A Little Life: A Novel
By Hanya Yanagihara
(Anchor, 97808041472707, $17)
“With heart-rending perfection, Yanagihara follows four college roommates through three decades of relationships, careers, struggles, and triumphs: JB, Malcolm, Willem, and Jude—the artist, the architect, the actor, and the lawyer. At the novel’s heart is Jude, the group’s emotional epicenter and heart. Each one is as different from each other as they are from anything else on the bookshelves. At the heart of all her stories are relatable characters who yearn for love and security. If you are in the mood for mystical, moody stories that you can finish in 20 minutes, but think about for hours, Get in Trouble!”
—Melinda Powers, Bookshop Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA

Of Things Gone Astray: A Novel
By Janina Matthewson
(The Friday Project, 9780000813757, $14.99)
“In London, a group of people have lost that which they hold most dear. A girl stands in the airport waiting for her lover while her feet turn to roots and her skin to bark. A recluse loses the front wall of her home, while a workaholic cannot find his office building. Piano keys, a sense of direction, and a boy’s relationship with his father all have gone astray. Slowly, each victim adapts, unwittingly helping one another during the briefest encounters. Each loss is heartbreaking and each character’s struggle to survive is inspiring. With stunning prose and insight, Matthewson uses magic to illuminate truth in this hauntingly beautiful debut novel.”
—Amelia Stymacks, Northshire Bookstore, Saratoga Springs, NY

Orhan’s Inheritance: A Novel
By Aline Ohanesian
(Algonquin Books, 9781616205300, $15.95)
“Debut author Ohanesian’s historical novel relives the nearly forgotten tragedy of the Armenian genocide during and after WWII. Through deporations, massacres, and executions of Christian and Jewish Armenians, the Ottoman Empire and its successors eliminated 1.5 million citizens. Ohanesian’s beautifully written book shares a tale of passionate love, unspeakable horror, incredible strength, and the hidden stories that haunt a family. Highly recommended.”
—Doug Robinson, Eagle Eye Book Shop, Decatur, GA

Pieces of My Mother: A Memoir
By Melissa Cistaro
(Sourcebooks, 9781492632113, $14.99)
“Cistaro’s story begins with the last days of her mother’s life. 35 years after she abandoned her children and husband with no explanation, Cistaro is still seeking the truth and the one answer that she feels she needs most desperately – why did her mother leave? What is most impressive about this memoir is the honesty with which the author details her own anxieties, and readers will relate to her and cheer her on when she makes an important, life-changing decision. This is an amazing story of forgiveness, connection, understanding, and grace.”
—Lynn Riehl, Nicola’s Books, Ann Arbor, MI

Where the Dead Pause and the Japanese Say Goodbye: A Journey
By Marie Mutsuki Mockett
(W.W. Norton, 9780393352290, $16.95)
“Mockett’s journey begins in the wake of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, near the site of the Fukushima Daiichi power plant, and encompasses a nation’s grieving as well as her own. Through her beautiful descriptions of traditions, rituals, conversations, and quiet moments, she shows the nuances of a people picking up and moving on. By seeking out the cultural context of her subject’s very human reactions and emotions, Mockett walks a fine line that globalization has tried to erase entirely, and our understanding of the events and their aftermath is richer for it.”
—Rachel Cass, Harvard Book Store, Cambridge, MA

Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America
By Barbara Ehrenreich
(Picador, 9780312626686, $16)
“Ehrenreich goes undercover, joining millions of Americans working at minimum wage jobs to see if it is as easy as some contend. She experiences firsthand the below-subsistence, dehumanizing conditions of much hourly wage work, but she also finds the remarkable humanity of the people who make daily life possible for the rest of us.”
—Kris Kleinidient, Left Bank Books, Saint Louis, MO