Heads, music biographer Jonathan Gould offers a deeply researched account of a band whose sound, fame, and legacy forever connected rock music to the cultural avant-garde. From their art school origins to the enigmatic charisma of David Byrne and the internal tensions that ultimately broke them apart, Gould tells the story of a group that emerged when rock music was still young and went on to redefine the prevailing expectations of how a band could sound, look, and act.

The Colonel and the King: Tom Parker, Elvis Presley and the Partnership that Rocked the World
Peter Guralnick
White Rabbit. PB. \$36.99
Available 9 December



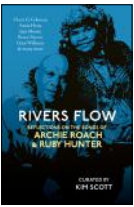
Peter Guralnick concludes his Elvis trilogy with a focus on the star's complicated relationship with his manager Colonel Tom Parker. Their relationship was founded on mutual admiration and support. The Colonel defended Elvis against RCA executives, Elvis' own booking agents and movie moguls. But in their final years together, the story grew darker. This groundbreaking portrait presents these two misunderstood icons as they've never been seen before: with all their brilliance, humour and flaws on full display.

Insomnia
Robbie Robertson
Hutchinson Heinemann. PB. \$36.99
Available 25 November



Robbie Robertson has produced music for Martin Scorsese's films for four decades, a relationship which began when Robertson asked him to direct *The Last Waltz*. At that time both men were facing personal upheaval and Robertson subsequently moved into Scorsese's home. Their friendship deepened into a career-altering partnership defined by equal parts admiration and ambition. *Insomnia* is a portrait of a creative bond between two titans of American arts: as friends, adventure-seekers, and boundary-pushing collaborators.

Rivers Flow: Reflections on the Songs of Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter
Kim Scott & Casey Mulder (eds)
Fremantle. PB. \$34.99
Available now



Rivers Flow honours the profound musical and cultural legacy of Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter. Curated and introduced by two-time Miles Franklin winner, and Noongar man, Kim Scott, this special volume brings together 23 First Nations writers from across Australia to share

stories, personal reflections, and poems that resonate with the legacy of these beloved artists. Among the contributors are Gina Williams, Claire G. Coleman, Jeanine Leane, Anita Heiss, Bruce Pascoe and many other remarkable writers.

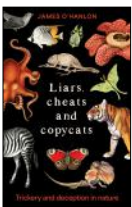
Bread of Angels
Patti Smith
Bloomsbury. PB. Was \$34.99
\$29.99
Available now



The most intimate of Patti Smith's memoirs, *Bread of Angels* takes us through a post-Second World War childhood in a condemned housing complex described in Dickensian detail, teenage years where the first glimmers of her art and romance take hold, and leaving it all behind to marry her one true love, Fred 'Sonic' Smith. As Smith suffers profound losses, grief and gratitude are braided through years of caring for her children, rebuilding her life and, finally, writing again. This is a radiant new memoir from the author of the National Book Award-winning *Just Kids*.

Natural History

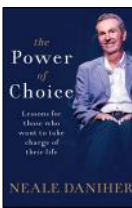
Liars, Cheats and Copycats: Trickery and Deception in Nature
James O'Hanlon
NewSouth. PB. \$34.99
Available now



Meet some of the world's most dastardly creatures, who lie, cheat and deceive for a living. To understand how these creatures swindle their way to the top, *Liars, Cheats and Copycats* reveals the science behind camouflage, mimicry and masquerade. Taking readers on a journey from tropical rainforests to the darkness of deep ocean trenches, James O'Hanlon explores how animals and plants use deception to avoid predators, lure in prey and even reproduce.

Personal Development

The Power of Choice: Lessons for Those Who Want to Take Charge of Their Life
Neale Daniher
Pan Mac. HB. \$39.99
Available now



Neale Daniher has lived with Motor Neurone Disease (MND) for 13 years. Though his body is broken his mind is sharp and his capacity to give, unvanquished. With a terminal diagnosis Daniher chose to fight, not just for himself, but for future generations and his tireless work with FightMND has mobilised millions. Daniher shares the life lessons he wishes to pass on to his grandkids: courage, gratitude and responsibility. It is an urgent reminder to use our agency to give, to love and make every minute count.

