**Afterlife: A Novel**

By Julie Álvarez

(Algonquin Books, 9781643751368, $16.95)

"Most people would make sour milk out of the lemons Antonia has been given, but she finds herself more resilient than she knew she was. When her husband passes away the same day she retires and the problems keep adding up, she must decide what to do. Julia Álvarez writes like she painted a picture you need to sit beside. Breathless and cinematic, this book is one to share with friends and the one we should be talking about in 2020."

—Suzanne Lucey, Page ISB Books, Wake Forest, NC

**Becoming Duchess Goldblatt**

By Anonymous

(Mariner Books, 9780358569831, $15.99)

"After the collapse of her marriage and her whole life, the anonymous author of Becoming Duchess Goldblatt started a Twitter account, speaking in the voice of an imperious, slightly dotty, always caring 81-year-old writer. The Duchess became the focus of intense adoration and eventually helped her creator to reconnect with the real world as she kept her identity a secret. Becoming Duchess Goldblatt is a glorious memoir, a truly 21st-century tale of life both online and off."

—David Enyeart, Next Chapter Booksellers, St. Paul, MN

**The Book of Longings: A Novel**

By Sue Monk Kidd

(Penguin Books, 9780438130591, $17)

"I absolutely could not put this book down. Sue Monk Kidd has written a narrative that not only centers on women who are missing from or largely ignored in scriptural accounts, but it focuses on their voices, stories, and hardships—their everyday lives and bigger-than-everyday longings. As Kidd is writing Ana’s story, Ana herself is writing the stories of women she’s learned about and women she knows. Her determination to give them voices weaves beautifully and reverently with Jesus’ teachings about reaching out to the marginalized and the forgotten."

—Anastacia Compton, Roundabout Books, Bend, OR

**Godshot: A Novel**

By Chelsea Bieker

(Catapult, 9781646220507, $16.95)

"Within the first chapter of Godshot, you can hear Chelsea Bieker’s fist swinging toward you, but it still won’t prepare you for the punch to the gut this book delivers. Lacey springs off the page in her first moments and takes you along with her on her dust-torn, glitter-stained, bloodied journey. Sometimes I got tired of being reminded how dangerous it is to be a woman (because, dammit, I KNOW!), but Bieker’s prose is so beautifully consuming I found myself whispering through words that twisted my insides. What a resounding book."

—Amy Van Keuren, Savoy Bookshop & Café, Westerly, RI

**How Much of These Hills Is Gold: A Novel**

By C Pam Zhang

(Riverhead Books, 9780525537212, $16)

"In the most inventive and fresh language I’ve seen in a long time, C Pam Zhang’s How Much of These Hills Is Gold, set during the American gold rush, tells the story of siblings Lucy and Sam as they wander the western expanse to give their father a proper burial. Zhang transforms the mythology of the American West and reclaims it through the eyes of first-generation Asian-Americans, tackling themes of race, immigration, and gender and creating a new narrative of a voice and people often left out of this pivotal historical period. Strange and surreal, this is a novel to read with care and gratitude."

—Chris Alonso, Books & Books, Coral Gables, FL

**Pretty Things: A Novel**

By Janelle Brown

(Random House Trade Paperbacks, 9780525479178, $17)

"Nina Ross is a grifter, just like her mom. She didn’t have a lot growing up, and they were always on the move. Vanessa, heiress of a family fortune, is a famous Instagram influencer. Everyone loves her, but her smile hides a past filled with tragedy. Nina and Vanessa’s lives become intertwined as part of a long con. Pretty Things is excellently written, with an intricate plot full of twists. I loved absolutely everything about this book. I highly recommend it."

—Rebecca Minnock, Murder by the Book, Houston, TX

**Three Hours in Paris: A Novel**

By Cara Black

(Soho Crime, 9781641292580, $16.95)

"I couldn’t put down this well-written and fast-paced thriller. This is the story of Kate Rees, an American female spy, and her tragedies and triumphs during WWII. Cara creates a captivating story around Hitler’s three-hour visit to Paris, to which he never returned again, and takes you on a wild ride through the city that day. Each piece of the timeline is expertly stitched together, and I found myself completely involved! Cara Black, you have a new fan!"

—Lisa Valentin, Ink Fish Books, Warren, RI

**The Roxy Letters: A Novel**

By Mary Pauline Lowry

(William Morrow Paperbacks, 9780062966759, $16.99)

"Simon Boudlin’s passion is to be the best fiddler there is, beholden to no one and following his muse wherever it takes him. But when he meets the beautiful Doris Aherne, his plans change. Paulette Jiles once again captures the great promise and sweeping beauty of the Texas frontier in cinematic prose as poetic and lyrical as the tunes that pour forth from the fiddler himself. Simon joins that great pantheon of strivers for a better life, and readers will root for him every step of the way. Fans of News of the World can rejoice—with Simon the Fiddler, Jiles has done it again!"

—Peter Sherman, Wellesley Books, Wellesley, MA