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“Quite Mad, Montgomery’s mental illness memoir, is nothing short of mesmerizing—an ode to her years of struggling with anxiety, OCD, and PTSD, all of which she eventually accepted as a core part of her being. . . . Nevertheless, the book contains quiet triumphs and self-discovery, shining with unyielding grace and humor. Montgomery’s writing is eloquent, making no attempt to mask her pain. She cites medical studies but also keeps things personal; the result is a stellar work of literary journalism.” —Foreword Reviews

Diagnosed with severe anxiety, PTSD, and OCD in her early twenties, Sarah Fawn Montgomery spent the next ten years seeking treatment and the language with which to describe the indescribable consequences of her mental illness. Faced with disbelief, intolerable side effects, and unexpected changes in her mental health as a result of treatment, Montgomery turned to American history and her own personal history—including her turbulent childhood and the violence she faced as a young woman—to make sense of the experience.

Blending memoir with literary journalism, Montgomery’s Quite Mad: An American Pharma Memoir examines America’s history of mental illness treatment—lobotomies to sterilization, the rest cure to Prozac—to challenge contemporary narratives about mental health. Questioning what it means to be a woman with highly stigmatized disorders, Montgomery also asks why mental illness continues to escalate in the United States despite so many “cures.” Investigating the construction of mental illness as a “female” malady, Montgomery exposes the ways current attitudes towards women and their bodies influence madness as well as the ways madness has transformed into a chronic illness in our cultural imagination. Montgomery’s Quite Mad is one woman’s story, but it offers a beacon of hope and truth for the millions of individuals living with mental illness and issues a warning about the danger of diagnosis and the complex definition of sanity.
From award-winning author Barrie Jean Borich comes Apocalypse, Darling, a narrative, lyrical exploration of the clash between old and new. Set in the steel mill regions of Chicago and in Northwest Indiana, the story centers on Borich's return to a decimated landscape for a misbegotten wedding in which her spouse's father marries his high school sweetheart. The book is a lilting journey into an ill-fated moment, where families attempt to find communion in tense gathering spaces and across their most formative disappointments. Borich tells the story of the industrial heartland that produced the steel that made American cities—while also being one of the most toxic environmental sites in the world.

As concise as a poem and as sweeping as an epic novel, Apocalypse, Darling explores the intersection of American traditional and self-invented social identities and the destruction and regreening of industrial cityscapes. Borich asks: Can toxic landscapes actually be remediated, and can patriarchal fathers ever really be forgiven? In a political climate where Borich is forced to daily reenter the toxic wastelands she thought she'd long left behind, Apocalypse, Darling is an urgent collision of broken spaces, dysfunctional affections, and the reach toward familial and environmental repair.
“I often found this book beguiling, and moving. There is always the temptation, in writing about sex, to sound superior, arch, immune to its power. But Shields writes from a place of genuine curiosity and confusion. He is ridiculous and brave, he never conflates sincerity with genuine candor, and he poses the kinds of questions that only ever bring trouble (and are the only kind worth reading about).” — Parul Sehgal, The New York Times

“By book’s end, we realize that Shields himself is a collage, coming to us in bits and pieces, slipping in and out of the words of others, offering up questions but few answers, forcing us to read between the lines. Many men operate this way, elusive, mute, masked. But Shields wants to be unmasked, to be real even if that means appearing weak or ugly. . . Shields’s brave honesty stands alone.” — Sibbie O’Sullivan, The Washington Post

David Shields’s The Trouble with Men: Reflections on Sex, Love, Marriage, Porn, and Power is an immersion into the perils, limits, and possibilities of human intimacy. All at once a love letter to his wife, a nervy reckoning with his own fallibility, a meditation on the impact of porn on American culture, and an attempt to understand marriage (one marriage, the idea of marriage, all marriages), The Trouble with Men is exquisitely balanced between the personal and the anthropological, nakedness and restraint. While unashamedly intellectual, it’s also irresistibly readable and extremely moving. Over five increasingly intimate chapters, Shields probes the contours of his own psyche and marriage, marshalling a chorus of other voices that leaven, deepen, and universalize his experience; his goal is nothing less than a deconstruction of eros and conventional masculinity. Masterfully woven throughout is an unmistakable and surprisingly tender cri de coeur to his wife. The risk and vulnerability on display are in the service of radical candor, acerbic wit, real emotion, and profound insight—exactly what we’ve come to expect from Shields, who, in an open invitation to the reader, leaves everything on the page.
“Paul Crenshaw writes some of the finest prose you’ll find anywhere and does so without a trace of literary gimmickry or personal showboating. If Chekhov wrote essays, this is what they would sound like.”
—Robert Atwan

