The End of Solitude
Selected Essays on Culture and Society
William Deresiewicz

A passionate, probing collection gathering nearly thirty years of groundbreaking reflection on culture and society alongside four new essays, by one of our most respected essayists and critics

What is the internet doing to us? What is college for? What are the myths and metaphors we live by? These are the questions that William Deresiewicz has been pursuing over the course of his award-winning career. The End of Solitude brings together more than forty of his finest essays, including four that are published here for the first time. Ranging widely across the culture, they take up subjects as diverse as Mad Men and Harold Bloom, the significance of the hipster, and the purpose of art. Drawing on the past, they ask how we got where we are. Scrutinizing the present, they seek to understand how we can live more mindfully and freely, and they pose two fundamental questions: What does it mean to be an individual, and how can we sustain our individuality in an age of networks and groups?

William Deresiewicz’s writing has appeared in the Atlantic, Harper’s Magazine, the New York Times, the American Scholar, and many other publications. He is the recipient of a National Book Critics Circle award for excellence in reviewing and is the New York Times bestselling author of Excellent Sheep, The Death of the Artist, and A Jane Austen Education.
The Long Alliance

The Imperfect Union of Joe Biden and Barack Obama

Gabriel Debenedetti

New York Magazine national correspondent Gabriel Debenedetti reveals an inside look at the complicated, co-dependent, and at-times rocky relationship between Joe Biden and Barack Obama, which has shaped Democratic politics over the past 16 years.

Delving deeper than the bromance narrative that’s held the public eye, The Long Alliance will examine the past, present, and future of this historic partnership—it’s twists and turns, ruptures and reunions, and the pivotal moment in each man’s legacy at which we’ve arrived now.

Obama needed Biden’s experience to help him win in 2008, and he relied on him heavily during his first years as president. But their relationship soured over policy disagreements and Biden’s blundering approach to Congress and voters. Then, Obama’s decision to support Hillary Clinton’s nomination in 2015 created a rift with Biden that lasted for years. Now, in an ironic twist, President Biden is in the position to restore Obama’s legacy—one that Trump spent the last four years trying to dismantle—and to implement a more radical, progressive agenda that the former president could only have dreamed of.

The real tale of this relationship is significantly more complex, dramatic, and consequential than is generally believed. The original mismatch between the know-it-all worshipper of legislative procedure and the hot-shot political Messiah transformed repeatedly in under-scrutinized ways that molded not just four different presidential campaigns and two different political parties, but also wars, a devastating near-depression, the lives of millions of immigrants, and movements for social equality. The bond between them has been, at times, tense, affectionate, nonexistent, and ironclad, and it has always been paradoxical. Now it is shaping a second presidential administration, and the future of Democratic politics as we know it.

Wolf Hustle

A Black Woman on Wall Street

Cin Fabré

Surviving landmines of racism and sexism while moving from the South Bronx projects to the investment Pit, at 19-years old Cin Fabré, ran with the wolves of Wall Street.

Cin Fabré didn’t learn about the stock market growing up, but from her neighborhood and her immigrant parents, she learned how to hustle. She knew that her hustle was the only way she could help her mother; her only ticket out of poverty and away from her abusive father. Shortly after graduating from high school, she applied her energy to selling overpriced eyewear in an optical store making more in commissions than she’d ever seen until one day a woman came in and spent thousands on new glasses without batting an eye. Without hesitation, Cin asked the woman what she did for a living and when she responded “Oh, I’m a stockbroker,” Cin saw this as an omen and vowed that she would become one too. At only nineteen years old, she pushed herself into brokerage firm VTR Capital, which was run by brokers who’d worked at Stratton Oakmont, where Jordan Belfort had reigned. She was shocked to find an army of young, mostly Black and Brown workers like her sitting at phones. She was a witness to a little-known secret in the brokerage system: Latinx and Black employees were forced to do the drudge work of finding investment leads for white male brokers, with no real prospects for promotion.

Most of us are familiar with the excesses of 90s Wall street—the spending, the sex, and the drugs—but the drug coursing through Cin Fabré’s veins was the energy of the trading Pit. “It was palpable the second she walked into the building—the air itself was electrified with frenetic action and the thrill of making money.”

However, during her ascent from cold caller to stockbroker—the only Black woman to do so at the firm—Cin endured constant sexual harassment and racism. Being a broker offered financial gain but no protection as Fabré continued to face propositions from other brokers and clients who believed that their investment money was a down payment on her body.

In Wolf Hustle the author examines her years spent trading frantically—and hustling successfully—Fabré grapples with what is most meaningful in life, ultimately beating Wall Street at its own game.

Cin Fabré grew up in the Patterson projects in the Bronx and joined Wall Street at nineteen years old as a cold caller for VTR Capital. She became one of the youngest Black female stockbrokers in the history of Wall Street, successfully executing lucrative deals only to walk away from it all in pursuit of a more meaningful life. Following her time on Wall Street, Fabré moved into private investing. She currently lives in New York City with her wife, Irina.
A groundbreaking exploration of the parental brain that untangles insidious myths from complicated realities, Mother Brain explodes the concept of “maternal instinct” and tells a new story about what it means to become a parent.

Before journalist Chelsea Conaboy gave birth, she anticipated the joy of holding her newborn, the endless dirty diapers, and the sleepless nights. What she didn’t expect was how different she would feel—a shift in self, as deep as it was disorienting. Something was changing: her brain.

New parents undergo major brain changes, driven by hormones and the deluge of stimuli a baby provides. These neurobiological changes help all parents—birthing or otherwise—adapt in those intense first days and prepare for a long period of learning how to meet their child’s needs. Yet this science is mostly absent from the public conversation about parenthood.

Conaboy delves into the neuroscience to reveal unexpected upsides, generations of scientific neglect, and a powerful new narrative of parenthood.

