



# OCTOBER '14

## Leaving Time

A Novel, by Jodi Picoult

"Jenna Metcalf was born into what should have been an idyllic life in a sanctuary where her mother studied grief in elephants. When Jenna was very young, a tragic event occurred and her mother disappeared. As a teenager, Jenna tries to reclaim her past by attempting to discover both who her mother was and what happened to her. She gains help from two unlikely allies: a former psychic who specialized in missing persons and a failed detective who was originally involved with investigating the tragedy. Together they follow the trail, finding transformation and connection in the race to discover the truth. Fascinating lore about elephant behavior enhances this tale about grief and the bonds of love between mother and child that persist across time and species. Emotionally wrenching, with an unexpected but transcendent conclusion, this is a great read!"

—Deb Fliegel, River Lights Bookstore, Dubuque, IA



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# OCTOBER '14

## Love Me Back

A Novel, by Merritt Tierce

"Not for the faint of heart or for those who need redemptive tales, *Love Me Back* is the story of Marie, a very smart, hard-working, but self-destructive young woman waitressing at a high-end restaurant in Dallas. In spare prose, Tierce brings the reader inside the world of the service industry and inside the head of a 20-something who makes many bad choices. Drugs, alcohol, casual sex, rundown apartments—these are the everyday things of Marie's existence. Tierce skillfully draws the reader into this world with a story that is eye opening, sometimes shocking, but never dull. Recommended!"

—Ellen Burns, Books on the Common, Ridgefield, CT



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## The Paying Guests

by Sarah Waters

"At the end of WWI, 26-year-old Frances and her mother find themselves in dire financial circumstances. Both of Frances' brothers died in the war, and now her father's death has left them in debt. Frances and her mother reconfigure their home in a gracious London neighborhood so that they can take in lodgers. From the moment Mr. and Mrs. Barber—the 'paying guests'—arrive, the young couple pulls Frances out of her staid routine, and before long sexual sparks are flying. Waters is a brilliant writer, a master of the hothouse atmosphere and the slow reveal, and her new novel is utterly absorbing."

—Ellen Sandmeyer, Sandmeyer's Bookstore, Chicago, IL



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## Nora Webster

A Novel, by Colm Tóibín

"This quiet but beautifully constructed novel of grief is the tale of an Irish woman caught between looking after her own emotional well-being and that of her four young children in the wake of her husband's death. Her relatives and community mean well, but they trespass almost as often as they support. Like Nora's own missteps, those of outsiders are also forgivable. Tóibín's work gets deeper and richer with each new book. I'm already looking forward to his next."

—Susan Scott, Secret Garden Bookshop, Seattle, WA



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## On Immunity

An Inoculation, by Eula Biss

"Biss' essays about the immunization debate range from the personal to the body politic and back again. Drawing on her experiences as a mother and employing an astonishing diversity of sources, Biss plumbs our ancient fear of infection. Acknowledging the permeability of both our borders and bodies, she arrives at the conclusion that 'immunity is a shared space—a garden we tend together.' Biss' precise language and wry humor make *On Immunity* as engaging as it is informative."

—Brooke Alexander, Brazos Bookstore, Dallas, TX



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## Good Grief

Life in a Tiny Vermont Village, by Ellen Stimson

"After reading Stimson's earlier book, *Mud Season*, I knew I wanted to at least be Facebook friends with her. Now that I've read *Good Grief*, I wish she were my next door neighbor because everyone needs fun, witty people like her in their lives. Stimson's new memoir hits all the high points for readers – it is witty, philosophical, laugh-out-loud funny, and totally relatable. Laugh along with her at the mundane and not so mundane situations that can flare up unexpectedly in life."

—Sue Roegge, Chapter2Books, Hudson, WI



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## A Sudden Light

A Novel, by Garth Stein

"Stein's new novel of family relationships and responsibilities explores the connections between the living and the dead, between parents and children, and what it means to be stewards of the land. Two very compelling characters drive the story: a 14-year-old boy trying to patch his family back together and a centuries-old ghost trying to make sure that the wrongs of the past are put right so that a family's legacy can be maintained. *A Sudden Light* is a compelling search for faith and meaning in a world where bad things sometimes happen."

