

## Renata Adler Speedboat

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of NYRB Classics, a handpicked anthology of selections from the series. In Greek mythology, Ariadne gave Theseus a ball of red thread to guide him through the labyrinth, and the Red Thread offers a path through and a way to explore the ins and outs and twists and turns of the celebrated NYRB Classics series, now twenty years old. The collection brings together twenty-five pieces drawn from the more than five hundred books that have come out as NYRB Classics over the last twenty years. Stories, essays, interviews, poems, along with chapters from novels and memoirs and other longer narratives have been selected by Edwin Frank, the series editor, to chart a distinctive, entertaining, and thought-provoking course across the expansive and varied terrain of the Classics series.

A NEW YORK REVIEW BOOKS ORIGINAL Notorious for a misspent life full of binges, blackouts, and unimaginable bad luck, Malcolm Lowry managed, against every odd, to complete and publish two novels, one of them, *Under the Volcano*, an indisputable masterpiece. At the time of his death in 1957, Lowry also left behind a great deal of uncollected and unpublished writing: stories, novellas, drafts of novels and revisions of drafts of novels (Lowry was a tireless revisiter and reviser—and interrupter—of his work), long, impassioned, haunting, beautiful letters overflowing with wordplay and lament, fraught short poems that display a sozzled off-the-cuff inspiration all Lowry's own. Over the years these writings have appeared in various volumes, all long out of print. Here, in *The Voyage That Never Ends*, the poet, translator, and critic Michael Hofmann has drawn on all this scattered and inaccessible material to assemble the first book that reflects the full range of Lowry's extraordinary and singular achievement. The result is a revelation. In the letters—acknowledged to be among modern literature's greatest—we encounter a character who was, as contemporaries attested, as spellbinding and lovable as he was self-destructive and infuriating. In the late fiction—the long story “Through the Panama,” sections of unfinished novels such as *Dark as the Grave Wherein My Friend Is Laid*, and the little-known *La Mordida*—we discover a writer who is blazing a path into the unknown and, as he goes, improvising a whole new kind of writing. Lowry had set out to produce a great novel, something to top *Under the Volcano*, a multivolume epic and intimate tale of purgatorial suffering and ultimate redemption (called, among other things, “The Voyage That Never Ends”). That book was never to be. What he produced instead was an unprecedented and prophetic blend of fact and fiction, confession and confusion, essay and free play, that looks forward to the work of writers as different as Norman Mailer and William Gass, but is like nothing else. Almost in spite of himself, Lowry succeeded in transforming his disastrous life into an exhilarating art of disaster. *The Voyage That Never Ends* is a new and indispensable entry into the world of one of the masters of modern literature.

Named *Vogue's* “Best Books to Read This Summer” ? *The Millions* “Most Anticipated: The Great Second-Half 2021 Book Preview” “A shimmering, dreamlike experience of multiple lives that collide and repel through fate and coincidence.” —Lydia Kiesling, author of *The Golden State* A luminous literary debut following two patients in recovery after an experimental memory drug warps their lives. Lucien moves to Los Angeles to be with his grandmother as she undergoes an experimental memory

treatment for Alzheimer's using the new drug, Memoroxin. An emerging photographer, he's also running from the sudden death of his mother, a well-known artist whose legacy haunts Lucien. Sophie has just landed the lead in the upcoming performance of *La Sylphide* with the Los Angeles Ballet Company. She still waitresses at the Chateau Marmont during her off hours, witnessing the recreational use of Memoroxin—or Mem—among the Hollywood elite. When Lucien and Sophie meet at The Center, founded by the ambitious yet conflicted Dr. Angelica Sloane to treat patients who've abused Mem, they have no memory of how they got there—or why they feel so inexplicably drawn to each other. Is it attraction, or something they cannot remember from “before”? Set in a city that seems to have no identity of its own, *The Shimmering State* is a graceful meditation on the power of story and its creation. It masterfully explores memory and how it can elude us, trap us, or set us free.