Chelsea Conaboy is a journalist specializing in personal and public health. She was part of the Boston Globe’s Pulitzer prize–winning team for coverage of the Boston Marathon bombing and more recently has worked as a magazine writer with bylines at Mother Jones, Politico, The Week, the Boston Globe Magazine, and others. She lives in Maine with her husband, their two young sons, and her own changing maternal brain.
Starry Messenger

Cosmic Perspectives on Civilization

Neil deGrasse Tyson

Bringing his cosmic perspective to civilization on Earth, Neil deGrasse Tyson shines new light on the crucial fault lines of our time—war, politics, religion, truth, beauty, gender, and race—in a way that stimulates a deeper sense of unity for us all.

In a time when our political and cultural perspectives feel more polarized than ever, Tyson provides a much-needed antidote to so much of what divides us, while making a passionate case for the twin chariots of enlightenment—a cosmic perspective and the rationality of science.

After thinking deeply about how science sees the world and about Earth as a planet, the human brain has the capacity to reset and recalibrates life’s priorities, shaping the actions we might take in response. No outlook on culture, society, or civilization remains untouched.

With crystalline prose, Starry Messenger walks us through the scientific palette that sees and paints the world differently. From insights on resolving global conflict to reminders of how precious it is to be alive, Tyson reveals, with warmth and eloquence, an array of brilliant and beautiful truths that apply to us all, informed and enlightened by knowledge of our place in the universe.

Neil deGrasse Tyson is an astrophysicist and the author of the #1 bestselling Astrophysics for People in a Hurry, among other books. He is the director of the Hayden Planetarium at the American Museum of Natural History, where he has served since 1996. Dr. Tyson is also the host and cofounder of the Emmy-nominated popular podcast StarTalk and its spinoff StarTalk Sports Edition, which combine science, humor, and pop culture. He is a recipient of 21 honorary doctorates, the Public Welfare Medal from the National Academy of Sciences, and the Distinguished Public Service Medal from NASA. Asteroid 13123 Tyson is named in his honor. He lives in New York City.
The Gospel of Wellness

Gyms, Gurus, Goop, and the False Promise of Self-Care

Rina Raphael

Clean eating. Clean cosmetics. Spinning. Meditation. If we’re healthier than ever, then why do American women feel even more stressed out? In the tradition of The Beauty Myth, journalist Rina Raphael looks at women’s obsession with wellness, and how the cure has become as bad as the disease.

Journalist Rina Raphael has been there. She’s bought cases of kombucha, she’s paid $45 for an exercise class, she’s sprinkled mushroom “superpowder” in her coffee, she’s gone on luxury mindfulness retreats, and she’s hung out with Hollywood’s crystal healers. She’s a respected journalist who has specialized in health and wellness, so she should know better right? Yes. And No.

You see Raphael was once a wellness junkie. Like millions of other women out there, she held out hope that clean eating or the newest strength training class would give her the salvation she sought. Why? Because the modern American woman has been sold a bum deal. In their male dominated workplace, stress levels for women are 1.5 times higher than for men. They then venture home, only to be confronted by “the second shift.”

Just how bad is it? Google searches for “self care” are at an all-time high. Dentists have seen an uptick in angry women grinding their teeth at night. What have women been sold as coping mechanisms? Meditation apps, “detoxes”, manifestation gurus — things that only a few years ago might have been considered fringe that are now mainstream. But deep within the underbelly of self-care—hidden beneath layers of clever marketing—the wellness industry beckons women with a far stronger, more seductive message. It promises women the one thing they desperately desire: control. They are told they can manage the chaos ruling their life by following a laid-out plan: Eat right, exercise, meditate, then buy all this stuff. This mass consumerism is a metaphor for harnessing everything that feels untenable in their life. Wellness isn’t just a lifestyle; it’s become something much more. It’s something to believe in. Which is why wellness is increasingly adopting patterns similar to religion.

The desire to be healthy is anything but new. But what we’re witnessing today is completely unlike its predecessors. Wellness, in its current form, is almost an obsession for the American woman. What’s the reason everyone is guzzling kombucha and taking to aromatherapy now? Why do women feel the weight of the world when they go to the grocery store and choose conventional over the hefty priced organic produce for their families? Why, in this moment, do we find ourselves at what seems to be the peak of alternative health practices? To quote Gwyneth Paltrow at a recent Goop summit, “Why do we all not feel well?” The Gospel of Wellness will examine how and why American women were led down this costly kale-covered path. Part investigative report, part sociological analysis, part personal account, this book will dive deep into this booming movement, bringing the reader inside the sprawling landscape of wellness and introducing them to its many trends and blind spots.

Blending traditional reporting, first-person narrative, and social critique, Rina Raphael will guide readers through a journey of the modern American woman and why she’s so dissatisfied with the status quo. Wellness did not sprout in a vacuum: it’s a reaction to trends building over decades. Women are searching for meaning, purpose, community, and certainty—and trying to find it through health practices. But what happens when the cure becomes as bad as the disease?

Rina Raphael is a journalist who specializes in health, wellness, tech, and women’s issues. She was a features contributor for Fast Company magazine and has also written for the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, CBS, NBC News, and Medium’s Elemental, among other publications. Her wellness industry newsletter, Well To Do, covers trends and news and offers market analysis. Raphael has spoken on the wellness industry at national conferences such as the Global Wellness Summit and the Fast Company Innovation Festival. Previously, she served as a senior producer and lifestyle editor at TODAY.com and NBCNews.com.
Madly, Deeply
The Diaries of Alan Rickman

Alan Rickman

Harry Potter and Sense and Sensibility actor Alan Rickman builds upon his legacy as a world-class actor, a tireless political activist, an avid traveler, and more through his diaries—a twenty-five-year passion project in which Rickman invites readers backstage and into his life.