“Uncommonly affecting, This One Will Hurt You is a debut collection of straightforward beauty.”
—Booklist

“It’s a stunning, beautiful meditation on life in rural America. . .Each entry in this book delivers on the promise of its title. This one will hurt, the next one will support, and yet another will challenge. No matter which drink you choose from this case, you’ll be surprised by its staying power.” —PopMatters

The powerful essays in Paul Crenshaw’s This One Will Hurt You range in subject matter from the fierce tornadoes that crop up in Tornado Alley every spring and summer to a supposedly haunted one-hundred-year-old tuberculosis sanatorium that he lived on the grounds of as a child. They ruminate on the effects of crystal meth on small southern towns, Maurice Sendak’s Where the Wild Things Are, and the ongoing struggle of being a parent in an increasingly disturbing world. They surprise, whether discovering a loved one’s secret, an opossum’s motivation, or the unexpected decision four beer-guzzling, college-aged men must make. They tell stories of family and the past, the histories of small things such as walls and weather, and the faith it takes to hold together in the face of death.

With eloquence, subtle humor, and an urgent poignancy, Crenshaw delivers a powerful and moving collection of nonfiction essays, tied together by place and the violence of the world in which we live.
On Our Way Home from the Revolution

Reflections on Ukraine
Sonya Bilocerkowycz

2019
$19.95 paperback

Winner of the Gournay Prize

“A fierce, lyrical book that achieves a rare balance between the burden and beauty of heritage. A powerfully American book even as it travels to post–Cold War Ukraine. The best use of memoir is not a how-I-got-to-be-me story, but a book like this—the courageous effort to pierce the secrets of a vexed political and cultural history.” —Patricia Hampl

“Part mythology, part personal essay, and part historical fact-finding mission that circles her family’s patriotic devotion to Ukraine, Sonya Bilocerkowycz asks what it means to love a country that struggles to confront its complicated history and wonders what to make of the incomplete narrative she inherited as a child. Tender, probing, and deeply honest.” —Angela Pelster

In 2014 Sonya Bilocerkowycz is a tourist at a deadly revolution. At first she is enamored with the Ukrainians’ idealism, which reminds her of her own patriotic family. But when the romantic revolution melts into a war with Russia, she becomes disillusioned, prompting a return home to the US and the diaspora community that raised her. As the daughter of a man who studies Ukrainian dissidents for a living, the granddaughter of war refugees, and the great-granddaughter of a gulag victim, Bilocerkowycz has inherited a legacy of political oppression. But what does it mean when she discovers a missing page from her family’s survival story—one that raises questions about her own guilt?

In these linked essays, Bilocerkowycz invites readers to meet a swirling cast of post-Soviet characters, including a Russian intelligence officer who finds Osama bin Laden a few weeks after 9/11; a Ukrainian poet whose nose gets broken by Russian separatists; and a long-lost relative who drives a bus into the heart of Chernobyl. On Our Way Home from the Revolution muddles our easy distinctions between innocence and complicity, agency and fate.
“Echo’s Fugue transforms the personal essay into a listening essay, a fugue-flight, a ‘covert correspondence,’ and an interactive diagram of the heart. Marked by the signature attunement that is the hallmark of her art, Desirae Matherly’s wide-ranging experiments with form and vantage achieve a self-betraying clarity that is unsurpassed.”
—Mary Cappello

“Echo’s Fugue is heartbreaking, precise, and wild. Matherly’s book is the work of a master.”
—Julija Šukys

Through a series of variations on the theme of love—unrequited, polyamorous, monogomous, scandalous, adulterous—Desirae Matherly’s Echo’s Fugue explores love in all its failures and delusions. Patterned on the unfinished The Art of Fugue by Johann Sebastian Bach which has been a mystery for centuries, Echo’s Fugue undertakes Bach’s project in prose—the tantalizing numerical correspondences throughout, the repetition of a single theme, the unfinished final piece.