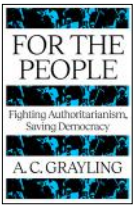
The Healing Power of Korean Letter Writing
Juhee Mun & Clare Richards (trans.)
Canongate. HB. \$34.99
Available 18 November



Geulwoll is a Korean word for 'letter'. It is also the name of an unassuming letter shop, located in a shabby building in the heart of Seoul. People visit from all over to write and send letters to loved ones – and to strangers. Everyone likes letters, there's an anticipation in unsealing the mysteries held within. Juhee Mun reveals the lost art of the handwritten letter: how it can ground and centre us, improve and repair our relationships with others and foster a culture of contemplation, reflection and togetherness.

Philosophy

For the People: Fighting Authoritarianism, Saving Democracy
A.C. Grayling
Oneworld. PB. \$34.99
Available now



While democracy once seemed the bedrock of Western societies, the past few decades have revealed a fragile reality. Once liberal countries are turning authoritarian, corporations and wealthy individuals are interfering with elections ever more flagrantly, and faith in democracy has plummeted. From gerrymandering and partisanship to corporate interference and tainted donations, A.C. Grayling reveals the forces undermining our democratic ideals and offers bold solutions.

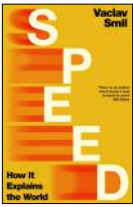
The Book of Memory: Or, How to Live Forever
Mark Rowlands
Granta. HB. \$29.99
Available now



Memory isn't all that we think it is. Each time we revisit even our most deeply ingrained memories, they can soften and consolidate, distorted. Yet they also carry within them the blueprint of each person's unique style. From episodic memories like shining islands in dark water, and forgotten memories that underpin our personalities, to the memories authored by others that we carry within us, Mark Rowlands explores our negotiations with the past and how memory makes us who we are.

Science

Speed: How It Explains the World
Vaclav Smil
Viking Nonfiction. PB. \$36.99
Available 2 December

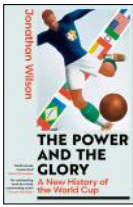


Explore how speed influences every aspect of life on Earth, from the slow grind of geological processes and the fleeting lifespans of organisms to the astonishing speed of light and the remarkable

adaptations of creatures like the swift antelope and the soaring albatross. In this ambitious book, internationally bestselling author Vaclav Smil uncovers the intricate connections between speed, nature, and human innovation.

Sport

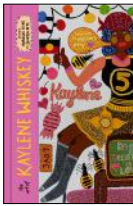
The Power and the Glory: A New History of the World Cup
Jonathan Wilson
Abacus. PB. \$34.99
Available 23 December



The football World Cup is the most watched sporting event on the planet, yet there has never been a comprehensive history which that has considered not only the matches and goals, the players and coaches, the tales of scandal and genius, the haggling and skulduggery of the bidding process, but has also placed the tournaments within a socio-political framework – until now. The story of the World Cup is also the story of the world; this book tells its definitive history.

Visual Arts

The Art of Kaylene Whiskey: Do You Believe in Love?
Natalie King & Iwantja Arts (eds)
T&H. HB. Was \$90
\$74.99
Available now



Kaylene Whiskey's paintings dazzle with brightly coloured pop stars rendered in dots and set amongst her own community in remote Central Australia, all connected to the Kungkarangkalpa Tjukurpa, or Seven Sisters Story, and partying at Iwantja Art Centre. Her comic-book style and text bubbles are hilarious yet potent symbols of female power in an Aboriginal setting. A joyful visual anthem, this is the first monograph on the artist.

The summer *Readings Monthly* cover features splendid internal artwork from *The Art of Kaylene Whiskey*. See page 3 for details.