Alan Rickman remains one of the most beloved actors of all time across almost every genre in the American and British markets, from his breakout role as Die Hard’s Hans Gruber to his heart-wrenching run as Professor Severus Snape, and beyond. His air of dignity, his sonorous voice, and the knowing wit he brought to each role have captivated viewers across nearly every generation alive today.

But Rickman’s artistry wasn’t confined to just his performances. Fans of movies, theater, and memoirs at large will delight in the intimate experience of Rickman detailing the extraordinary and the ordinary in a way that is “anecdotal, indiscreet, witty, gossipy and utterly candid.” He grants us access to his thoughts and insights on theater performances, the craft of acting, politics, friendships, work projects, and his general musings on life. Madly, Deeply: The Diaries of Alan Rickman was written with the intention to be shared, and reading it feels as if Rickman is chatting to a close friend.

With an introduction by Kate Winslet.

Alan Rickman was born in West London. Rickman studied at Chelsea College of Art and Design, the Royal College of Art, and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. He started in theater and later expanded to films with Die Hard. Rickman played a wide variety of characters in iconic films across many genres, including Truly, Madly, Deeply; Sense and Sensibility; Galaxy Quest; The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy; Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street; Love Actually; and every movie in the Harry Potter series. He passed away in 2016.
Uphill

A Memoir

Jemele Hill

An empowering, unabashedly bold memoir by The Atlantic journalist and former ESPN SportsCenter co-anchor about overcoming a legacy of pain and forging a new path, no matter how uphill life’s battles might be

Jemele Hill’s world came crashing down when she called President Trump “a white supremacist”; the White House wanted her fired from ESPN, and she was deluged with death threats. But Hill had faced tougher adversaries growing up in Detroit than a tweeting president. Beneath the exterior of one of the most recognizable journalists in America was a need—a calling—to break her family’s cycle of intergenerational trauma.

Jemele Hill’s life began in upheaval. Born in the middle of a lively routine Friday night Monopoly game to a teen mother and a heroin-addicted father, Hill constantly adjusted to the harsh realities of not only her own childhood but the inherited generational pain of her mother and grandmother. Her escape was writing.

Hill's mother was less than impressed with the brassy and bold free expression of her diary, but Jemele never stopped discovering and amplifying her voice. Through hard work and a constant willingness to learn, Hill rose from newspaper reporter to columnist to new heights as the anchor for ESPN’s revered SportsCenter. Soon, she earned respect and support—though not always from her bosses—for her fearless opinions and unshakable confidence, as well as a reputation as a trusted journalist who speaks their mind with truth and conviction.

In Jemele Hill’s journey Uphill, she shares the whole story of her work, the women of her family, and her complicated relationship with God in an unapologetic, character-rich, and eloquent memoir.

Jemele Hill is the Emmy Award–winning former cohost of ESPN’s SportsCenter and 2018 NABJ Journalist of the Year. Hill is a contributing writer for The Atlantic, where she covers the intersection of sports, race, politics, and culture. She is also the host of Spotify’s Jemele Hill Is Unbothered podcast, the cohost with Cari Champion of Cari & Jemele: Speak.Easy. on CNN+, and the producer of a Disney/ESPN documentary with Colin Kaepernick. She grew up in Detroit, graduated from Michigan State University, and now lives in Los Angeles.
Win Every Argument

The Art of Debating, Persuading, and Public Speaking

Mehdi Hasan

A riveting and practical guide to the art of argument and rhetoric, from the award-winning journalist, anchor, and expert debater, MSNBC's Mehdi Hasan

Arguments are everywhere—and everyone wants to win. In fact, every single person on the face of the planet has, at some point in their lives, tried to win an argument.

Whether it is in the comments section on Facebook, or in the marble hallways of Congress, or at the Thanksgiving dinner table. We cannot escape the human urge, need, and desire to argue.

Mehdi Hasan believes that anyone can win an argument. As a journalist, anchor, and interviewer who has clashed with politicians, generals, spies, and celebrities from across the world, Hasan will reveal his tricks of the trade—16 different ways to get the upper hand in a debate, from the Rule of 3 to Judo Moves.

The book will also be chock-full of vivid examples and behind-the-scenes anecdotes from Hasan’s own debates, which have ranged from the Oxford Union in England to Kiev in Ukraine, as well as from U.S. presidential debates and scenes from movies and TV shows like Star Trek and A Few Good Men. Win Every Argument will unpack words of wisdom from everyone from the ancient philosopher Aristotle to the WWE wrestler Ronda Rousey.

Whether you are a student making a presentation or a lawyer trying to convince the court, this book will teach you how to sharpen your speaking skills to make the winning case.

Mehdi Hasan is an award-winning British-American journalist, anchor, and author. He is the host of The Mehdi Hasan Show on MSNBC and NBC’s streaming channel Peacock. Hasan is a former columnist and podcaster at The Intercept, and his op-eds have also appeared in the New York Times and the Washington Post.
Winterland

A Novel

Rae Meadows

Disappearing Earth meets Little Girls in Pretty Boxes in this captivating novel about a young girl who is tapped to be a part of the Soviet Union’s gymnastics system.

Perfection has a cost…

In a remote Arctic town on the far edge of the Soviet Union in 1973, a young mother who has begun to question the state rhetoric goes to work and never returns. She leaves behind her heartbroken husband, Yuri, and her eight-year-old daughter, Anya. As she longs for her mother’s return, Anya’s world becomes even more isolated when she is tapped by the state to train for the highest honor – representing the Soviet Union as a gymnast in the Olympics. Her only confidant is her neighbor Vera, an older woman who survived ten years in a Gulag camp.

Winterland alternates between the point of view of Anya, as she grows to become a more serious Soviet contender in gymnastics, and Vera, who survived unspeakable horrors in the wild tundra of Norilsk in the 1930’s and who might hold the key to what happened to Anya’s mother.