—Andrea Jones, The Galaxy Bookshop, Hardwick, VT



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## Some Luck

A Novel, by Jane Smiley

"With a novel as expansive and rich as the fertile farm grounds of Iowa, Smiley returns to the Midwest. Fans of her Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Thousand Acres* will welcome this homecoming, the sweeping story of Walter and Rosanna Langdon's lives from 1920 to 1953. Memorable events—the Dust Bowl, the Depression, the McCarthy hearings, the Korean War—are all intertwined with the roller coaster of farm family life. The first volume in a planned trilogy, *Some Luck* is a celebration of the American family set against the backdrop of the land that will become the 'bread basket of the nation.'"

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



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## The Fall

**A Father's Memoir in 424 Steps,**  
**by Diogo Mainardi, Margaret Jull Costa (Trans.)**

"In this memoir, Mainardi, the great Brazilian journalist/novelist, traces the life and sufferings of his son, Tito. Due to the gross negligence of the hospital in which Tito was born, he has been afflicted with cerebral palsy. Tito's story is told in 424 parts—two or three per page—by turns angry, loving, and poetic, that mirror the greatest number of steps Tito has ever taken without falling down. Along the way, Mainardi ruminates about art history, philosophy, literature, and what it is to love someone unconditionally, through every tribulation that arises, and at whatever cost."

—Conrad Silverberg, Boswell Book Company, Milwaukee, WI



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## Lila

**A Novel, by Marilynne Robinson**

"Robinson revisits the characters from the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Gilead* and its companion novel, *Home*, with her new novel covering the backstory of minister John Ames' young wife, whose raffish beginnings as a migrant worker are told in a series of time shifts. The ebb and flow of the story and the rhythm of the sentences seem effortless, and the skill of a master storyteller at work is fully on display. In *Gilead*, Iowa, Robinson has created her own Yoknapatawpha County, and if Alice Munro is regarded as our modern-day Chekhov, surely Robinson is our contemporary Faulkner. An impressive work."

—Matthew Lage, Iowa Book, Iowa City, IA



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# OCTOBER '14

## Man V. Nature

**Stories, by Diane Cook**

"The stories in this collection all involve a fascination with the Great Unknown or the Great Unknowable. In absurdist fashion, Cook reveals people caught up in situations that, while impossible, ridiculous, and horrifying, appear completely normal to their protagonists. There's never an easy explanation, or in some cases no explanation at all, but the absurdities make complete sense within the framework of the tales. This is a terrific, very unusual collection, perfect for fans of Kafka or Bulgakov."

—Bill Carl, The Booksellers on Fountain Square, Cincinnati, OH



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# OCTOBER '14

## Thrown

**by Kerry Howley**

"Unlike anything you've ever read, *Thrown* is a philosophical exploration of what it means to be alive viewed through the lens of mixed martial arts. The work of an intense intellect, *Thrown* uses the lives of two combatants to struggle with the biggest questions of human experience, fighting for meaning and significance in our chaotic and confusing world. A major work by a major mind."

—Josh Cook, Porter Square Books, Cambridge, MA



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# OCTOBER '14

## How to Build a Girl

**A Novel, by Caitlin Moran**

"In Wolverhampton, England in 1990, 14-year-old Johanna humiliates herself on live television. Shortly thereafter, she decides to reinvent herself as Dolly Wilde, a fast-talking, hard-drinking sex-adventurer who writes for the local music rag. Never mind the fact that she doesn't drink, that she's a virgin, and that her music collection is comprised solely of The Beatles and the Bee Gees. Armed with eyeliner, a fair amount of Thunderbird, and pure determination, Dolly breaks onto the scene and makes a new life for herself, only to realize that the hardest—and most heartbreaking—changes are the ones we make within. Laugh-out-loud hilarious, inspiring, and profound, Moran has written the coming-of-age story of our time."