Matherly’s essays appear as letters, indexes, narrative, or sentence diagrams, each defying the rules of the blank page. Song lyrics, obsession, Greek mythology, psychology, game theory, and human sexuality form a fragmented narrative about loss and unhealthy attachments. Mimicry of Bach’s fugues leads the author to questions about love, sex, desire, the “Bach or Stravinsky” paradigm in game theory, and relationships considered taboo by mainstream standards.

What authority speaks clearest with regard to love, sex, and desire—and is objectivity even possible? The final essay attempts to resolve this question while echoing the puzzle of Bach’s final unfinished fugue.
"The gravitational pull of the child toward the mother is so powerful that it persists even in the face of cruelty or neglect. What is finally most affecting about this book is not Frances's story but her son's pained efforts to confront it." —Ruth Franklin, The New York Review of Books

In 1984, Phillip Lopate sat down with his mother, Frances, to listen to her life story. A strong, resilient, indomitable woman who lived through the major events of the twentieth century, she was orphaned in childhood, ran away and married young, and then reinvented herself as a mother, war factory worker, candy store owner, community organizer, clerk, actress, and singer. But paired with exciting anecdotes are the criticisms of the husband who couldn’t satisfy her, the details of numerous affairs and sexual encounters, and, though she succeeded at many of her roles, accounts of how she always felt mistreated, taken advantage of. After the interviews, at a loss for what to do with the tapes, Lopate put them away. But thirty years later, after his mother had passed away, Lopate found himself drawn back to the recordings of this conversation. Thus begins a three-way conversation between a mother, his younger self, and the person he is today.

Trying to break open the family myths, rationalizations, and self-deceptions, A Mother’s Tale is about family members who love each other but who can’t seem to overcome their mutual mistrust. Though Phillip is sympathizing to a point, he cannot join his mother in her operatic displays of self-pity and how she blames his father for everything that went wrong. His detached, ironic character has been formed partly in response to her melodramatic one. The climax is an argument in which he tries to persuade her—using logic, of all things—that he really does love her, but is only partially successful, of course.

A Mother’s Tale is about something primal and universal: the relationship between a mother and her child, the parent disappointed with the payback, the child, now fully grown, judgmental. The humor is in the details.
**SUSTAINABILITY**

*A Love Story*
Nicole Walker

“With her sobering and at times darkly humorous writing, Walker brings a refreshingly original perspective to sustainability. She is at once pessimistic and optimistic, somewhat fearful and cautiously hopeful. . . . Her book is a challenge to others to think about the unique role they can play in sustaining the planet.” — *Foreword Reviews*

Personal essays examining what it means to live and love sustainably while still being able to have Internet and eat bacon.

2018  
$23.95 paperback

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**FEAR ICONS**

*Essays*
Kisha Lewellyn Schlegel

“*Fear Icons*, embraces an assemblage of forms to dissect the topics that obsess her: those directly informed by love and fear.” — *Los Angeles Review of Books*

Reflections on the myriad forms that fear takes and an examination of the ways that love and fear intensify each other.

2018  
$19.95 paperback

Winner of the Inagural Gournay Prize
HUMMINGBIRDS BETWEEN THE PAGES
Chris Arthur

“Among the very best essayists in the English language today.”
—Robert Atwan, founder and series editor of The Best American Essays

An acclaimed writer’s ruminations on the layer beneath life’s quotidian moments, from Darwin to Buddha and back.

2018
$23.95 paperback

CURIouser AND CURIouser
Essays
Nicholas Delbanco

“Delbanco has a fine intellect and a sharp pen, and he wields both with precision.” —Harvard Review

Essays on literary life, music, and the visual arts that, taken together, stand as installments “towards an autobiography” of a preeminent author and critic.

2017
$19.95 paperback

THE REAL LIFE OF THE PARTHENON
Patricia Vigderman

“The work is a sequence of beautifully interwoven meditations. Like any wide-awake traveler, Ms. Vigderman asks questions. . . . Owing to bravura writing, this book is as rewarding for an armchair traveler as for a first-time or seasoned one.”
—The Wall Street Journal

Gathers present meaning for antiquity’s remains, illuminating a crucial element of contemporary cultural life: the dynamic between loss and delight.

