The Book of Essie: A Novel
By Meghan MacLean Weir
(Vintage, 9780525563020, $16.95)

“Essie finds out she is pregnant, she must protect herself and her future in the face of public scorn. Weir proves herself to be a brilliant new talent with a sensitive and unflinching take on child exploitation and life in the public eye. A must-read!”

—Liv Stratman, Books Are Magic, Brooklyn, NY

Census: A Novel
By Jesse Ball
(Ecco, 9780062676846, $16.99)

“Jesse Ball, you brilliant weirdo, how did you do it? Census is a novel about everything big, told in the miniature, heart-wrenching tableau of a census. We are grazed by the notion that something is a bit different in this world, breathing down our necks. Sentences inspire double takes, characters jump from the page into life, and a transformative journey is undertaken for both the reader and the characters. As the end of the alphabet approaches, the landscape becomes more haunting, and the reader learns more about love and death than I thought was possible in a single book.”

—Halley Pary, Parnassus Books, Nashville, TN

Clock Dance: A Novel
By Anne Tyler
(Vintage, 9780525563020, $16.95)

“Anne Tyler’s extraordinary ability to tell a story in the simplest language has helped her become one of our most beloved authors. Here she brings us Willa Drake, who has been seeking something all her life, it seems. It’s not until she’s reached middle age that she finally opens a new, in her heart and welcomes in the unsual group of people: an entire neighborhood, ready to bring her a new perspective and understanding of life. Tyler’s newest is one for book lovers, and one for you, too.”

—Linda Bond, Auntie’s Bookstore, Spokane, WA

Dear Mrs. Bird: A Novel
By AJ Pearce
( Scribner, 9781501156250, $16.99)

“This story of loves both great and small is most certainly not saccharine sweet. My Ex-Life reminds us that there is a reason for everything, and that sometimes it’s wise to go back to the familiar (albeit old) parts of ourselves to remind us just how far we’ve come. Stephen McCauley writes like your best friend—the one who always says what you’re thinking but you’d never have the guts to utter out loud. His perception of even the mundane tasks of life reveals a witty tone dripping with self deprecation and amusement. This book is most certainly one you should put at the top of your to-be-read pile!”

—Jordan Arias, Anderson’s Bookshop, Naperville, IL

The Death of Mrs. Westaway: A Novel
By Ruth Ware
(Gallery/Scout Press, 9781501156250, $16.99)

“Does Ruth Westaway keep getting better and better? Yes, she does. A down-on-her-luck protagonist, a too-good-to-be-true inheritance, and a creepy old mansion combine for a deliciously suspenseful tale. The plucky heroine, Hal, believes she’s mistakenly been identified as an heir to a great estate, but she decides to play along in the hopes of scamming a couple thousand pounds out of the situation. Once she’s arrived at the reading of the will, she quickly realizes that she is in way over her head. This is a deceptive and suspense-riddled thrill ride!”

—Connie Brooks, Battenkill Books, Cambridge, NY

The High Season: A Novel
By Judy Blundell
(Random House Trade Paperbacks, 9780552508731, $17)

“What would you do to keep your home by the sea on Long Island? Rent it out for the summer to get some cash to pay the bills? But what if the person who rents the house this summer is out to get more than the house? Ruthie’s about to find out what she’s capable of when the rich and famous Adeline Clay takes over her nest. The parties, guests, and nasty business keep building until Ruthie reaches the end of her patience and there’s only one thing left to do. You’ll be glad you decided to go along on this ride!”

—Linda Bond, Auntie’s Bookstore, Spokane, WA

The Mars Room: A Novel
By Rachel Kushner
(Scribner, 9781476756585, $17)

“Rachel Kushner writes some seriously smart and gorgeous prose, so when she headed to prison in The Mars Room, I went. It is dark. It is painful. At times, the level of detail in the book and its fabulously invented and drawn characters make feel like a documentary. We are struggling with so many social justice issues across the country right now it is overwhelming, and I worried that The Mars Room would push me over the edge. Instead, I couldn’t stop reading. What really happened? Who is to blame? How will things turn out? How can we make things better? Ultimately, Kushner’s great success is profoundly illustrating a very simple message: It’s complicated.”

—Sara Hinckley, Hudson Booksellers, Marietta, GA

My Ex-Life: A Novel
By Stephen McCauley
(Flafron Books, 9781522424455, $16.99)

“This story of loves both great and small is most certainly not saccharine sweet. My Ex-Life reminds us that there is a reason for everything, and that sometimes it’s wise to go back to the familiar (albeit old) parts of ourselves to remind us just how far we’ve come. Stephen McCauley writes like your best friend—the one who always says what you’re thinking but you’d never have the guts to utter out loud. His perception of even the mundane tasks of life reveals a witty tone dripping with self deprecation and amusement. This book is most certainly one you should put at the top of your to-be-read pile!”

—Jordan Arias, Anderson’s Bookshop, Naperville, IL

Spinning Silver: A Novel
By Naomi Novik
(Del Rey, 9780399180996, $17)

“In her second standalone fantasy, Novik once again mines the tales we know to create something completely modern yet timeless. This reimagined version of Rumpelstiltskin, set in a terrorist, Eastern Europe-like country called Litvas, is breathtaking. It explores female autonomy, class, Jewish life, and oppression while telling a compelling and richly realized fantasy tale. I just wanted to spend more time with Miryem, Wanda, Irina, and the story’s other vibrant, compelling voices. If you loved Uprooted, don’t hesitate to dive into this one. If you haven’t read Novik’s earlier work, begin here—you’ll be hooked.”

—Anmiryam Budner, Main Point Books, Wayne, PA

There There: A Novel
By Tommy Orange
(Vintage, 9780525436072, $16)

“The Mars Room
By Rachel Kushner
(Scribner, 9781476756585, $17)

“Rachel Kushner writes some seriously smart and gorgeous prose, so when she headed to prison in The Mars Room, I went. It is dark. It is painful. At times, the level of detail in the book and its fabulously invented and drawn characters make feel like a documentary. We are struggling with so many social justice issues across the country right now it is overwhelming, and I worried that The Mars Room would push me over the edge. Instead, I couldn’t stop reading. What really happened? Who is to blame? How will things turn out? How can we make things better? Ultimately, Kushner’s great success is profoundly illustrating a very simple message: It’s complicated.”

—Sara Hinckley, Hudson Booksellers, Marietta, GA

Welcome to Lagos
By Chibundu Onuzo
(Gapput, 9781538720289, $16.95)

“A disparate and electric ensemble cast—sad, hopeful, honorable, conquiving, quixotic, and just plain wacky—drive Chibundu Onuzo’s remarkable debut, but it’s the character of Nigeria itself—the air and soil of its countryside and the high-voltage freneticism of its largest city—that so often shines through, undeniably alive. Equally madcap, heartbreaking, and redemptive, Welcome to Lagos unfailingly and beautifully captures the ambitions and contradictions of a nation on the brink.”

—Sam Kaas, Third Place Books, Lake Forest Park, WA

The Word Is Murder: A Novel
By Anthony Horowitz
(Harper Perennial, 9780062676801, $16.99)

“When a healthy 60-year-old woman is found strangled in her London home the very day she had organized and paid for her own funeral, former police detective—now consultant—Daniel Hawthorne convinces author Anthony Horowitz to shadow his investigation to eventually publish this very story. Imagine sitting in a darkened English pub listening to Horowitz as he tells the story of the unbearable but captivating Hawthorne. Readers will quickly join in playing detective as characters, plot twists, clues, and red herrings escalate. Delicious!”

—Jennifer Gwydir, Blue Willow Bookshop, Houston, TX