Reminiscent of Maggie Shipstead’s Astonish Me and Julia Philips’s Disappearing Earth, Winterland tells the story of an era, shaped by glory and loss and about forging a life when you no longer are what you were and finding light where none exists.

Rae Meadows is the recipient of the 2019 Goldenberg Prize for Fiction, the 2018 Hackney Literary Award for the novel, and a finalist for the 2018 Manchester Fiction Prize. She is the author of I Will Send Rain (2016), which was shortlisted for the Langum Prize in American Historical Fiction and longlisted for the International Dublin Literary Award. Her first novel, Calling Out, received the 2006 Utah Book Award for fiction and was named an Entertainment Weekly Must Read, a Book Sense Notable Novel, and a Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers selection. Her second novel, No One Tells Everything, was named a Notable Novel by Poets & Writers and was awarded Honorable Mention in the Anne Powers Fiction Prize. Mercy Train (released in hardback as Mothers and Daughters) was chosen as a Target Emerging Authors selection and was published in multiple languages.

Meadows received a B.A. in Art History from Stanford University, and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Utah. She lives with her family in Brooklyn, NY. A competitive gymnast herself, she grew up admiring the Soviet gymnastics of the 1970’s. In her 40’s, she decided to go back to the thing she loved as a child and now practices regularly at Chelsea Piers, where she can be found doing back hand-springs.
**The Raging 2020s**

*Companies, Countries, People - and the Fight for Our Future*

Alec Ross

In the face of unprecedented global change, *New York Times* bestselling author Alec Ross proposes a new social contract to restore the balance of power between government, citizens, and business.

For 150 years, there has been a contract. Companies hold the power to shape our daily lives. The state holds the power to make them fall in line. And the people hold the power to choose their leaders. But now, this balance has shaken loose.

As the market consolidates, the lines between big business and the halls of Congress have become razor-thin. Private companies have become as powerful as countries. As Walter Isaacson said about Alec Ross’s first book, *The Industries of the Future*, “The future is already hitting us, and Ross shows how it can be exciting rather than frightening.”

Through interviews with the world’s most influential thinkers and stories of corporate activism and malfeasance, government failure and renewal, and innovative economic and political models, Ross proposes a new social contract—one that resets the equilibrium between corporations, the governing, and the governed.

Alec Ross is one of the world’s leading experts on innovation. Author of *New York Times* bestselling *The Industries of the Future*, he is currently a distinguished visiting professor at the University of Bologna Business School and a board partner at Amplo, a global venture capital firm. He was a distinguished senior fellow at Johns Hopkins University and a senior fellow at the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs. He served as Senior Advisor for Innovation to the Secretary of State to help modernize the practice of diplomacy and advance America’s foreign policy interests. He began his career as a 6th-grade teacher in Baltimore.
Landslide
The Final Days of the Trump Presidency

Michael Wolff

Michael Wolff pulled back the curtain on the Trump presidency with his #1 bestselling blockbuster Fire and Fury. In Landslide, an instant New York Times bestseller, he closes the door on the presidency with a final, astonishingly candid account.

We all witnessed some of the most shocking and confounding political events of our lifetime: the careening last stage of Donald J. Trump’s reelection campaign, the president’s audacious election challenge, the harrowing mayhem of January 6, the buffoonery of the second impeachment trial. But what was really going on in the inner sanctum of the White House during these calamitous events? What did the president and his dwindling cadre of loyalists actually believe? And what were they planning?

Wolff embedded himself in the White House in 2017 and gave us a vivid picture of the chaos that had descended on Washington. Almost four years later, Wolff finds the Oval Office even more chaotic and bizarre, a kind of Star Wars bar scene. At all times of the day, Trump, behind the Resolute desk, is surrounded by schemers and unqualified sycophants who spoon-feed him the “alternative facts” he hungers to hear—about COVID-19, Black Lives Matter protests, and, most of all, his chance of winning reelection. Once again, Wolff has gotten top-level access and takes us front row as Trump’s circle of plotters whittles down to the most enabling and the president reaches beyond the bounds of democracy as he entertains the idea of martial law and balks at calling off the insurrectionist mob that threatens the institution of democracy itself.

As the Trump presidency’s hold over the country spiraled out of control, an untold and human account of desperation, duplicity, and delusion was unfolding within the West Wing. Landslide is that story as only Michael Wolff can tell it.

Michael Wolff is the author of two books about the Trump White House, Fire and Fury and Siege. His six other books include a biography of Rupert Murdoch, The Man Who Owns the News, and his memoir of the early internet years, Burn Rate. He has been a regular columnist for New York magazine, Vanity Fair, British GQ, the Hollywood Reporter, and the Guardian. The winner of two National Magazine Awards, he lives in New York City with his family.
Too Famous

The Rich, the Powerful, the Wishful, the Notorious, the Damned

Michael Wolff

If you can judge a book by its enemies, Too Famous could be an instant classic.

Bestselling author of *Fire and Fury* and *Landslide* and chronicler of the Trump White House Michael Wolff dissects more of the major monsters, media whores, and vainglorious figures of our time. His scalpel opens their lives, careers, and always equivocal endgames with the same vividness and wit he brought to his disemboweling of the former president. These brilliant and biting profiles form a mesmerizing portrait of the hubris, overreach, and nearly inevitable self-destruction of some of the most famous faces from the Clinton era through the Trump years. When the mighty fall, they do it with drama and with a dust cloud of gossip.

This collection features exclusive work—recent reporting about Tucker Carlson, Jared Kushner, Harvey Weinstein, Ronan Farrow, and Jeffrey Epstein—and twenty years of coverage of the most notable egomaniacs of the time—among them, Hillary Clinton, Michael Bloomberg, Andrew Cuomo, Rudy Giuliani, Arianna Huffington, Roger Ailes, Boris Johnson, and Rupert Murdoch—creating a lasting statement on the corrosive influence of fame. Ultimately, this is an examination of how the quest for fame, notoriety, and power became the driving force of culture and politics, the drug that alters all public personalities. And how their need, their desperation, and their ruthlessness became the toxic grease that keeps the world spinning.

