



# APRIL '14

## The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry

A Novel, by Gabrielle Zevin

"Fikry is a bookseller with a small shop in a sleepy island resort town off the coast of Massachusetts. He's a bit cantankerous, but with good reason: his wife, the 'people person' of the relationship, has recently died and his prized possession, a rare copy of *Tamerlane*, has gone missing. Despite those losses, there's one strange addition, a baby girl left on his doorstep with an explicit request for Fikry to take her in. Zevin's novel offers the reality of both death and rebirth, held together by the spirit of the bookstore. It's a romantic comedy, a spiritual journey, and if you include the chapter openings, a collection of short story criticisms as well. In short, it's a celebration of books and the people who read them, write them, and sell them."

—Daniel Goldin, Boswell Book Company, Milwaukee, WI



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# APRIL '14

## Frog Music

A Novel, by Emma Donoghue

"Donoghue writes my favorite historical fiction. She has a knack for that great alchemy of turning research—letters, family trees, and newspaper articles buried in archives—into fiction that lives and breathes on the page. *Frog Music*, a vivid, atmospheric crime novel, brings to life the roiling streets of San Francisco just after the Gold Rush. The story of Blanche and her murdered friend, Jenny, which is based on true events, has a frantic pulse that makes it hard to put down. This is the kind of book only Donoghue could write, and I'm so glad she did."

—Kat Bailey, Bookshop Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA



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## The Empathy Exams

Essays, by Leslie Jamison

"The essays in Jamison's collection establish her as a gifted emotional cartographer, a welcome anomaly in a world of cold, predictable think pieces. These essays explore our human need to be heard and understood, as well as the challenges we face as minds bound to bodies that experience pain and failure. Jamison's investigations into the power and perils of empathy range widely—from a stint as a medical actor to participation in a conference for sufferers of a mysterious, some say imaginary, illness—but each leads her readers closer to an essential truth about what it means to care."

—Danielle Dubois Dimond, Brazos Bookstore, Houston, TX



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## The Collector of Dying Breaths

A Novel of Suspense, by M.J. Rose

"This latest offering from Rose marks the return of Jac L'Etoile, the heroine first introduced in *The Book of Lost Fragrances*. Jac is quickly engulfed in a quest to create an elixir that will bring souls back to life using a person's last, dying breath. Her patrons are the mysterious Greek heiress Melinoe and her stepbrother, Serge, whose sibling relationship raises many questions for Jac. As Jac's former lover, Griffin, assists her in the pursuit to recreate the elixir based on notes left behind by René le Florentine, the two are drawn into the past life of René, his lover Isabeau, and the dynamic, manipulative Catherine de Médiçi. Rose captivates us with a story about relationships past and present, and the most basic of human emotions: love, greed, and betrayal."

—Stacey Harris, Books & Books, Coral Gables, FL



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## The Plover

**A Novel, by Brian Doyle**

"A solitary sea journey for an epically disillusioned man named Declan O'Donnell evolves into a rousing adventure tale in Doyle's *The Plover*. O'Donnell's small boat becomes the refuge of a number of unexpected—and largely unwelcome—passengers, all of them anxious to leave their former lives bobbing in the ship's wake. Lyrical and literate, this novel is as much a love story dedicated to the sea as it is an exciting and ultimately moving human drama."

—Alden Graves, Northshire Bookstore, Manchester Center, VT



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## The Intern's Handbook

**A Thriller, by Shane Kuhn**

"I have a twisted sense of humor and so does Shane Kuhn, the author of this darkly funny novel of office work and assassination – something like what you might get if Joshua Ferris and Josh Bazell ever collaborated. It's full of misdirection, red herrings, and characters so layered with secret identities and hidden agendas that even they may not know the truth. If you learn nothing else from this exciting, exhilarating debut, take this lesson to heart: If the intern offers to make you coffee, just say 'No, thank you.'"