2018
$21.95 paperback
YOU, ME, AND THE VIOLENCE

Catherine Taylor

“While art might not have the power to end violence or manufacture the empathy of first-person witness to traumatic events You, Me, and the Violence shows that it does have the capacity to push us beyond the forms we have been given, drawing us closer together and activating the agency to articulate truths that without art we cannot know.” —Los Angeles Review of Books

In You, Me, and the Violence, Catherine Taylor pairs puppetry and drone warfare to create a collage of meditations on family, politics, violence, autonomy, and, ultimately, hope.

2017
$19.95 paperback

LOVE’S LONG LINE

Sophronia Scott

“In her first collection of essays, the American novelist Sophronia Scott writes about her life as a mother, a daughter, and a person of faith. . . . Scott’s calm confidence in her craft and her generosity with her subjects give consistent pleasure.” —Times Literary Supplement

A rumination on faith, motherhood, race, and human connection after the shooting at her son’s school, Sandy Hook Elementary.

2018
$19.95 paperback

DON’T COME BACK

Lina María Ferreira Cabeza-Vanegas

“Don’t Come Back is Ferreira’s unflinching look at the space between languages—life, she shows her readers, is always in translation.” —The Paris Review

An exploration of home and identity through personal essays about growing up in Colombia amidst its conflicting myths and histories.

2017
$22.95 paperback
Out of Step
A Memoir
Anthony Moll

“Filled with raw emotion, wry humor, and unselfconscious reflection, the story conveys Moll’s unwavering sense of self in a refreshing, inspiring way. Out of Step is a personal story whose impact is far reaching and life affirming.” —Foreword Reviews

A queer coming-of-age-story set against the backdrop of the U.S. military during the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” era.

2018
$18.95 paperback

Brief Interviews with the Romantic Past
Kathryn Nuernberger

“Nuernberger has an insatiable curiosity for curiosities, coupled with sublime honesty and a prose style laced with wit, wonder, and grace. The brief essay at its best.” —Dinty W. Moore, author of Between Panic and Desire

Reflections on the myriad forms that fear takes and an examination of the ways that love and fear intensify each other.

2017
$19.95 paperback

Winner of The Journal Non/Fiction Prize

Through a Long Absence
Words from My Father’s Wars
Joy Passanante

“It’s absorbing and affecting in every detail. Through a Long Absence is one from the heart. It’ll take a piece out of you.” —Peter Travers, Rolling Stone

This book tells the story of one man coming of age as a young surgeon performing operations in tents under fire, struggling in St. Louis as a child bootlegger and the son of Sicilian immigrants, and taking up a passionate love affair with his Jewish wife.

2017
$23.95 paperback

Foreword Indies Winner
**Diary of a Reluctant Dreamer**
*Undocumented Vignettes from a Pre-American Life*

Alberto Ledesma

“Diary of a Reluctant Dreamer is an eye-opening glimpse into a mostly hidden way of life.” — *Foreword Reviews*

“This is a powerful document of the unspoken anxieties felt by Americans like [Ledesma] who worry that their immigration status and history will overshadow everything else in their lives.” — *Publishers Weekly*

From undocumented to “hyper documented,” one man’s illustrated memoir about personal and national identity.

2017
$17.95 paperback

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**Tales from La Vida**
*A Latinx Comics Anthology*

Edited by Frederick Luis Aldama

“The auspicious result features a manifold cast from the most established to as-yet-unproven discoveries, each working in varied styles, methods, lengths. . . . As testimony and magnification of the multitudinous Latinx experience, *La Vida* bursts forth con fuerte.” — *Booklist*

One-of-a-kind collection of Latinx comics that sheds light on Latinx experiences, exploring language, culture, history, and more.

2018
$17.95 paperback
**Angelitos**  
*A Graphic Novel*  
Ilan Stavans and Santiago Cohen

“Angelitos vividly captures the mix of good and bad within all people and societies.” —*Foreword Reviews*

A graphic novel about the volatile nature of existence on the fringes of society in Mexico City.