Unseen: Art and Crime in Australia
Penelope Jackson
Monash University Publishing. PB. \$39.99
Available 1 December

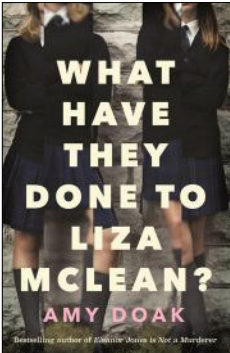


The Australian art world is often host to crime, including theft, fraud and forgeries. *Unseen* offers an insight into art crime in Australia from colonisation to today, focusing on stories that have often escaped mainstream attention. From scandals involving William Dobell, fraud in Aboriginal art, to climate protests, the book also examines works hidden from public sight now deemed embarrassments or burdens. Ultimately, it explores how our conception of artistic value changes over time, and what that reveals about Australian society. **R**

Young Adult

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Young Adult



What Have They Done to Liza McLean?
Amy Doak
Penguin. PB. \$19.99
Available now

R The latest novel by the author of the *Eleanor Jones* murder-mystery series is set in an elite boarding school that oozes tradition and old money. When scholarship kids Meg and Liza arrive at prestigious Douglas College, it's quite a culture shock. Although Meg's a straight-A student, her younger sister is a wild child and Meg finds herself retrieving her sister from the principal's office far too often. There she meets Benedict Hargreaves the Fourth (aka Benny), who comes from a long lineage of Douglas alumni and is the only student allowed to reside off campus. Opposites immediately attract, despite both harbouring secrets.

When Meg's wayward sister suddenly becomes studious and robotic after a wild night out, Meg is suspicious. She enlists the help of Benny, who's highly adept at hacking the school computer system. When the two of them find the school gardener dead, they must untangle the threads between these mysteries.

Written in dual voices with alternating chapters by Meg and Benny, and with fascinating secondary characters, including Mack, Benny's bestie who stylishly dresses all his friends, and Kitty De Vries, the bad-tempered heiress who leads Liza astray, this is a highly entertaining murder mystery that combines the elite boarding school trope with a slow-burn romance. Those who love crime mysteries and romance aged 12+ will devour this highly addictive story and be left wanting more. Meg and Benny are a delightful crime-busting duo and I hope this won't be the last we'll hear from them.

Angela Crocombe is a senior children's book buyer and The Readings Prize and The Readings Foundation coordinator

Hazelthorn
C.G. Drews
Hodder. PB. \$19.99
Available now



Evander can never leave the Hazelthorn estate, go into the gardens or be alone with Laurie, the boy who tried to kill him seven years ago. But when his reclusive guardian is murdered and Evander inherits Hazelthorn, Laurie may be the only one who can help him find the killer. As dark secrets unravel, Evander must discover what he's really inherited before Hazelthorn's garden demands to be fed.

The Hive
Anna February
Chicken House. PB. \$22.99
Available now



R The Hive is all that's left of humanity in a future where oceans have swallowed the land and the heat of the sun has become deadly. But life carries on in the Hive's subterranean network, ruled over by the two Queens at its apex. Feldspar is a Shield in the Hive, a bodyguard raised from birth to protect Euphemie, one of the Queen's daughters, with her life. So when an assassin kills Euphemie, it should mean the end of Feldspar's life too – Shields and their charges share a magical bond that sentences the guard to instant death if they fail in their duty. But somehow Euphemie is dead, Feldspar is still alive, and there is an assassin at large in the Hive.

Feldspar is desperate to prove her innocence, avoid execution and track down whoever killed her friend; and, fortunately, there's one person who's as eager for the truth as she is – a royal outcast, with a reputation for his skill with the dark arts.

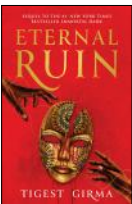
This is a premise that's hard to summarise, so while I'm not able to share all the intricacies of the world or the characters here, I will say that *The Hive* is a unique story filled with well-rounded characters and nuanced relationships. That's something that can be hard to achieve in any novel, but within a story that combines a sci-fi dystopia with a mystery/thriller, it's particularly impressive to be able to find space for it all and still end up with a story that feels this fast-paced.

