The Book of Aron: A Novel
By Jim Shepard
(Vintage, 9781010872741, $15.95)
“Shepard has performed a small miracle in channeling the voice of a young Jewish boy trapped in the Warsaw ghetto. He traces Aron’s progression from country bumpkin and reluctant scholar to a ‘macher’ on the streets of Warsaw, where his cunning and courage prolong the lives of his increasingly oppressed and desperate family. Aron’s story meshes with that of Janusz Korczak, well-known pediatrician, child rights advocate, and orphanage operator, when Aron is rescued from the streets after the death of all of his family members. The final scene of Korczak leading the ragtag parade of children to Treblinka closes an astonishing portrayal of the Nazi evil viewed through the eyes of a very resourceful, tragic, but indefatigable child.”
—Darwin Ellis, Books on the Common, Ridgefield, CT

In a Dark, Dark Wood: A Novel
By Ruth Ware
(Gallery/Scout Press, 9781501123311, $16)
“This book has all the trappings of a good English mystery—an approaching storm, an isolated house, mysterious footprints, and a group of relative strangers all locked in together. Ware’s characters are playfully crafted, and just as you think they’re becoming a cliché, they do something totally unexpected. In a Dark, Dark Wood is a titillating exploration of the classic tropes, layered with the complex style and hard edges found in the best modern thrillers. Highly recommended!”
—Kelsey Myers, Old Firehouse Books, Fort Collins, CO

Speak: A Novel
By Louisa Hall
(Ecco, 9780062391209, $15.99)
“This is an amazingly complex novel that explores humanity, time, memory, communication, love, and the fear of losing what once was. Introducing five different narratives that at first seem unconnected, Hall creates a shimmering sardonic web of a story: delicately crafted, fragile, and infinitely beautiful, uncovering humanity’s most elusive and abstract thoughts. Hall impresses upon the reader the importance of speaking not just in order to move forward, but also in order to retain the past: ‘They are all in me, in the words that I speak, as long as I am still speaking.’”
—Nancy Solberg, Odyssey Bookshop, South Hadley, MA

Don’t Let’s Go to the Dogs Tonight: An African Childhood
By Alexandra Fuller
(Random House Trade Paperbacks, 9780375758997, $16)
Originally published in hardcover in 2001
“Fuller’s compelling memoir about her unconventional childhood growing up in Africa is sometimes heartbreaking, often funny, yet never sentimental or political. Living in Rhodesia in the 1970s was not easy. Beyond the difficulties of coping with the day-to-day dangers of scorpions, venomous snakes, disease, and other life-threatening situations, the Fuller family also had to contend with the perils of living in a country torn apart by war. Fuller writes about her unorthodox upbringing, her unusual parents, and the tragic loss of three of her siblings with candor and love.”
—Adrian Newell, Warwick’s, La Jolla, CA

Killer Angels: The Classic Novel of the Civil War
By Michael Shaara
(Ballantine Books, 9780345407276, $16)
Originally published in hardcover in 1974
“Killer Angels was the most recommended title when I opened Lemuria Books in 1975. Even though it also won the Pulitzer Prize that year, it was not until years later that I finally read this great Civil War novel. Like Truman Capote’s In Cold Blood, Shaara’s Killer Angels created a new genre that many have tried to copy.”
—John Evans, Lemuria Books, Jackson, MS

The Transit of Venus
By Shirley Hazzard
(Penguin Books, 9780140107470, $16)
Originally published in hardcover in 1980
“WWII has just ended when two Australian sisters—Grace, whose nature is described by her name, and Caro, more angular in terms of beauty and character—encounter the Englishmen who will subsume their lives. The result is not only a rapturous love story, but also a novel of ideas as adept at skewering family life in both its ugly and beautiful glory. These characters love each other, except when they don’t, and every interaction is crackling with Tyler’s quirky and unassuming wit. A Spool of Blue Thread shows how lives intersect—very rarely neatly—and how that messiness gives meaning to every human connection. Tyler is a master of her craft—this being her 20th novel—and she is a treasure to read.”
—Anmiryam Budner, Main Point Books, Bryn Mawr, PA

The Sunlit Night: A Novel
By Rebecca Dinerstein
(Bloomsbury, 9781632861646, $16)
“The endless daylight of a Norwegian summer is the perfect backdrop for this warm and quirky debut filled with unusual characters and situations, a setting that is real yet somehow out of time, visual and precise writing, emotional warmth, and faith in the healing power of love. This tale of Frances and Yasha, their families, and their companions during a transformative summer in perpetual Arctic light is a perfect read for fans of Nicole Krauss’ The History of Love or Bill Forsyth’s classic movie, Local Hero.”
—Anmiryam Budner, Main Point Books, Bryn Mawr, PA

A Spool of Blue Thread: A Novel
By Anne Tyler
(Ballantine Books, 9780553394399, $16)
“Tyler’s story of three generations of the Whitshank family has all the hallmarks for which she is so well known. There is drama, dysfunction, and sorrow aplenty here, but Tyler has an amazing way of exposing family life in both its ugly and beautiful glory. These characters love each other, except when they don’t, and every interaction is crackling with Tyler’s quirky and unassuming wit. A Spool of Blue Thread shows how lives intersect—very rarely neatly—and how that messiness gives meaning to every human connection. Tyler is a master of her craft—this being her 20th novel—and she is a treasure to read.”
—Dinah Hughley, Powell’s Books, Portland, OR