2018  
$17.95 paperback

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**Drawing on Anger**  
*Portraits of U.S. Hypocrisy*  
Eric J. García

“García’s work is visually incisive, provocative, and arresting.” —*The Santa Fe New Mexican*

Over a decade’s worth of satirical illustrations of Uncle Sam’s hypocritical foreign and domestic policies through a Chicano lens.

2018  
$18.95 paperback

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**Thunderbolt**  
*An American Tale, Vol. 1*  
Wilfred Santiago

“A firecracker exploration about our national origins.” —Ilan Stavans, author of the best-selling *Don Quixote of La Mancha: The Graphic Novel*

Graphic novel depiction of the true story of militant abolitionist John Brown and his rise to infamy in pre-Civil War America.

$17.95 paperback

Coming Fall 2019
“Svoboda transports readers to a fantastical American West in this collection of stories that surprise, disturb, and amuse in equal measure.”
—Publishers Weekly

“A remarkably evocative exploration of an iconic region and its denizens.”—Booklist

“[Svoboda’s] enigmatic sentences, elliptical narratives, and percussive plots delve into the possibilities of form, genre, and plausible futures, but always with an eye on the vast subterranean psychologies of her all-too-real creations.”
—Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

Water, its use and abuse, trickles through Great American Desert, a story collection by Terese Svoboda that spans the misadventures of the prehistoric Clovis people to the wanderings of a forlorn couple around a pink pyramid in a sci-fi prairie. In “Dutch Joe,” the eponymous hero sees the future from the bottom of a well in the Sandhills, while a woman tries to drag her sister back from insanity in “Dirty Thirties.” In “Bomb Jockey,” a local Romeo disposes of leaky bombs at South Dakota’s army depot, while a family quarrels in “Ogallala Aquifer” as a thousand trucks dump chemical waste from a munitions depot next to their land. Bugs and drugs are devoured in “Alfalfa,” a disc jockey talks her way out of a knifing in “Sally Rides,” and an updated Pied Piper begs parents to reconsider in “The Mountain.” The consequences of the land’s mistreatment is epitomized in the final story by a discovery inside a pink pyramid.

In her arresting and inimitable style, Svoboda’s delicate handling of the complex dynamics of family and self seeps into every sentence of these first-rate short stories about what we do to the world around us—and what it can do to us.
Quakertown
A Novel
Lee Martin

“A consistently impressive and often dazzling new novel. Lee Martin has written one of the best books of the year.” —The Washington Post

“His gently melancholy style strikes a fine balance between literary fiction and accessible, emotion-driven storytelling.” —Publishers Weekly

The story of a flourishing black community segregated from its white brethren, and the remarkable gardener who was asked to do the unimaginable.

2017
$23.95 paperback

When
Stories
Katherine Zlabek

“Katherine Zlabek is a writer with an honest style. Her prose is so clear that you can see the ache and hope shimmering at the bottom of these stories. This is a sad, lovely, and utterly convincing collection.” —Chris Bachelder

Stories illuminating harsh Midwest realities vibrate with yearning and beauty in this debut collection.

2019
$22.95 paperback

The Journal Non/Fiction Prize

Coming Fall 2019
“Susannah Nevison’s searing second collection, *Lethal Theater*, is not about how we die but how we kill, protected by procedure, faith in duty, cruel appetite, and the State. Nevison steadfastly rejects dulled indifference; instead, her poems—lyric, found, urgent—pulse with sound anger, grief, and complicity’s persistent ache.” —Douglas Kearney

“Susannah Nevison’s *Lethal Theater* is a powerful, nuanced accounting of the physical and spiritual price violence exacts on its victims and perpetrators. This stunning lyric meditation on imprisonment relentlessly pushes the limits of mercy in asking us to bear witness to the ways in which we inflict pain on others in places where ‘the dark touches / everything, spreading its wound.’” —Erika Meitner