As Feldspar digs deeper into the rivalries, secrets and inner workings of the Hive that she's grown up protecting, she starts to see the cruelties that have been justified by the need to survive. I was really impressed by how Anna February handles this, showing both the motivation and paralysis that her characters feel in the face of a corrupt system that they're determined to fight, don't know if they can really change, but are ashamed for not challenging sooner. It's empathetic and ultimately encouraging for any would-be activists who are intimidated by how much there is to change in our world.

Readers who loved *Gideon the Ninth* should definitely pick up this book, as should anyone looking for an imaginative sci-fi thriller! Recommended for readers aged 13+.

Bella Mackey is the digital content lead

Eternal Ruin
(The Immortal Dark, Book 2)
Tigest Girma
Lothian. PB. \$24.99
Available now



Kidan Adane has finally embraced her darkness. Trapped with the violently unstable vampire Susenyos and reeling from her sister's return, Kidan wields her anger like a weapon. The lines of loathing and attraction begin to blur

between Kidan and Susenyos, but the quest for power rules them both. As secrets resurface, Kidan and her sister must confront each other and take their rightful places in the looming war.

Coldwire (2058, Book 1)
Chloe Gong
Hodderscape. PB. \$24.99
Available now



Medaluo and Atahua are in a cold war. The Medan orphans living in Atahua must attend Nile Military Academy. When recent graduate Eirale is framed by a wanted anarchist, she's forced to work with him to avoid arrest. Meanwhile, Lia is close to graduating when she's sent on a high-stakes mission with her academic nemesis. Eirale and Lia begin to suspect they are pieces in a larger conspiracy.

We Fell Apart
E. Lockhart
A&U. PB. \$24.99
Available 4 November



R *We Fell Apart* is the new novel from much-loved Young Adult novelist E. Lockhart, who is best known for her bestseller *We Were Liars*, which was recently adapted for TV.

We Fell Apart is a tense and compelling novel set in the same world as *We Were Liars* but it can be read as standalone tale without missing anything. It's the story of 18-year-old Matilda, who is at a crossroads in her life as her mother has left her to follow another love interest (of one week). Matilda has also been dumped by her boyfriend and has lost all her friendship group because of it. When an email comes through from a man claiming to be her father, she is curious and intrigued to follow it. He is a famous but reclusive painter and suggests she comes to visit him, which she does as she is keen to know him and discover the parts of herself she feels are missing.

She crosses the country to find quite a different scenario from the one she expected. Her father isn't there to welcome her – he's apparently in Italy and hasn't left a return date. His house is a neglected castle and there are three boys rattling around, all of whom have stories of their own to discover. They are all about to find out that sometimes family isn't just about blood relations.

I would recommend this novel for readers aged 14+ who love classic Young Adult novels. It is a tense thriller with loads of secrets and, of course, a simmering love interest.

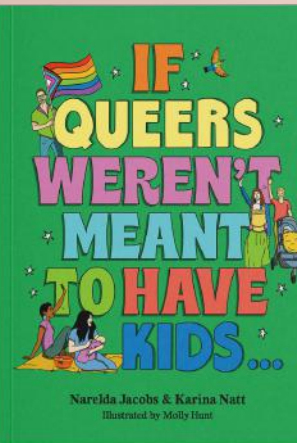
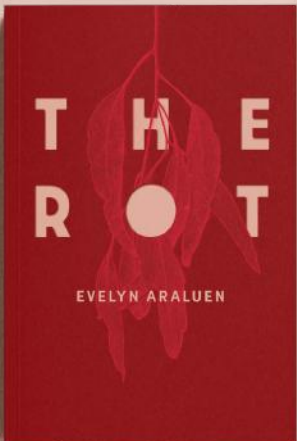
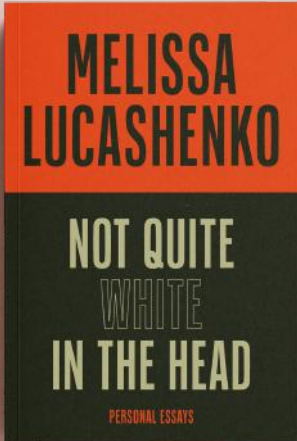
Melanie Barton is from Readings Carlton