What is really going on here? For decades Renata Adler has been asking and answering this question with unmatched urgency. In her essays and long-form journalism, she has captured the cultural zeitgeist, distrusted the accepted wisdom, and written stories that would otherwise go untold. As a staff writer at *The New Yorker* from 1963 to 2001, Adler reported on civil rights from Selma, Alabama; on the war in Biafra, the Six-Day War, and the Vietnam War; on the Nixon impeachment inquiry and Congress; on cultural life in Cuba. She has also written about cultural matters in the United States, films (as chief film critic for *The New York Times*), books, politics, television, and pop music. Like many journalists, she has put herself in harm's way in order to give us the news, not the “news” we have become accustomed to—celebrity journalism, conventional wisdom, received ideas—but the actual story, an account unfettered by ideology or consensus. She has been unafraid to speak up when too many other writers have joined the pack. In this sense, Adler is one of the few independent journalists writing in America today. This collection of Adler's nonfiction draws on *Toward a Radical Middle* (a selection of her earliest *New Yorker* pieces), *A Year in the Dark* (her film reviews), and *Canaries in the Mineshaft* (a selection of essays on politics and media), and also includes uncollected work from the past two decades. The more recent pieces are concerned with, in her words, “misrepresentation, coercion, and abuse of public process, and, to a degree, the journalist's role in it.” With a brilliant literary and legal mind, Adler parses power by analyzing language: the language of courts, of journalists, of political figures, of the man on the street. In doing so, she unravels the tangled narratives that pass for the resolution of scandal and finds the threads that others miss, the ones that explain what really is going on here—from the Watergate scandal, to the “preposterous” Kenneth Starr report submitted to the House during the Clinton impeachment inquiry, to the plagiarism and fabrication scandal of the former *New York Times* reporter Jayson Blair. And she writes extensively about the Supreme Court and the power of its rulings, including its fateful decision in *Bush v. Gore*.

An intellectually thrilling and emotionally wrenching investigation of otherness: the need for one person to understand another person completely, the impossibility of any such absolute knowing, and the erotics of this separation. Can one person know another person? How do we live through other people? Is it possible to fill the gap between people? If not, can art fill that gap? Grappling with these questions, David Shields gives us a book that is something of a revelation: seventy-plus essays, written over the last thirty-five years, reconceived and recombined to form neither a miscellany nor a memoir but a sustained meditation on

otherness. The book is divided into five sections: Men, Women, Athletes, Performers, Alter Egos. Whether he is writing about sexual desire or information sickness, George W. Bush or Kurt Cobain, women's eyeglasses or Greek tragedy, Howard Cosell or Bill Murray, the comedy of high school journalism or the agony of first love, Shields's sustained, piercing focus is on the multiplicity of perspectives informing any situation, on the irreducible log jam of human information, and on the possibilities, and impossibilities, for human connection.

**SHORTLISTED FOR THE 2019 BOOKER PRIZE** Baking a multitude of tartes tatin for local restaurants, an Ohio housewife contemplates her four kids, husband, cats and chickens. Also, America's ignoble past, and her own regrets. She is surrounded by dead lakes, fake facts, Open Carry maniacs, and oodles of online advice about survivalism, veil toss duties, and how to be more like Jane Fonda. But what do you do when you keep stepping on your son's toy tractors, your life depends on stolen land and broken treaties, and nobody helps you when you get a flat tire on the interstate, not even the Abominable Snowman? When are you allowed to start swearing? With a torrent of consciousness and an intoxicating coziness, Ducks, Newburyport lays out a whole world for you to tramp around in, by turns frightening and funny. A heart-rending indictment of America's barbarity, and a lament for the way we are blundering into environmental disaster, this book is both heresy—and a revolution in the novel.

