



FEBRUARY '14

The Free

A Novel, by Willy Vlautin

"There may not be another writer whose new work I look more forward to than Willy Vlautin. With just three novels under his belt, he's managed to create a collection of work that reflects the reality of the down-and-out working class in modern America. In his best book yet, the plights of three main characters intertwine as each struggles to overcome hardship and create a better life despite the odds being stacked against them. In a story full of heartbreak yet somehow ultimately uplifting, Vlautin once again demonstrates the power and beauty to be found in our own humanity."

—Cody Morrison, Square Books, Oxford, MS



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FEBRUARY '14

The Martian

A Novel, by Andy Weir

"This taut, cerebral debut thriller introduces readers to the only kind of alien we have yet to encounter: ourselves. Astronaut Mark Watney is mistakenly left for dead on Mars when his mission companions flee a violent wind storm. His mental and physical struggles to survive are a crash course in botany, mechanics, and the will to endure. This is the compelling space saga that you didn't know you had been waiting for!"

—Zack Ruskin, Book Passage, Corte Madera, CA



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FEBRUARY '14

This Dark Road to Mercy

A Novel, by Wiley Cash

"While the nation is consumed by the competition between home-run hitters Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire, two young motherless girls in North Carolina are approached by their estranged and unpredictable ex-baseball-player father. Their court-appointed guardian becomes alarmed as a sinister man with an axe to grind reveals himself. Told in alternating voices, this spellbinding novel is reminiscent of the dark, spare work of Cormac McCarthy. At once gritty and evocative, *This Dark Road to Mercy* is riveting and not to be missed!"

—Tova Beiser, Brown University Bookstore, Providence, RI



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FEBRUARY '14

Under the Wide and Starry Sky

A Novel, by Nancy Horan

"Just as she did in *Loving Frank*, Horan brings to life the story of a strong woman and a talented man — in this case Fanny Van de Grift Osbourne and Robert Louis Stevenson. Stevenson was not a strong man physically, which meant the couple spent much of their married life chasing climates and locations in an attempt to give him a chance at life as a writer. Fannie gives up her personal ambitions as an artist and writer to be Stevenson's caregiver, but at what cost? This multifaceted book demonstrates all the twists and turns of life—love and loyalty, wealth and poverty, privilege and survival, success and disappointment, darkness and joy. Readers will want to revisit the works of Stevenson with new eyes after reading Horan's wonderful book."

—Beverly Bauer, Redbery Books, Cable, WI



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FEBRUARY '14

Dept. of Speculation

A Novel, by Jenny Offill

"I found myself gasping at the sheer beauty and conciseness of Offill's sentences in this portrait of a marriage. *Dept. of Speculation* can be devoured quickly, or readers can linger in it over many sittings. Covering the topics of love, loneliness, grief, joy, fidelity, beauty, depression, mania, motherhood, and writing, the shifting points of view are subtle yet profound, and despite the darkness and sadness of the story, when I closed the book I was left more alert and attentive, and feeling more alive. Highly recommended!"

—Janet Geddis, Avid Bookshop, Athens, GA



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Archetype

A Novel, by M.D. Waters

"Emma has just woken up with no memories. Her husband, Declan, who is very involved in her recovery, takes time to care for her and help her relearn everything. Then Emma starts to have nightmares that she begins to think may be more real than the life she's come to know—memories of another husband and of a war and a resistance movement. When Emma's two lives collide, she has to decide who to trust before both lives are snuffed out. This is a great futuristic novel that will lead readers to questions of ethics and provide lots of material for group discussions."

—Melissa Oates, Fiction Addiction, Greenville, SC



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The Secret of Raven Point

A Novel, by Jennifer Vanderbes

"This story of a young woman's tour of duty as a WWII Army nurse is remarkable. Headed for a career in science, Juliet veers toward nursing in an effort to find her brother who is missing in action in Italy. Hope, love in many variations, stories of soldiers, doctors, nurses and support staff, the wounded and dying, civilians and officers—it's all as messy as war and also splendid, heroic, and prosaic. Readers will be drawn in by the characters and deeply moved by the telling of their stories. Books as special as this make my job as a bookseller a joy!"