Never Ever After
(Never Ever After, Book 1)
Sue Lynn Tan
Hodderscape. PB. \$24.99
Available now



Since her uncle died, Yining has survived as a skilled thief and liar. When she acquires an enchanted ring, her step-aunt steals it and Yining heads to the kingdom to seize it back. There, Yining catches the eye of the prince, but nothing is as it seems, and soon she's on a perilous quest. **R**

OUT NOW



UQP

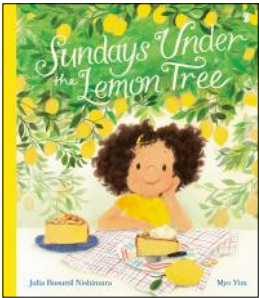
2025 Australian
Small Publisher
of the Year

Kids

PICTURE BOOK OF THE MONTH

Picture Book

Sundays Under the Lemon Tree
Julia Busuttil Nishimura & Myo Yim (illus.)
Scribble. HB. \$24.99
Available now



R What a heartwarming picture book! With bright and fun illustrations that capture the joy of life’s simple pleasures, *Sundays Under the Lemon Tree* brings us a story about family and food. Every Sunday, a family comes together, eating scrumptious home-cooked delights under the large lemon tree in their backyard. One Sunday, a young child gets to help collect seawater to make fresh ricotta and take part in making her grandma’s apple cake. Peering through the door of the oven to watch over the cake as it bakes, the smells of cinnamon, sugar and golden-brown apples waft out of the pages, bringing to life the simple pleasure of a freshly baked cake.

Reading this story brought back my own memories of taking part in *la raccolta delle olive* (the olive harvest) and learning some of my own family recipes. Excitingly, flicking to the very back of the book you will find Julia Busuttil Nishimura’s own recipe for the lemon, apple and ricotta cake made throughout the book – the cherry on top of such a sweet story. For ages 4+.

Lili Reus-Smit is from Readings Kids

KIDS BOOK OF THE MONTH

Junior Grade

Ivy and Bearlock Holmes: The Case of the Missing Flower
Kristyna Litten
T&H. HB. \$21.99
Available now



R In the Richard Scarry-esque town of Bearona, Ivy and her grandpa, a retired detective, find themselves with a mystery to solve when a rare Agave Bearona flower goes missing from the botanic gardens just as it is set to bloom for the first time in 100 years. Their investigation sends them across the map of Bearona to lots of interesting locations. They encounter a botanist, a brass band, an archaeologist, and a bear who is a beekeeper, which makes sense if you think about it!

... this book will delight younger sleuths, and most importantly, keep them guessing till the end!

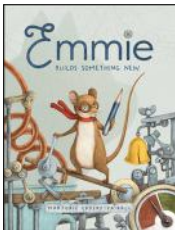
There are 15 different puzzles throughout, including mazes, codes, search-and-finds, and matching tasks so readers can help solve the mystery. Simple information about flowers, pollination and honey-making is also woven into the story.

Mystery puzzle books are very popular at the moment, and while the grown-ups get stuck into *Strange Pictures* and *Murdle*, the lovely full-colour illustrations, funny details and fascinating facts in this book will delight younger sleuths, and most importantly, keep them guessing till the end! Lots of fun for ages 5+.

Kim Gruschow is a senior children’s book buyer

Picture Books

Emmie Builds Something New
Marjorie Crosby-Fairall
Affirm Kids. HB. \$24.99
Available now



R *Emmie Builds Something New* is a wondrous new picture book by veteran illustrator and now debut author Marjorie Crosby-Fairall. With detailed illustrations full of infectious character, this gorgeous story follows Emmie the mouse in her quest to create an invention marvellous enough to solve her newest problem: there is a cat prowling around her house! From a lion made with an accordion to an egg-beater elephant or a teapot dragon, watch Emmie craft wacky constructions as she tries to frighten away the cat.

It’s only once she succeeds, and the poor kitten is cowering in the corner, that Emmie realises she might need to turn her talents to a new kind of invention –

one that will help her make a friend. Quirky, kind and colourful, *Emmie Builds Something New* is a perfect tale for kids aged 3+, especially budding builders and creators!