In her new poetry collection, *Lethal Theater*, Susannah Nevison reckons with the rituals of violence that underpin the American prison system, both domestically and abroad. Exploring the multiple roles of medicine in incarceration, Nevison’s poems expose the psychological and physical pain felt by the prison system’s inhabitants. Nevison asks readers to consider the act and complications of looking—at the spectacle of punishment, isolation, and interrogation, as mapped onto incarcerated bodies—by those who participate in and enforce dangerous prison practices, those who benefit from the exploitation of incarcerated bodies, and those who bear witness to suffering. Unfolding in three sections, Nevison’s poems fluidly move among themes of isolation and violence in prisons during periods of war, the history of medical experimentation on domestic prisoners, and the intersection between anesthesia used in hospital settings and anesthesia used in cases of lethal injection. *Lethal Theater* is an attempt to articulate and make visible a grotesque and overlooked part of American pain.
**Radioapocrypha**

BK Fischer

“Fischer produces a work as smart, satisfying, and nuanced in its climax as it is as a whole.”
— *Publishers Weekly*

“The New Testament gets a remix in poet B. K. Fischer’s verse novella *Radioapocrypha*, a pagan rejoinder to the biblical story of redemption. An homage to a 1980s adolescence, it might also be one of the more necessary poetry collections for 2018: Fischer lends us nuanced ways of thinking about faith and fakes, secular shamans and sexual misconduct, deceit and devotion.”
— *Los Angeles Review of Books*

A suburban retelling of the gospel set in 1989 Maryland, *Radioapocrypha* is a gritty story of loners, losers, and lovers.

2018
$16.95 paperback

**June in Eden**

Rosalie Moffett

“Rosalie Moffett’s tender and brilliant poems constitute a ‘fractal / of receptacles’ where we can more deeply perceive the strangeness of language, its many mirrors and doors, hazards and possibilities. *June in Eden* offers a vision of how such struggle can transform our shared condition into something infinitely more lustrous and merciful.”
— *Mary Szybist, author of Incarnadine* (winner of the 2013 National Book Award for Poetry)

Gives us a speaker bewildered by and in awe of the world: the miracles and failures of technology, medicine and imagination. These darkly humorous poems are works of grief and wonder and give us a landscape that looks, from some angles, like paradise.

2017
$14.95 paperback

*Winner of The Journal Charles B. Wheeler Poetry Prize*
Series from Mad Creek Books

**Latinographix, Frederick Luis Aldama, Series Editor**
This series showcases trade graphic and comic books—graphic novels, memoir, nonfiction, and more—by Latinx writers and artists, with any balance of text and visual narrative, taking up themes of all kinds and exploring topics from immigration to family, education to identity, and more. Submissions accepted yearlong.

**Machete, Joy Castro, Series Editor**
The Machete literary nonfiction series showcases fresh stories, innovative forms, and books that break new aesthetic ground in nonfiction—memoir, personal and lyric essay, literary journalism, cultural meditations, short shorts, hybrid essays, graphic pieces, and more—from authors whose writing has historically been marginalized, ignored, and passed over. The series is explicitly interested in diversity in all of its manifestations. Submissions accepted yearlong.

**21st Century Essays, David Lazar and Patrick Madden, Series Editors**
The first and only major series that announces its focus on the essay, 21st Century Essays is a vehicle to discover, publish, and promote some of the most daring, ingenious, and artistic nonfiction, focusing on that central, frequently chimerical, and invariably supple form: the essay. Submissions to the series are accepted March 15th through April 15th.

Book Awards from Mad Creek Books

**The Gournay Prize**
The Gournay Prize selects one book-length collection of essays each year to receive a cash prize of $1,000 and publication in the 21st Century Essays series. Submissions are accepted March 15th through April 15th. For more information or to submit: madcreek.submittable.com/submit

**The Journal Non/Fiction Prize**
*The Journal*, the literary magazine of The Ohio State University MFA Program in Creative Writing, selects one book-length collection of short prose each year for publication by Mad Creek Books. The prize carries a cash award of $1,500. Submissions are accepted January 15th through March 10th. For more information or to submit: thejournal.submittable.com/submit

**The Journal Charles B. Wheeler Poetry Prize**
*The Journal*, the literary magazine of The Ohio State University MFA Program in Creative Writing, selects one full-length manuscript of poetry each year for publication by Mad Creek Books. The winning author receives the Charles B. Wheeler prize of $2,500. Submissions are accepted during the month of September. For more information or to submit: thejournal.submittable.com/submit.