—Billie Bloebaum, Powell's Books at PDX, Portland, OR



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## And the Dark Sacred Night

**A Novel, by Julia Glass**

"A decade has passed since we fell in love with the unforgettable characters of *Three Junes*. In her latest, Glass gives readers another all-consuming novel, this time centered around Malachy Burns, the journalist who made a profound impact on *Three Junes*' beloved protagonist, Fenno McLeod. Beautifully told, this is an immensely satisfying tale of family secrets, hidden truths, and personal discovery—a moving story that leaves the reader breathless, in awe of the author's ability to hit each and every note."

—Anderson McKean, Page & Palette, Fairhope, AL



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## Learning to Walk in the Dark

**by Barbara Brown Taylor**

"Why are we so quick to light the night, to focus only on the positive, and to dismiss discomfort? When is the last time you noticed darkness within you, took a moment to figure out its source, and then let it be? Taylor set out to do just that in her new memoir. She wanted to learn how our culture has lost its balance by demonizing darkness and how she might regain equilibrium. Taylor watched the moon rise, explored a cave, and delved into the writings of those who had already embraced the shadows to remind us that even in the dark, we can find strength."

—Hannah Johnson-Breimeier, Boswell Book Company, Milwaukee, WI



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## Inappropriate Behavior

Stories, by Murray Farish

"What is your 'inappropriate behavior' of choice? In this hip collection of stories, debut author Farish exposes an America living on the edge—the edge of the law, the edge of grief, the edge of society. Portraying characters who appear as real as a next-door neighbor, each unique story will make you wonder just what is happening behind closed doors. Highly original and focused on the unusual, *Inappropriate Behavior* is an auspicious beginning for a talented new voice."

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



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## In Paradise

A Novel, by Peter Matthiessen

"A large group of very different people, each with their own reason, goes on retreat at Auschwitz. Visiting Auschwitz for several days could not be more stark, yet Matthiessen masterfully layers in a chiaroscuro of experiences where feelings and responses surprise even the most resolute. The reader's experience of this novel seems closer to being washed over by music or wind than by what we think of as reading. Some wholly other form of communication is at hand in this fine, fine novel."

—Sheryl Coteur, Copperfield's Books, Sebastopol, CA



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## Astonish Me

A Novel, by Maggie Shipstead

"Following *Seating Arrangements*, one of the favorite debut novels of 2012, Shipstead's sophomore effort does not disappoint. *Astonish Me* is beautifully written and takes an in-depth look at the world of competitive ballet. Ballet has always been Joan's dream but she doesn't quite have what it takes. When she finds herself pregnant and her career ending, she sees her son and his friend Chloe as a chance for a do-over. Long-kept secrets threaten to topple her world as Joan struggles to keep her family together. An engaging psychological family drama."

—Amanda Skelton, Union Avenue Books, Knoxville, TN



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## Mimi Malloy, At Last!

A Novel, by Julia MacDonnell

"In this family drama, MacDonnell does a fine job of conjuring up the Irish Catholic diaspora and its ramifications that play out well into the last part of the 20th century. Mimi lives on her own in Boston but not without her nosy daughters coming around all the time. Mimi is having flashbacks to her youth and through conversations with her sisters, she remembers the dark secret that has been hanging over the family for years. Unforgettable!"

—Valerie Koehler, Blue Willow Bookshop, Houston, TX



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## Murder at Cape Three Points

by **Kwei Quartey**

"Two bodies appear drifting in a canoe at the Cape Three Points oil drilling rig. They turn out to be Charles and Fiona Smith-Aidoos, prominent members of the local community. Charles works for Malgum Oil, the company that owns the rig. The local police investigate, but nothing comes of it. Sapphire, the Smith-Aidoos' niece, requests the help of the Ghanaian federal police, and Inspector Darko Dawson of the Accra police is assigned. Quartey portrays the country of Ghana with all its charms and quirks, a culture that stands at the brink of the modern world, yet has not lost its tribal traditions. The result is a thoroughly fascinating book."

—Janice Hunsche, Kaleidosaurus Books, Fishers, IN

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## The Cairo Affair

by **Olen Steinhauer**

"Steinhauer has once again produced an extremely well-constructed page-turner, this time set in Egypt during the initial Libyan uprising. Layers of deceit, betrayal, and duplicity permeate this story of an alleged American plan to steal the revolution from the hands of the Libyan people. The CIA in Cairo is turning Egyptian secret service members; the Egyptians spy on the other services and have sources in many foreign embassies; and there is a leak of the Libyan plan that points to an American diplomat who is murdered. Plenty of intrigue, unreliable sources, shifting allegiances, and philosophy—Steinhauer manages it all superbly."