Harvey Weir is from Readings Doncaster

Board Books

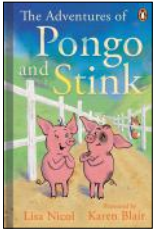
Banana, Banana, Banana!
Sarah Finan
Post Wave. BB. \$19.99
Available now



There’s only one thing this little baby wants to eat as a snack – bananas, bananas, bananas! Mashed in a bowl, mixed with porridge, smothered in honey – always yummy. With sweet rhyming text, bold, bright artwork and clever die-cuts throughout, this board book is a joy to read aloud to little ones and can be enjoyed again and again.

Junior Grade

The Adventures of Pongo and Stink
Lisa Nicol & Karen Blair (illus.)
Penguin. HB. \$19.99
Available now



Pongo and Stink are FED UP with living in a pigsty. They want to live a life of luxury, just like their tormentor, Rollo the dog. When Pongo has the audacious idea of dressing up as pups, the two piggies set out to chase their dreams. But will the wily fox scupper their plans? Or will Pongo and Stink realise that they are perfect, just as they are?

Middle Grade

Bunns Rabbit
Alan Barillaro
Walker. HB. \$24.99
Available now



R *Bunns Rabbit* is an enchanting middle grade novel with the most stunning, soft-focused illustrations throughout from award-winning director, writer and animator Alan Barillaro. It’s a heartwarming parable that tells the story of Bunns Rabbit, who is born with smaller ears than the rest of his brothers and sisters and the

other meadow rabbits in his community. This, it is thought, will bring great pain and trouble to the meadow.

Bunns undertakes a quest to change himself so that he will fit in, but this doesn’t go according to plan and shows Bunns and the others what is truly important – authenticity, friendship and family. At the heart of this story is a message about accepting yourself, with all your differences, and that what makes you different may actually be the quality that makes you unique and special.

In the style of *Watership Down* and *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse*, this tale of little Bunns will appeal to fans – young and old alike – of those classics and of *Runt*. It’s particularly tailored for 9–12-year-olds, but reading it together would be a beautiful experience. I can’t recommend this book, with its gorgeous message about difference and strength, more highly.

Melanie Barton is from Readings Carlton

The Last Ember (The Aerimander Chronicles, Book 1)
Lily Berlin Dodd
Hardie Grant. PB. \$19.99
Available now



R Aerimanders are extinct. The dragon-like creatures have been gone so long their existence is almost more myth than memory. That is, until Eva Alexander, a 12-year-old student at the exclusive Young Ladies’ Royal Academy for Science and Mathematics, accidentally walks out of a jewellery shop with a mysterious silver egg.

Suddenly, Eva’s privileged life is turned upside down when everyone from secret government agents to organised crime syndicates discover her secret. The hijinks escalate when Eva and her egg are kidnapped by Dusty, an orphaned milk-boy by day, newly initiated member of the underground Union of Thieves by night. All the while, clever Eva is herself scheming to take advantage of her precarious predicament.

But what does everyone want with this egg? Is the baby aerimander within an endangered creature worthy of protection, or a weapon of war waiting to be unleashed on unsuspecting citizens? Murky motivations, class divides and government conspiracies abound in this chaotic cat-and-mouse adventure across the kingdom!

Dark, funny, intricate, and exciting, this fast-paced action fantasy debut will thrill upper-middle grade readers who love their stakes high and their humour sharp. Recommended for readers aged 10+.

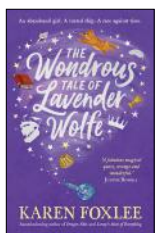
Katey Bellew is from Readings Kids

Lost Evangeline (A Norendy Tale)
Kate DiCamillo & Sophie Blackall (illus.)
Walker. HB. \$24.99
Available now



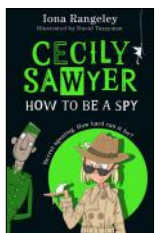
When a shoemaker discovers a tiny girl (as small as a mouse!) in his shop, he names her Evangeline and raises her as his own. The shoemaker's wife believes Evangeline has bewitched her husband, so when an opportunity arises to rid herself of the girl, she takes it. Evangeline finds herself lost in the wide world. But she is brave, and she is resourceful, and she may just find her way again.