—Amanda Hurley, Inkwood Books, Tampa, FL



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## The High Divide

**A Novel, by Lin Enger**

"Early one morning in 1886, Ulysses Pope leaves his family to embark on a journey that he hopes will save his immortal life. The wife and two sons he leaves behind are devastated by his unannounced departure, and so begins a life-altering adventure for all concerned that addresses questions far beyond the usual trope in a classic Western novel. *The High Divide* is a book about a man living his life with integrity and how he puts his family and his life on the line to make amends on a grand scale. Enger writes with enormous literary skill in this remarkable work."

—Pam Cady, University Book Store, Seattle, WA



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# OCTOBER '14

## The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace

**A Brilliant Young Man Who Left Newark for the Ivy League, by Jeff Hobbs**

"On one level, *The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace* is about unfulfilled potential and heartbreaking loss, but more importantly, it deals with the pressure we all feel to succeed and be happy in an increasingly competitive society. It is a beautiful eulogy to a friend and an accurate portrayal of what it means to be young, talented, and conflicted."

—Shawn Donley, Powell's Books, Portland, OR



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# OCTOBER '14

## Night Blindness

**A Novel, by Susan Strecker**

"Family tragedy and guilt are too much for 16-year-old Jensen Reilly to handle by herself, but that is what she tries to do for 13 years. She abandons everything that defines her and starts a new life as an artist and model, eventually eloping with her art professor. Jensen is finally forced to face her past, her old friends, her family, and her first true love when her father is diagnosed with a brain tumor and she returns home to help care for him. *Night Blindness* is a story of first love, family, grief, guilt, forgiveness, and how the truth can truly set one free."

—Nancy McFarlane, Fiction Addiction, Greenville, SC



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## Gutenberg's Apprentice

A Novel, by **Alix Christie**

"This novel about the making of the first printed book, the Gutenberg Bible, is a dramatic and gripping tale of betrayal and intrigue. A young scribe is apprenticed to the visionary and difficult genius Johann Gutenberg at the behest of his father, Gutenberg's financial backer. Tension between genius and finance, between old ways and the new, that is aggravated by threats from the Church and the traditional guilds make for a great read. Christie is a master printer herself, and in *Gutenberg's Apprentice* she brings a real feeling for the beauty and artistry of printing and honors one of the most revolutionary achievements in history."

—Rod Froke, DIESEL: A Bookstore, Larkspur, CA



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## Wolf in White Van

A Novel, by **John Darnielle**

"Darnielle is an outstanding storyteller writing about lives on the outside edges of society and the extreme moments in those lives. Sean, the narrator of *Wolf in White Van*, has had an isolated existence since he was disfigured at the age of 17. As the creator of a mail-based role-playing game called Trace Italian, Sean influences the lives of others in unexpected, unintended ways. *Wolf in White Van* is captivating, haunting, and powerful. Highly recommended!"

—Carol Schneck Varner, Schuler Books, Okemos, MI



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# OCTOBER '14

## A Deadly Wandering

A Tale of Tragedy and Redemption in the Age of Attention, by **Matt Richtel**

"*A Deadly Wandering* is a riveting account of the fatal tragedy and subsequent seminal legal—and moral—battle that led to texting-while-driving bans being signed into law. It links neuroscientific research, legal undertakings, and narrative nonfiction that is full of vivid, heartbreaking, real-life characters to expose and objectively question our modern glorification of multitasking and technological connectedness. Richtel's exceptional reporting will absolutely change the way you think about the devices that keep us online, and you will close this book transformed. This is one of the most important books of our time."

—Julia Sinn, Bookshop Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA



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## Florence Gordon

by **Brian Morton**

"Inscrutable, intellectual, life-long activist Florence Gordon never sought the limelight, and her work now seems to be receding into feminist history. But, at 75, she receives a rapturous review in the *New York Times*. That, plus some disconcerting physical difficulties, increasingly unreasonable demands from her ex-husband, and the recent move of her son and his family to her Upper West Side neighborhood throw this fiercely controlled, independent woman off balance. Every character in this novel faces unexpected challenges and is vividly, memorably drawn. Florence's granddaughter, Emily, observes that 'each person is the center of a world.' Rarely has that been so richly demonstrated."

—Banna Rubinow, the river's end bookstore, Oswego, NY



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