You know the people here by name and reputation, but it’s guaranteed that after this book you will never see them the same way again or fail to recognize the scorched earth the famous leave behind them.

*Michael Wolff* is the author of several books about the Trump White House: *Fire and Fury*, *Siege*, and *Landslide*. His other books include a biography of Rupert Murdoch, *The Man Who Owns the News*, and his memoir of the early internet years, *Burn Rate*. He has been a regular columnist for *New York* magazine, *Vanity Fair*, *British GQ*, the *Hollywood Reporter*, and the *Guardian*. The winner of two National Magazine Awards, he lives in New York City with his family.
My Monticello

Fiction

Jocelyn Nicole Johnson

A young woman descended from Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings driven from her neighborhood by a white militia. A university professor studying racism by conducting a secret social experiment on his own son. A single mother desperate to buy her first home even as the world hurtles toward catastrophe. Each fighting to survive in America.

Tough-minded, vulnerable, and brave, Jocelyn Nicole Johnson’s precisely imagined debut explores burdened inheritances and extraordinary pursuits of belonging. Set in the near future, the eponymous novella, “My Monticello,” tells of a diverse group of Charlottesville neighbors fleeing violent white supremacists. Led by Da’Naisha, a young Black descendant of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings, they seek refuge in Jefferson’s historic plantation home in a desperate attempt to outlive the long-foretold racial and environmental unravelling within the nation.

In “Control Negro,” hailed by Roxane Gay as “one hell of story,” a university professor devotes himself to the study of racism and the development of ACMs (average American Caucasian males) by clinically observing his own son from birth in order to “painstakingly mark the route of this Black child too, one whom I could prove was so strikingly decent and true that America could not find fault in him unless we as a nation had projected it there.” Johnson’s characters all seek out home as a place and an internal state, whether in the form of a Nigerian widower who immigrates to a meager existence in the city of Alexandria, finding himself adrift; a young mixed-race woman who adopts a new tongue and name to escape the landscapes of rural Virginia and her family; or a single mother who seeks salvation through “Buying a House Ahead of the Apocalypse.”

United by these characters’ relentless struggles against reality and fate, My Monticello is a formidable book that bears witness to this country’s legacies and announces the arrival of a wildly original new voice in American fiction.

Jocelyn Nicole Johnson’s writing has appeared in Guernica, the Guardian, Kweli, Joyland, phoebe, Prime Number Magazine, and elsewhere. Her short story “Control Negro” was anthologized in Best American Short Stories 2018, guest edited by Roxane Gay, and read live by LeVar Burton as part of PRI’s Selected Shorts series. Johnson has been a fellow at Hedgebrook, Tin House Summer Workshops, and VCCA. A veteran public-school art teacher, Johnson lives and writes in Charlottesville, Virginia.
**Misfits**

*A Personal Manifesto*

Michaela Coel

> From the brilliant mind of Michaela Coel, creator and star of *I May Destroy You* and *Chewing Gum*, comes a passionate and inspired declaration against fitting in.

When invited to deliver the MacTaggart Lecture at the Edinburgh International Television Festival, Michaela Coel touched a lot of people with her striking revelations about race, class and gender, but the person most significantly impacted was Coel herself. Building on her celebrated speech, *Misfits* immerses readers in her vision through powerful allegory and deeply personal anecdotes—from her coming of age in London public housing to her discovery of theater and her love for storytelling. And she tells of her reckoning with trauma and metamorphosis into a champion for herself, inclusivity, and radical honesty.

With inspiring insight and wit, Coel lays bare her journey so far and invites us to reflect on our own. By embracing our differences, she says, we can transform our lives. An artist to her core, Coel holds up the path of the creative as an emblem of our need to regard one another with care and respect—and transparency.

*Misfits* is a triumphant call for honesty, empathy and inclusion. Championing “misfits” everywhere, this timely, necessary book is a rousing coming-to-power manifesto dedicated to anyone who has ever worried about fitting in.

Michaela Coel is the creator of the hit TV shows *Chewing Gum* and *I May Destroy You*. She is a BAFTA, Royal Television Society, Broadcasting Press Guild, and NAACP prize–winning actor, screenwriter, and director. In 2020, she was included in *Time* magazine’s 100 Most Influential People and British *Vogue*’s 2020 Most Influential Women lists. *Misfits* is her first book.
From Warsaw with Love

Polish Spies, the CIA, and the Forging of an Unlikely Alliance

John Pomfret

The epic story of how Polish intelligence officers forged an alliance with the CIA in the twilight of the Cold War, told by the award-winning author John Pomfret

Spanning decades and continents, from the battlefields of the Balkans to secret nuclear research labs in Iran and embassy grounds in North Korea, this saga begins in 1990. As the United States cobbles together a coalition to undo Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait, six US officers are trapped in Iraq with intelligence that could ruin Operation Desert Storm if it is obtained by the brutal Iraqi dictator. Desperate, the CIA asks Poland, a longtime Cold War foe famed for its excellent spies, for help. Just months after the Polish people voted in their first democratic election since the 1930s, the young Solidarity government in Warsaw sends a veteran ex-Communist spy who’d battled the West for decades to rescue the six Americans.

John Pomfret’s gripping account of the 1990 cliffhanger in Iraq is just the beginning of the tale about intelligence cooperation between Poland and the United States, cooperation that one CIA director would later describe as “one of the two foremost intelligence relationships that the United States has ever had.” Pomfret uncovers new details about the CIA’s black site program that held suspected terrorists in Poland after 9/11 as well as the role of Polish spies in the hunt for Osama bin Laden.