The Wondrous Tale of Lavender Wolfe
Karen Foxlee
A&U. HB. \$24.99
Available 18 November



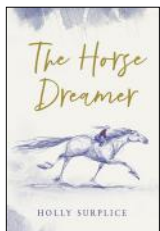
Lavender Wolfe has a magical secret. She is alone on a wharf when she's snatched and taken aboard a pirate ship, The Good Marchioness. The crew are on a desperate voyage – to find and return stolen treasure before all those who sail within the cursed pirate ship are turned to sand. Lavender included. Can Lavender and her magic help break the curse? Or will she be lost to the sands of time?

Cecily Sawyer: How to Be a Spy
Iona Rangeley & David Tazzyman (illus.)
HarperCollins. PB. \$16.99
Available now



Cecily Sawyer has spent the evening in the attic, training her unusually intelligent pet mouse, Mrs Maple Syrup, when her parents disappear. Luckily, Cecily has wanted to be a spy her whole life and is more than ready to investigate. But soon, Cecily discovers she's not the only spy out there – far from it, in fact. And Mrs Maple Syrup is not the only unusually intelligent mouse ...

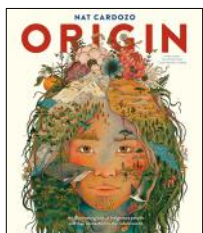
The Horse Dreamer
Holly Surplice
Chicken House. HB. \$29.99
Available now



The horse arrives in the storm, when Merryn needs him most, following the loss of her father. Sorrel is a dreamlike creature, seemingly made from the woods and the sea. Perhaps she wished him into existence. He becomes her friend and confidant. Throughout the summer and autumn, they ride and play, but as Christmas approaches, it will require all of Merryn's new-found strength to help her mum and her sisters heal too.

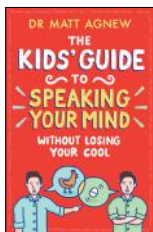
Kids' Nonfiction

Origin: An Illuminating Look at Indigenous Peoples and Their Connection to the Natural World
Nat Cardozo with María José Ferrada, Ian Farnes & Layla Benitez-James (trans)
Red Comet. HB. \$41.99
Available now



We are all one. We all inhabit the same planet, and we all have a common human origin. This is the core theme of this book. Each double-page spread presents a contemporary and fascinating look at more than 20 Indigenous peoples from across the globe. In these societies, a sense of community life prevails, based on reciprocity, solidarity, mutual aid, avoiding excess, and honouring what nature provides.

The Kids' Guide to Speaking Your Mind Without Losing Your Cool
Dr Matt Agnew
A&U. PB. \$24.99
Available 3 February



How do we end up with different ideas and opinions? How can we talk about these ideas and opinions to each other even when we disagree? Dr Matt explains how to avoid confirmation bias and 'us' vs 'them' thinking, and how to stay calm and show respect to others in the heat of an argument. Included are some thought experiments to help kids speak their mind without losing their cool.

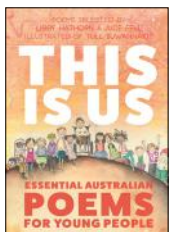
The Great Outdoor Adventure Journal
Jemma Ortiger
Brolly. PB. \$29.99
Available now



This is no ordinary activity journal ... it's a passport to adventure! Inside, you'll find a mix of activities and adventures for when you only have five minutes to spare or all day to explore. From growing seeds to making nature art, cracking codes to treasure hunts, there's something that will spark curiosity and creativity for every adventurer. Get ready to discover the wonders of Australian flora and fauna and let your imagination soar.

