Bonobo Handshake
A Memoir of Love and Adventure in the Congo, by Vanessa Woods
(Gotham, 9781592406340, $16)
“This memoir left me wanting to donate all my money to Friends of Bonobos. The author has captured the spirit of an animal that so many of us knew nothing about. Her writing and research about the civil war in the Congo helps the reader to understand the impact that it has had on the bonobas. I can’t wait for this to come out and for people to be made aware of her cause.”
—Sarah Galvin, The Bookstore Plus, Lake Placid, NY

Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter
A Novel, by Tom Franklin
(Harper Perennial, 9780060594671, $14.99)
“This is a spellbinding novel about friendship, honesty and race relations in Mississippi. The two main characters, Silas Jones and Larry Ott, are childhood friends who have been separated by circumstance and time. Now, adults, they are thrust in each other’s path again when a girl goes missing and the past must be confronted. A thriller as well as a character study, this powerful and redemptive novel, reminiscent of Dennis Lehane’s, is unforgettable.”
—Fran Wilson, Colorado State University Bookstore, Fort Collins, CO

A Dog’s Purpose
A Novel, by W. Bruce Cameron
(Farrar, 9780765330345, $12.99)
“This is a charming story of a dog’s search for meaning over the course of several lifetimes, from that of a fetal dog, to a beloved family pet, a search-and-rescue dog, and a victim of abuse. I laughed and cried, all the while appreciating the fragility of life as seen through the first-person narration of this remarkable dog.”
—Tova Beiser, Brown University Bookstore, Providence, RI

Father of the Rain
A Novel, by Lily King
(Grove Press, 9780802145345, $14.95)
“Told loosely over four decades, Father of the Rain is the story of Daley and her complicated and sometimes painful relationship with her alcoholic father. We are taken up with each step of her path as she moves from recognition of the problem to anger and defiance, to wanting to be the savior and, finally, acceptance. All of this is masterfully woven in the beautiful prose of author Lily King.”
—Kathleen Costello, Maria’s Bookshop, Durango, CO

The Passage
A Novel, by Justin Cronin
(Ballantine, 9780345504975, $16)
“Justin Cronin’s incredible imagination takes the reader on a ride that is engrossing, thought-provoking, terrifying and, above all, immensely entertaining. A diverse and engaging cast of characters dot the landscape in this sweeping novel that is both fantastic science fiction and heartbreaking drama. An absolutely thrilling read, The Passage is destined to reach a huge audience and leave everyone wanting more.”
—Tiffany Miner, Book People, Austin, TX

Healer
A Novel, by Carol Cassella
(Simon & Schuster, 9781416556145, $15)
“A very contemporary story that shows us a family that may disintegrate when they go from mega-rich biotechers to a family of three struggling to keep ahead of the fuel bill. Carol Cassella has a superb ear for family relationships and adds depth to her novel (set in Eastern Washington State) when her protagonist, Claire, a doctor working in a low-end clinic serving the migrant community, confronts the very real poverty and life on the edge among the Latino fruit pickers.”
—Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books, Orinda, CA

The Marrowbone Marble Company
A Novel, by M. Glenn Taylor
(Ecco, 9780061923944, $14.99)
“Gripping and raw, set between the moral compass of the ‘40s and the social revolution of the ‘60s, this novel follows a West Virginia family through its turbulent relationships with war, poverty, social injustice and racial segregation. It would be hard not to call this a piece of fine art, with its classic storytelling and brilliant writing.”
—Scott Fulz, Next Chapter Bookshop, Mequon, WI

My Thoughts Be Bloody
The Bitter Rivalry That Led to the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln, by Nora Titone
(Free Press, 9781416586067, $16)
“My Thoughts Be Bloody offers a fresh and unique approach to the Lincoln assassination. Through a complete examination of the life of John Wilkes Booth and his intense rivalry with his more famous brother, Edwin, Nora Titone offers a credible, compelling answer to the question of why John murdered Lincoln. Her writing is smart and lively, and the tale she relates is fascinating. Even seasoned Lincoln buffs will find much that is new in this ambitious work.”
—Christopher Rose, Andover Bookstore, Andover, MA

Room
A Novel, by Emma Donoghue
(Back Bay Books, 9780312573577, $14.99)
“This is like no other book I have ever read. This emotionally powerful story of young Jack and his mother, held in captivity for seven years, is both a heart-wrenching testament to the power of the love between a mother and child and a riveting story of overcoming horrible circumstances. Emma Donoghue has written one of those rare books that you will remember reading your entire life, as you will be altered by the experience.”
—Lanora Hurley, Next Chapter Bookshop, Mequon, WI

Take Good Care of the Garden and the Dogs
A True Story of Bad Breaks and Small Miracles, by Heather Lende
(Algonquin, 9781616200510, $14.95)
“Reading Heather Lende’s book feels like sharing coffee with a true friend, taking the time to celebrate and mourn life’s pleasures and sorrows. In 2010, when friends and time are sometimes forgotten, it is a real pleasure to pick up a book and find such a friend, with her thoughtful reflections and great sense of humor so close at hand.”
—Linda Ramsdell, The Galaxy Bookshop, Hardwick, VT

The Wave
by Susan Casey
(Anchor, 9780767928854, $15.95)
“As with Devil’s Teeth, her earlier study of great white sharks, Casey’s newest effort combines engaging hard-science with adrenaline-infused raw action. Drop into The Wave and charge these monstrous ocean creatures with an eclectic cast of sun-baked watermen and intrepid researchers. This read will definitely pull you out of your beach chair and into the water. Surf’s way up!”
—Jamie Reiner, Elliot Bay Book Co., Seattle, WA