From a legendary journalist and star writer at The New Yorker -- one of the most revered institutions in publishing -- an insider's look at the magazine's tumultuous yet glorious years under the direction of the enigmatic William Shawn. Renata Adler went to work at The New Yorker in 1963 and immediately became part of the circle close to editor William Shawn, a man so mysterious that no two biographies of him seem to be about the same person. Now Adler, herself an unrivaled literary force, offers her brilliant take on the man -- and the myth that is The New Yorker -- disputing recent memoirs by Lillian Ross and Ved Mehta along the way. With her lucid prose, meticulous eye for detail, and genuine love of The New Yorker, Adler re-creates thirty years in its history and depicts Shawn as a man of robust common sense, amazing industry, and editorial genius, who nurtured innumerable major talents (and egos) to produce a magazine that was -- and remains -- unique. Her ensemble cast -- all involved in legendary friendships, feuds, and love affairs -- includes Edmund Wilson, S. N. Behrman, Brendan Gill, Calvin Trillin, Dwight MacDonal, Donald Barthelme, Hannah Arendt, Pauline Kael, S. I. Newhouse, Robert Gottlieb, Tina Brown, and practically everyone of note in and around The New Yorker. Above and beyond the fascinating literary anecdotes, however, Adler's is a striking narrative that follows the weakening of Shawn's hold over the magazine he loved, his reluctant attempts to find a successor, and the coup by which he was ultimately overthrown. It is a wonderful piece of reporting, full of real-life drama of Shakespearean dimensions, which Shawn himself surely would have loved.

From the author of *The Door*, selected by The New York Times Book Review as one of the ten best books of 2015 An NYRB Classics Original Like Magda Szabó's internationally acclaimed novel *The Door*, Iza's *Ballad* is a striking story of the relationship between two women, in this case a mother and a daughter. Ettie, the mother, is old and from an older world than the rapidly modernizing Communist Hungary of the years after World War II. From a poor family and without formal education, Ettie has

devoted her life to the cause of her husband, Vince, a courageous magistrate who had been blacklisted for political reasons before the war. Iza, their daughter, is as brave and conscientious as her father: Active in the resistance against the Nazis, she is now a doctor and a force for progress. Iza lives and works in Budapest, and when Vince dies, she is quick to bring Ettie to the city to make sure her mother is close and can be cared for. She means to do everything right, and Ettie is eager to do everything to the satisfaction of the daughter she is so proud of. But good intentions aside, mother and daughter come from two different worlds and have different ideas of what it means to lead a good life. Though they struggle to accommodate each other, increasingly they misunderstand and hurt each other, and the distance between them widens into an abyss. . . .

Now back in print for the first time since 1969, a stunning novel about childhood, marriage, and divorce by one of the most interesting minds of the twentieth century. Dream and reality overlap in *Divorcing*, a book in which divorce is not just a question of a broken marriage but names a rift that runs right through the inner and outer worlds of Sophie Blind, its brilliant but desperate protagonist. Can the rift be mended? Perhaps in the form of a novel, one that goes back from present-day New York to Sophie's childhood in pre-World War II Budapest, that revisits the divorce between her Freudian father and her fickle mother, and finds a place for a host of further tensions and contradictions in her present life. The question that haunts *Divorcing*, however, is whether any novel can be fleet and bitter and true and light enough to gather up all the darkness of a given life. Susan Taubes's startlingly original novel was published in 1969 but largely ignored at the time; after the author's tragic early death, it was forgotten. Its republication presents a chance to discover a splintered, glancing, caustic, and lyrical work by a dazzlingly intense and inventive writer.

From the acclaimed author of *Weather* comes a slim, stunning portrait of a marriage--a beguiling rumination on the mysteries of intimacy, trust, faith, knowledge, and the condition of universal shipwreck that unites us all. **ONE OF THE 10 BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR - THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW** A Best Book of the Year: *The New Yorker*, *The Boston Globe*, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, *Vogue.com*, *Electric Literature*, *Buzzfeed* In the beginning, it was easy to imagine their future. They were young and giddy, sure of themselves and of their love for each other. "Dept. of Speculation" was their code name for all the thrilling uncertainties that lay ahead. Then they got married, had a child and navigated the familiar calamities of family life—a colicky baby, a faltering relationship, stalled ambitions. When their marriage reaches a sudden breaking point, the wife tries to retrace the steps that have led them to this place, invoking everything from Kafka to the Stoics to doomed Russian cosmonauts as she analyzes what is lost and what remains. In language that shimmers with rage and longing and wit, Offill has created a brilliantly suspenseful love story—a novel to read in one sitting, even as its piercing meditations linger long after the last page.