—Becky Milner, Vintage Books, Vancouver, WA



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FEBRUARY '14

The Crane Wife

A Novel, by Patrick Ness

"Based on a Japanese folk tale, *The Crane Wife* spins a story about two artists—one of whom may not be fully human—and how they achieve the act of creation and destruction, both in their art and in their personal lives and relationships. The characters are fully drawn, each with faults but very lovable in their own ways, and the act of creation is beautifully explored through children, art, and budding relationships, as well as through myths of earth-creation. This is my favorite read of the year—and it's been a good year for fiction!"

—William D. Carl, Books on the Square, Providence, RI



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FEBRUARY '14

The Girl With a Clock for a Heart

A Novel, by Peter Swanson

"This brilliant debut thriller has all the characteristics necessary for bestsellerdom! There is George Foss, an everyman protagonist who has never gotten over his first college sweetheart; Liana Dector, that first love, now a femme fatale who is as stunning as she is unpredictable; and a plot with surprises and twists on every other page. *The Girl With a Clock for a Heart* will take its rightful place beside my favorites from Michael Connelly and Dennis Lehane!"

—Jerry Brown, The Bookstore, Radcliff, KY



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FEBRUARY '14

The Winter People

A Novel, by Jennifer McMahon

"This unsettling novel tackles one of the biggest questions there is: Can the dead be brought back to life? Weaving between 1908 and the present, the plot involves a missing mother, a dead husband, a revenge killing, secret papers hidden in cubby holes, a mother destroyed by grief, something terrifying that is buried, something evil uncovered in a field, and a closet door that has been nailed shut. An intricate and chilling ghost story, *The Winter People* will have you flying through its pages!"

—Dianah Hughley, Powell's Books, Portland, OR



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Lost Lake

A Novel, by Sarah Addison Allen

"After a year of mourning her husband, Kate finally wakes up and realizes she has let someone else drive her life and it is not going the way she wishes. On a whim, she and her daughter, Devin, head south to visit her Aunt Eby in Lost Lake, Georgia. Eby has run the cottages at Lost Lake since she and her husband were first married, but now, she, too, is mourning the loss of her husband and it is finally time to sell the Lost Lake property. Summer proves to be a time of healing and renewal as Lost Lake regulars and local townspeople come together with Kate and Devin to discover that sometimes when you open yourself to new possibilities, you find second chances you never dreamed were there."

—Susan Thomas, Coffee Tree Books, Morehead, KY



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Pigs Can't Swim

A Memoir, by Helen Peppé

"For Helen, born into a Maine farm family featuring eight children, parents with good intentions but far too much to do, assorted animals raised to be eaten, and gardens to weed and hoe, two things soon become clear: books provide a necessary escape from the rampant chaos, and vegetarianism is a must if one is to avoid eating one's friends. Helen, the youngest, is an animal lover among carnivores, a rule follower who stands guard over her rebellious siblings, and the only reader in the house. Peppé's mordant humor, her irreverence, and her astonishing ear for dialogue make this memoir a joy to read, at once hilarious and wise, cynical and touching, realistic and hope filled."

—Betsy Burton, The King's English Bookshop, Salt Lake City, UT



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FEBRUARY '14

Orfeo

A Novel, by Richard Powers

"Orfeo is the kind of novel that creeps slowly into a reader's consciousness and makes a home there. A beautiful, cerebral book that's as concerned with the past and how the decisions made by protagonist Peter Els shaped his personal philosophies and relationships and how music played a role in it all, as it is with the very real present and how Peter's hobbyist interest in DNA makes him an accidental bioterrorism threat. Orfeo is an intelligent and incredibly moving portrait of the role of art in both one man's life and society as a whole. Stunning!"