In the tradition of the most memorable works on espionage, Pomfret’s book tells a distressing and disquieting tale of moral ambiguity in which right and wrong, black and white, are not conveniently distinguishable. As the United States teeters on the edge of a new cold war with Russia and China, Pomfret explores how these little-known events serve as a reminder of the importance of alliances in a dangerous world.

John Pomfret, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, served as a correspondent for the Washington Post for two decades, covering wars, revolutions, and China. His most recent book, The Beautiful Country and the Middle Kingdom, won the Arthur Ross Book Award from the Council on Foreign Relations. The recipient of numerous journalism awards, he lives with his wife and three children in Berkeley, CA.
**Second Thoughts**  
*On Having and Being a Second Child*

Lynn Berger

From Lynn Berger, cofounder of the international journalist platform The Correspondent, *Second Thoughts* is a lovely, searching meditation on second children—on whether to have one and what it means to be one—that seamlessly weaves pieces of art and culture on the topic with scientific research and personal anecdotes.

The decision to have more than one child is at least as consuming as the decision to have a child at all—and yet for all the good books that deliberate on the choice of becoming a mother, there is far less writing on the choice of becoming a mother of two, and all the questions that arise during the process. Is there any truth in the idea of character informed by birth order, or the loneliness of only children? What is the reality of sibling rivalry? What might a parent to one, or two, come to regret?

Lynn Berger is here to fill that gap with the curious, reflective *Second Thoughts*. Grounded in autobiography and full of considered allusion, careful investigation and generous candor, this is the first book specifically covering this topic for mothers of one, mothers of two or more—and second children themselves.

Lynn Berger is the Care Correspondent at Dutch journalism platform De Correspondent. She holds a PhD in Communications from Columbia University and lives in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
Burning Boy
The Life and Work of Stephen Crane
Paul Auster

Booker Prize-shortlisted and New York Times bestselling author Paul Auster’s comprehensive, landmark biography of the great American writer Stephen Crane.

With Burning Boy, celebrated novelist Paul Auster tells the extraordinary story of Stephen Crane, best known as the author of The Red Badge of Courage, who transformed American literature through an avalanche of original short stories, novellas, poems, journalism, and war reportage before his life was cut short by tuberculosis at age twenty-eight.

Auster’s probing account of this singular life tracks Crane as he rebounds from one perilous situation to the next: A controversial article written at twenty disrupts the course of the 1892 presidential campaign, a public battle with the New York police department over the false arrest of a prostitute effectively exiles him from the city, a star-crossed love affair with an unhappily married uptown girl tortures him, a common-law marriage to the proprietress of Jacksonville’s most elegant bawdyhouse endures, a shipwreck results in his near drowning, he withstands enemy fire to send dispatches from the Spanish-American War, and then he relocates to England, where Joseph Conrad becomes his closest friend and Henry James weeps over his tragic, early death.

In Burning Boy, Auster not only puts forth an immersive read about an unforgettable life but also, casting a dazzled eye on Crane’s astonishing originality and productivity, provides uniquely knowing insight into Crane’s creative processes to produce the rarest of reading experiences—the dramatic biography of a brilliant writer as only another literary master could tell it.

Paul Auster is the bestselling author of 4 3 2 1, Sunset Park, Invisible, The Book of Illusions, and The New York Trilogy, among many other works. In 2006 he was awarded the Prince of Asturias Prize for Literature. Among his other honors are the Prix Médicis Étranger for Leviathan, the Independent Spirit Award for the screenplay of Smoke, and the Premio Napoli for Sunset Park. In 2012, he was the first recipient of the NYC Literary Honors in the category of fiction. He has also been a finalist for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award (The Book of Illusions), the PEN/Faulkner Award (The Music of Chance), the Edgar Award (City of Glass), and the Man Booker Prize (4 3 2 1). He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a Commandeur de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. His work has been translated into more than forty languages. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.
The Story of Russia

Orlando Figes

From “the great storyteller of Russian history” (*Financial Times*), a brilliant account of the national mythologies and imperial ideologies that have shaped Russia’s past and politics—essential reading for understanding the country today

*The Story of Russia* is a fresh approach to the thousand years of Russia’s history, concerned as much with the ideas that have shaped how Russians think about their past as it is with the events and personalities comprising it. No other country has reimagined its own story so often, in a perpetual effort to stay in step with the shifts of ruling ideologies.

From the founding of Kievan Rus in the first millennium to Putin’s war against Ukraine, Orlando Figes explores the ideas that have guided Russia’s actions throughout its long and troubled existence. Whether he’s describing the crowning of Ivan the Terrible in a candlelit cathedral or the dramatic upheaval of the peasant revolution, he reveals the impulses, often unappreciated or misunderstood by foreigners, that have driven Russian history: the medieval myth of Mother Russia’s holy mission to the world; the imperial tendency toward autocratic rule; the popular belief in a paternal tsar dispensing truth and justice; the cult of sacrifice rooted in the idea of the “Russian soul”; and, always, the nationalist myth of Russia’s unjust treatment by the West.

How the Russians came to tell their story and to revise it so often as they went along is not only a vital aspect of their history, it is also our best means of understanding how the country thinks and acts today. Based on a lifetime of scholarship and enthrallingly written, *The Story of Russia* is quintessential Figes: sweeping, revelatory, and masterful.