Poetry

This Is Us: Essential Australian Poems for Young People
Libby Hathorn, Jude Fell (eds) & Tull Suwannakit (illus.)
NLA. HB. \$34.99
Available now



In this beautifully illustrated collection of poems filled with the voices of all kinds of Australians, from modern poets such as Miriam Wei Wei Lo and Jazz Money to household names such as Banjo Paterson and Henry Lawson. Carefully crafted into 10 chapters, readers will find poems that make them laugh and sing, and connect them with Australians old and new. This is a poetry book to savour and to share.

Kids Classic of the Month

Trixie Belden: The Secret of the Mansion
Julie Campbell
RHUS. PB. \$16.99
Available now



R Trixie Belden is the OG – she's smart, overflowing with personality, and always poking her nose into trouble. When her older brothers go away to camp, Trixie is sure that she's in for a long and dreary summer. But a new best friend and the mystery of a dying man's fortune promise to perk things right up. *Trixie Belden: The Secret of the Mansion* is the first in the re-release of the series by Julie Campbell.

Unchanged since their first printing, this classic series is right on time for the younger fans of the cosy-crime wave. There's something wholesome about Trixie – the sprawling farm where she lives, her unencumbered friendship with her two brothers, Brian and Mark, and the occasional intrusion from her overly curious younger brother, Bobby. But in addition to these nostalgic values, there's a feistiness to Trixie that captured me as a young reader and I know will still capture young readers today. Trixie Belden is a troublesome tomboy with a huge heart, and these clever mysteries will have readers begging for more. For ages 8+.

Bec Kavanagh is from Readings Kids **R**

Jack LOWDEN
Martin FREEMAN

The Fifth Step

National Theatre Live

SCREENING FROM
NOVEMBER 29
AT CINEMA NOVA

N O V A

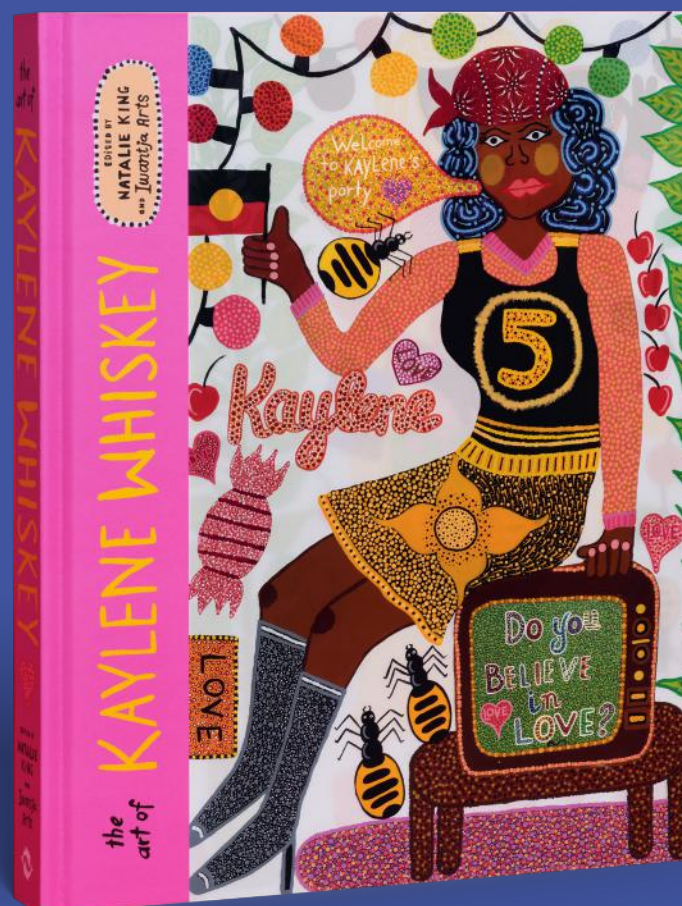
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Share the joy of Kaylene Whiskey
in her first major monograph
edited by Natalie King and Iwantja Arts



OUT NOW



‘Kaylene Whiskey is an artistic Swiss Army knife in the world of multimedia.’ - Taika Waititi



First 50 customers to receive Third Drawer Down Kaylene Whiskey tea towel with every purchase of *The Art of Kaylene Whiskey*.
One per customer, in-store only.