—Lauren Wiser, Left Bank Books, St. Louis, MO



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FEBRUARY '14

The Days of Anna Madrigal

A Novel, by Armistead Maupin

"Maupin's Tales of the City series has enchanted many over the years. At the center of its fictional 'logical family' – the family you get to choose—is Anna Madrigal, now 92, a bit unsteady on her pins and frail but still the anchor of this quirky, lovely group of people. As time goes on, Anna feels the need to revisit Winnemucca, Nevada, the home of her youth, to acknowledge her past and secrets too-long hidden. As luck would have it, familiar characters Michael, Ben, Shawna, Jake, and Amos are also heading into the dry flats of Nevada for the Burning Man festival. It is always a treat to read about this community, where what you are does not matter nearly as much as who you are."

—Deon Stonehouse, Sunriver Books, Sunriver, OR



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FEBRUARY '14

The Sun and Other Stars

A Novel, by Brigid Pasulka

"This is a wondrous novel that radiates with poignant, witty insights on love, loss, loyalty, and sacrifice. Pasulka's sharp, engaging prose transports readers to a seaside Italian village and immerses them in community gossip, family dramas, and personal discoveries spurred by an obsession with soccer. It is a delightfully consuming story that will leave readers satiated and smiling."

—Anderson McKean, Page & Palette, Fairhope, AL



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FEBRUARY '14

The Secret of Magic

A Novel, by Deborah Johnson

"A young lawyer who is sent by Thurgood Marshall to Mississippi in 1946 to investigate the murder of a black soldier encounters a world both surreal and mysterious. Regina Robichard learns that the Jim Crow South is a world unto itself, but she also learns the power of narrative and story as she meets a reclusive author who produced the book that influenced her childhood. This is a novel of subtlety, incisive portraits, and a brilliant evocation of a time and place on the cusp of momentous change."

—Bill Cusumano, Nicola's Books, Ann Arbor, MI



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The Deliverance of Evil

by Roberto Costantini

"Masterfully delivering a mystery that explores modern Italian history, the complexities of relationships, and the depths of evil, Costantini's *The Deliverance of Evil* is an intriguing thrill ride. Commissario Michele Balistreri, once young and impulsive, now older and haunted, must investigate a series of twisted killings and their connections to an evil from years ago. Costantini has created both an unforgettable, complex character in Balistreri and a mystery that never stops surprising the reader."

—Luisa Smith, Book Passage, Corte Madera, CA



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FEBRUARY '14

The Last Days of California

A Novel, by Mary Miller

"Two sisters bicker with one another over the space in a car's backseat, gas station snack choices, motel room beds, and boys, of course. Only this isn't another angst-ridden coming-of-age road trip novel. This family is driving from Georgia to California so its members can witness the Rapture as it rolls through the world's time zones and arrives, at blessed last, in Pacific Standard Time. A swift, quirky, earnest read that will resonate with anyone who's ever been to a church sleepover, proselytized, or just been a teenager."

—Stacie M. Williams, Boswell Book Company, Milwaukee, WI



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North of Boston

A Novel, by Elisabeth Elo

"In this gritty debut thriller, Pirio Kasparov has an unusually high tolerance for survival in cold water, a fact that captures the interest of the Navy and the attention of the thugs who were responsible for her submersion. Pirio, the only child of a wealthy, cynical Russian and his late wife, developed the attitude and instincts of a street fighter in boarding school, skills she will need when she decides to investigate why the boat she was on was rammed, her friend killed, and her godson left without a dad. Fast paced, atmospheric, and detailed, Elo's novel will have you reading way past your bedtime!"

—Kathleen McGonagle, Buttonwood Books & Toys, Cohasset, MA



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The UnAmericans

Stories, by Molly Antopol

"Antopol has written a pitch-perfect collection of stories that capture the essence of human survival and triumph: a grandmother sharing the tale of her harrowing sewer-line escape from the Nazis and her rescue by a young resistance worker who ultimately becomes her husband; an aspiring actor of Russian descent jailed during the McCarthy era, who is attempting to build a relationship with his son after his prison term is over; another father, this one a struggling, middle-aged adjunct professor, who worries that the play his daughter is producing may expose the secrets of his escape from Czechoslovakia. Each story is a gem to be savored and each demonstrates that a new American talent has emerged."

—Nancy Simpson-Brice, The Book Vault, Oskaloosa, IA



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