Orlando Figes is the author of many acclaimed books on Russian history, including *A People’s Tragedy, Natasha’s Dance, The Whisperers, The Crimean War, Revolutionary Russia,* and *The Europeans: Three Lives and the Making of a Cosmopolitan Culture.* His books have been translated into over thirty languages. He is a professor of history at Birkbeck College, London University.
In the Midst of Civilized Europe
The Pogroms of 1918–1921 and the Onset of the Holocaust

Jeffrey Veidlinger

FINALIST FOR THE JEWISH BOOK AWARD

“The mass killings of Jews from 1918 to 1921 are a bridge between local pogroms and the extermination of the Holocaust. No history of that Jewish catastrophe comes close to the virtuosity of research, clarity of prose, and power of analysis of this extraordinary book. As the horror of events yields to empathetic understanding, the reader is grateful to Veidlinger for reminding us what history can do.”
—Timothy Snyder, author of Bloodlands

Between 1918 and 1921, over a hundred thousand Jews were murdered in Ukraine by peasants, townsmen, and soldiers who blamed the Jews for the turmoil of the Russian Revolution. In hundreds of separate incidents, ordinary people robbed their Jewish neighbors with impunity, burned down their houses, ripped apart their Torah scrolls, sexually assaulted them, and killed them. Largely forgotten today, these pogroms—ethnic riots—dominated headlines and international affairs in their time. Aid workers warned that six million Jews were in danger of complete extermination. Twenty years later, these dire predictions would come true.

Drawing upon long-neglected archival materials, including thousands of newly discovered witness testimonies, trial records, and official orders, acclaimed historian Jeffrey Veidlinger shows for the first time how this wave of genocidal violence created the conditions for the Holocaust. Through stories of survivors, perpetrators, aid workers, and governmental officials, he explains how so many different groups of people came to the same conclusion: that killing Jews was an acceptable response to their various problems. In riveting prose, In the Midst of Civilized Europe repositions the pogroms as a defining moment of the twentieth century.

Jeffrey Veidlinger is a professor of history and Judaic studies at the University of Michigan. His books, which include The Moscow State Yiddish Theater and In the Shadow of the Shtetl, have won a National Jewish Book Award, the Barnard Hewitt Award for Theatre Scholarship, two Canadian Jewish Book Awards, and the J. I. Segal Award. He lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan.
"My Body offers a lucid examination of the mirrors in which its author has seen herself, and her indoctrination into the cult of beauty as defined by powerful men. In its more transcendent passages . . . the author steps beyond the reach of any 'Pygmalion' and becomes a more dangerous kind of beautiful. She becomes a kind of god in her own right: an artist."

Emily Ratajkowski is an acclaimed model and actress, an engaged political progressive, a formidable entrepreneur, a global social media phenomenon, and now, a writer. Rocketing to world fame at age twenty-one, Ratajkowski sparked both praise and furor with the provocative display of her body as an unapologetic statement of feminist empowerment. The subsequent evolution in her thinking about our culture’s commodification of women is the subject of this book. My Body is a profoundly personal exploration of feminism, sexuality, and power, of men’s treatment of women and women’s rationalizations for accepting that treatment. These essays chronicle moments from Ratajkowski’s life while investigating the culture’s fetishization of girls and female beauty, its obsession with and contempt for women’s sexuality, the perverse dynamics of the fashion and film industries, and the gray area between consent and abuse.

Nuanced, fierce, and incisive, My Body marks the debut of a writer brimming with courage and intelligence.

Emily Ratajkowski is a model, actress, activist, entrepreneur, and writer. She has starred in David Fincher’s Gone Girl, among other films. Ratajkowski has also appeared on the covers of multiple magazines and walked the runway for numerous high fashion brands. Her 2020 essay for New York magazine, “Buying Myself Back,” was the magazine’s most-read piece of the year and was hailed as a landmark. My Body is her first book.
Lifelines

A Doctor's Journey in the Fight for Public Health

Leana Wen

"Our best doctors aren’t created in medical school, they are born through remarkable life experiences with a desire and capacity to end the injustices others accept. Dr. Leana Wen is a public health superhero, destined to make profound changes in our world. This is her origin story."

—Dr. Sanjay Gupta, CNN Chief Medical Correspondent

“Public health saved your life today—you just don’t know it,” is a phrase that Dr. Leana Wen likes to use. You don’t know it because good public health is invisible. It becomes visible only in its absence, when it is underfunded and ignored, a bitter truth laid bare as never before by the devastation of COVID-19.

Leana Wen—emergency physician, former Baltimore health commissioner, CNN medical analyst, and Washington Post contributing columnist—has lived on the front lines of public health, leading the fight against the opioid epidemic, outbreaks of infectious disease, maternal and infant mortality, and COVID-19 disinformation. Here, in gripping detail, Wen lays bare the lifesaving work of public health and its innovative approach to social ills, treating gun violence as a contagious disease, for example, and racism as a threat to health.

Wen also tells her own uniquely American story: an immigrant from China, she and her family received food stamps and were at times homeless despite her parents working multiple jobs. That child went on to attend college at thirteen, become a Rhodes scholar, and turn to public health as the way to make a difference in the country that had offered her such vast possibilities.

Ultimately, Wen insists, it is public health that ensures citizens are not robbed of decades of life, and that where children live does not determine whether they live.

Dr. Leana Wen is an emergency physician, public health professor at George Washington University, and nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. She is also a contributing columnist for the Washington Post and a CNN medical analyst. Previously, she served as Baltimore’s health commissioner, where she led the nation’s oldest continuously operating public health department. She is the author of the patient advocacy book, When Doctors Don’t Listen: How to Avoid Misdiagnoses and Unnecessary Tests. Dr. Wen lives with her husband and their two young children in Baltimore.
Accidental Gods

On Men Unwittingly Turned Divine

Anna Della Subin

A provocative history of men who were worshipped as gods that illuminates the connection between power and religion and the role of divinity in a secular age

Ever since 1492, when Christopher Columbus made landfall in the New World and was hailed as a heavenly being, the accidental god has haunted the modern age. From Haile Selassie, acclaimed as the Living God in Jamaica, to Britain’s Prince Philip, who became the unlikely center of a new religion on a South Pacific island, men made divine—always men—have appeared on every continent. And because these deifications always emerge at moments of turbulence—civil wars, imperial conquest, revolutions—they have much to teach us.