—Darwin Ellis, Books on the Common, Ridgefield, CT

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**APRIL '14**

## My Wish List

A Novel, by **Grégoire Delacourt, Anthea Bell (Trans.)**

"This story traces the path Jocelyne's life takes after she is the unexpected winner of a very large lottery prize. The title refers to the lists that Jocelyne begins to compose—lists of what she can do with the money—and their content is as telling as the fact that Jocelyne has kept the news of her win to herself, not even telling her husband or cashing the check. Delacourt's descriptions of Jocelyne's fabric shop in a small town in France are so beguiling that it doesn't take long for the reader to want Jocelyne's life to remain unchanged, but the lottery win has set things in motion, and the results are unexpected. A lovely gem of a book."

—Jenny Lyons, Vero Beach Book Center, Vero Beach, FL

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## Roosevelt's Beast

A Novel, by **Louis Bayard**

"It is 1914 and Teddy Roosevelt and his son, Kermit, along with other members of a scientific expedition, are traveling deep into the jungle to map Brazil's Rio da Duvida, the River of Doubt. Kermit and Teddy are kidnapped by a mysterious Amazonian tribe, and the head tribesman explains that the tribe needs their help to kill 'The Beast With No Tracks,' which has been killing jaguars as well as humans, but has never been seen. Another wonderful reinvention of the past by acclaimed author Bayard, whose literary style includes wit, suspense, and psychological horror with a twist."

—Karen Briggs, Great Northern Books & Hobbies, Oscoda, MI

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## Strange Harvest

**A Tale of Cannibals, Colonialism, and Michael Rockefeller's Tragic Quest for Primitive Art, by Carl Hoffman**

"The tragedy of Michael Rockefeller's death is made far more poignant by the larger tragedy of the environment that surrounded it. Faulty ethnographic assumptions, compounded by unsettling socio-economic factors, bring a depth and pathos to *Savage Harvest*. A rare balance of mystery and the author's slowly unfolding epiphany of understanding is maintained throughout this riveting and edifying work of nonfiction."

—Kenny Brechner, Devaney Doak & Garrett Booksellers, Farmington, ME



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## The Bohemians

**Mark Twain and the San Francisco Writers Who Reinvented American Literature, by Ben Tarnoff**

"Four writers who changed the face of American literature—Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Charles Warren Stoddard, and Ina Coolbrith—arrived in San Francisco in the 1860s and immediately found the city's 'intoxicating energy' to be just the elixir they needed to create a new American literature free from the 'heavy European influence that dominated the East.' Tarnoff makes the Bohemians come alive both as a group and as individuals in the blossoming West Coast, the site of burgeoning immigration from five continents. This book is an essential reference that needs to be in every home across America."

—Trayce and Jerry Finney, Hiram Books, Hiram, GA



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## Mind of Winter

**by Laura Kasischke**

"On a snowy Christmas morning in a Detroit suburb, Holly Judge asks her daughter Tatiana to help her prepare dinner for their guests while her husband drives to the airport to get his parents. Holly reflects on the circumstances of Tatiana's adoption but her recollections become more and more confusing as the day progresses and she feels that 'something has followed them from Russia.' Kasischke has accomplished a remarkable feat in writing a highly suspenseful novel with very little action and whose heart-wrenching conclusion will haunt you long after you finish reading."

—Pierre Camy, Schuler Books & Music, Grand Rapids, MI



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## The Book of Duels

**Flash Fiction, by Michael Garriga, Tynan Kerr (Illus.)**

"There are many great storytellers published today, but it takes an exceptional writer to tell a story in so few words—and Michael Garriga does it brilliantly. Told candidly from the perspective of each duelist and a witness, *The Book of Duels* delves into the final thoughts—of honor, love, hatred, anger, God—of those facing death. Gritty and often darkly humorous, this debut collection will make readers take note of flash fiction."

—Lindsay Pingel, Inkwood Books, Tampa, FL



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