The Innocents: A Novel
By Michael Crammey
(Anchor, 9781984989234, $16.95)
"Michael Crammey is a master chronicler of isolation, and The Innocents is a perfect example. Following an orphaned brother and sister trying to survive on the coast of Newfoundland, this is a spare and elemental novel about the power of family and the act of survival, even in the harshest circumstances."
—Tyler Goodson, Avid Bookshop, Athens, GA

Long Bright River: A Novel
By Liz Moore
(Riverhead Books, 9780525540867, $17)
"This story’s power comes not just from its beautiful writing but the reality of its characters and the incisive nature of its setting. Liz Moore has created a masterpiece that exposes the opioid epidemic in Philadelphia, highlighting the vulnerability of its victims and the sheer scope of suffering it causes. From the first page, when the murder mystery begins, readers will suffer and rejoice with the novel’s oh-so-human characters. The power of this story is a fire that will linger for a long time."
—Hilary Kotecki, The Doylestown & Lahaska Bookshops, Doylestown, PA

Olive, Again: A Novel
By Elizabeth Strout
(Random House Trade Paperbacks, 9780812986471, $16)
"Thank goodness Elizabeth Strout decided to return for another round with one of the most beloved, maddening, confounding, and compelling characters I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. Readers will delight in the fact that Olive, while forging new relationships and puzzling over long-existing ones, remains the crazy, complicated family member you just can’t quit. Add in spare yet beautifully rendered prose and we have a book that exposes the opioid epidemic in Philadelphia, highlighting the vulnerability of its victims and the sheer scope of suffering it causes. From the first page, when the murder mystery begins, readers will suffer and rejoice with the novel’s oh-so-human characters. The power of this story is a fire that will linger for a long time."
—Page Berger, Barrett Bookstore, Darien, CT

Dead Astronauts: A Novel
By Jeff VanderMeer
(Picador, 9781250575827, $17)
"Set in the same world as his excellent 2017 novel Borne, Dead Astronauts finds VanderMeer again at the top of his game exploring a universe destroyed by the nefarious Company. Delightful strangeness abounds: a man disintegrating into hundreds of salamanders, an ancient giant fish called Leviathan, a large blue fox with a message to deliver across time—all these and more make Dead Astronauts one of VanderMeer’s most engagingly strange and beguiling novels. As he continues to explore deeply environmental themes, his unique lens makes our views on race, identity, humanity, and the very existence of the self."—Faith Parke-Dodge, Page 158 Books, Wake Forest, NC

Separation Anxiety: A Novel
By Laura Zigman
(Ecco, 9780062909084, $16.99)
"Told with humor, wit, and wisdom, Laura Zigman’s novel explores the unexpected trials of middle age. We follow Judy Vogel, who is rebounding from the recent deaths of her parents, struggling with writer’s block, juggling financial issues, coping with a failing marriage, and raising an adolescent son. When she comes across her son’s old baby slings, she starts to wear the family dog as a unique form of support. This thought-provoking novel is full of heart, hope, and the strength to move forward."
—Maxwell Gregory, Lake Forest Book Store, Lake Forest, IL

The Water Dancer: A Novel
By Ta-Nehisi Coates
(One World, 9780399590610, $18)
"Ta-Nehisi Coates understands something big and he understands it better than anyone else right now. The Water Dancer led me on a journey up and down the landscape of American slavery with a narrative that feels like The Book of Exodus meets, well, Ta-Nehisi Coates. Over 400 pages I have cried, I have laughed, I have been educated, and I have been enlightened. Coates writes with an honesty that can only come from a sublime, even spiritual, understanding of the souls of the white man and the black man in America. Written with poignancy and humanity, The Water Dancer left me stunned but clear-headed, like I had just been woken up from a deep, dream-filled sleep."
—Norris Rettiger, Lemuria Bookstore, Jackson, MS

On Swift Horses: A Novel
By Shannon Pufahl
(Riverhead Books, 9780525528317, $17)
"This densely atmospheric debut sinks its hooks deep into post-war America’s tender underbelly, exposing the homophobia and bigotry beneath a nation’s renewed spirit of hope and opportunity. Muriel and Julius are the restless outsiders, siblings-in-law who share a passion for gambling as well as their more furtive passion. Both are trying to make their own opportunities to find love and happiness—a gamble that one will unexpectedly win and one will just as unexpectedly lose. An immersive and rewarding first novel."
—Karen Brisette, Shakespeare & Co., New York, NY

When Time Stopped
By Ariana Neumann
(Scribner, 9781982106386, $15)
"This book is beautiful, intimate, breathtaking, and heartbreaking. It reads like a novel and yet gives a better sense of what was happening to Jewish families during the Holocaust than any history book I’ve read. I feel so invested in the Neumann family and their friends, as if I know them personally. More than anything, my takeaway from this book is the love and hope that was so clearly poured into it."
—Gabrielle Belsisle, An Unlikely Story, Plainville, MA