In a revelatory history spanning five centuries, a cast of surprising deities helps to shed light on the thorny questions of how our modern concept of “religion” was invented; why religion and politics are perpetually entangled in our supposedly secular age; and how the power to call someone divine has been used and abused by both oppressors and the oppressed. From nationalist uprisings in India to Nigerien spirit possession cults, Anna Della Subin explores how deification has been a means of defiance for colonized peoples. Conversely, we see how Columbus, Cortés, and other white explorers amplified stories of their godhood to justify their dominion over native peoples, setting into motion the currents of racism and exclusion that have plagued the New World ever since they touched its shores.

At once deeply learned and delightfully antic, Accidental Gods offers an unusual keyhole through which to observe the creation of our modern world. It is that rare thing: a lyrical, entertaining work of ideas, one that marks the debut of a remarkable literary career.

Sunbelt Blues

The Failure of American Housing

Andrew Ross

“Vividly and compassionately observed, a commanding analysis of the national housing crisis that has pushed millions to the brink of homelessness. . . . This powerful exposé should be required reading for all progressives.”

—Mike Davis, author of City of Quartz and Ecology of Fear

Today, a minimum-wage earner can afford a one-bedroom apartment in less than five percent of the counties in America. And the single worst place in the United States to look for affordable housing is Osceola County, Florida. Next door to Disney World, Osceola’s fifteen-mile Route 192 corridor has become a site of shocking contrasts. At one end, global investors snatch up foreclosed properties and park their capital in extravagant vacation homes for affluent visitors, eliminating the county’s affordable housing in the process. At the other, underpaid tourist industry workers, displaced families, and disabled and elderly people subsisting on government checks cram themselves into dilapidated, roach-infested motels, or move into tent camps in the woods.

Through visceral, frontline reporting from the motels and encampments dotting central Florida, renowned social analyst Andrew Ross exposes the overlooked housing crisis sweeping America’s suburbs and rural areas, where residents suffer ongoing trauma, poverty, and nihilism. As millions of renters face down evictions and foreclosures in the midst of the COVID-19 recession, Ross reveals how ineffective government planning, property market speculation, and poverty wages have combined to create this catastrophe. Urgent and incisive, Sunbelt Blues offers original insight into what is quickly becoming a full-blown national emergency.

Andrew Ross is a professor of social and cultural analysis at New York University and a social activist. A contributor to the New York Times, the Guardian, and the Nation, he is the author of many books, including The Celebration Chronicles, Bird on Fire: Lessons from the World’s Least Sustainable City, and Nice Work If You Get It: Life and Labor in Precarious Times.
"To be a member of the human race is to undergo loss, anguish, bereavement, betrayal, failure, aloneness, and the fear of death . . . To be human is also, in some cases, to possess extraordinary courage, endurance, intellectual power, imagination, and capacity for hope . . . Michael Ignatieff’s remarkable and moving new book, written out of the dark times of a world pandemic . . . suggests what we might learn from individual examples of ‘the human experience.’"


When we lose someone we love, when we suffer loss or defeat, when catastrophe strikes—war, famine, pandemic—we go in search of consolation. Once the province of priests and philosophers, the language of consolation has largely vanished from our modern vocabulary, and the places where it was offered, houses of religion, are often empty. Rejecting the solace of ancient religious texts, humanity since the sixteenth century has increasingly placed its faith in science, ideology, and the therapeutic.

How do we console each other and ourselves in an age of unbelief? In a series of lapidary meditations on writers, artists, musicians, and their works—from the books of Job and Psalms to Albert Camus, Anna Akhmatova, and Primo Levi—esteemed writer and historian Michael Ignatieff shows how men and women in extremity have looked to each other across time to recover hope and resilience. Recreating the moments when great figures found the courage to confront their fate and the determination to continue unafraid, On Consolation takes those stories into the present, movingly contending that we can revive these traditions of consolation to meet the anguish and uncertainties of our precarious twenty-first century.

The Radical Potter

The Life and Times of Josiah Wedgwood

Tristram Hunt

“Impassioned, wide-ranging... Hunt’s sympathetic, engaged and finely written biography makes it clear that Wedgwood was a one-off, and a genius.”

—The Spectator

Wedgwood’s pottery, such as his celebrated light-blue jasperware, is famous worldwide. Jane Austen bought it and wrote of it in her novels; Empress Catherine II of Russia ordered hundreds of pieces for her palace; British diplomats hauled it with them on their first-ever mission to Peking, audaciously planning to impress China with their china. But the life of Josiah Wedgwood is far richer than just his accomplishments in ceramics. He was a leader of the Industrial Revolution, a pioneering businessman, a cultural tastemaker, and a tireless scientific experimenter whose inventions made him a fellow of the Royal Society. He was also an ardent abolitionist, whose Emancipation Badge medallion—depicting an enslaved African and inscribed “Am I Not a Man and a Brother?”—became the most popular symbol of the antislavery movement on both sides of the Atlantic. And he did it all in the face of chronic disability and relentless pain: a childhood bout with smallpox eventually led to the amputation of his right leg.

As historian Tristram Hunt puts it in this lively, vivid biography, Wedgwood was the Steve Jobs of the eighteenth century: a difficult, brilliant, creative figure whose personal drive and extraordinary gifts changed the way we work and live. Drawing on a rich array of letters, journals, and historical documents, The Radical Potter brings us the story of a singular man, his dazzling contributions to design and innovation, and his remarkable global impact.

Tristram Hunt is the director of the Victoria & Albert Museum and one of Britain’s best-known historians. His previous books, which include Cities of Empire: The British Colonies and the Creation of the Urban World and Marx’s General: The Revolutionary Life of Friedrich Engels, have been published in more than a dozen languages. Until taking on the leadership of the V&A, he served as Member of Parliament for Stoke-on-Trent, the home of Wedgwood’s potteries. A senior lecturer in British history at Queen Mary University of London, he appears regularly on BBC radio and television.