A strange, thrilling novel about desperate love, paranoia, and heartbreak by one of America's most singular writers. "What's new. What else. What next. What's happened here." *Pitch Dark* is a book about love. Kate Ennis is poised at a critical moment in an affair with a married man. The complications and contradictions pursue her from a house in rural Connecticut to a brownstone apartment in New York City, to a small island off the coast of Washington, to a pitch black night in backcountry Ireland. Composed

in the style of Renata Adler's celebrated novel *Speedboat* and displaying her keen journalist's eye and mastery of language, both simple and sublime, *Pitch Dark* is a bold and astonishing work of art.

A landmark book, "brilliant, thoughtful" (*The Atlantic*) and "raw and gorgeous" (*LA Times*), that fast-forwards the discussion of the central artistic issues of our time, from the bestselling author of *The Thing About Life Is That One Day You'll Be Dead*. Who owns ideas? How clear is the distinction between fiction and nonfiction? Has the velocity of digital culture rendered traditional modes obsolete? Exploring these and related questions, Shields orchestrates a chorus of voices, past and present, to reframe debates about the veracity of memoir and the relevance of the novel. He argues that our culture is obsessed with "reality," precisely because we experience hardly any, and urgently calls for new forms that embody and convey the fractured nature of contemporary experience.

Wittgenstein's *Mistress* is a novel unlike anything David Markson or anyone else has ever written before. It is the story of a woman who is convinced and, astonishingly, will ultimately convince the reader as well that she is the only person left on earth.

This is a woman as a mother, daughter, wife, spectator, lover, mistress. Observer and commentator. Actor and reactor. Dressed up bright as a child or submerged in the grey elegance of Paris, she shifts readily between roles, countries, and languages. Skilled and successful, she controls how much she cares.

SHORTLISTED FOR THE BOOKER PRIZE 2021 SHORTLISTED FOR THE WOMEN'S PRIZE FOR FICTION 2021

\_\_\_\_\_ 'A literary star' Guardian 'An intellectual and emotional rollercoaster' Daily Mail 'I can't remember the last time I laughed so much reading a book' David Sedaris 'It moved me to tears' Elizabeth Day 'Patricia Lockwood is a completely singular talent' Sally Rooney 'Takes us on a complex journey' Financial Times 'A formidably gifted writer' New York Times Book Review \_\_\_\_\_ This is a story about a life lived in two halves. It's about what happens when real life collides with the world accessed through a screen. It's about where we go when existential threats loom and high-stakes reality claims us back. It's about living in world that contains both an abundance of proof that there is goodness, empathy, and justice in the universe, and a deluge of evidence to the contrary. Irreverent and sincere, poignant and delightfully profane, *No One Is Talking About This* is a meditation on love, language and human connection from one of the most original voices of our time.

In *Sleepless Nights* a woman looks back on her life—the parade of people, the shifting background of place—and assembles a scrapbook of memories, reflections, portraits, letters, wishes, and dreams. An inspired fusion of fact and invention, this beautifully realized, hard-bitten, lyrical book is not only Elizabeth Hardwick's finest fiction but one of the outstanding contributions to American literature of the last fifty years.

Abruptly abandoning her unfulfilling life, an increasingly unstable woman flees to New Zealand and tests fate by hitchhiking, sleeping in public areas and involving herself with strangers while obsessing about her sister's death and hiding a growing rage. Original. 15,000 first printing. The award-winning author of *Station Eleven*, *Emily St. John Mandel* returns with a wondrous novel of time travel that precisely captures the

reality of our current moment. *Sea of Tranquility* is a virtuoso performance and an enormously exciting offering from one of our most remarkable writers. 'So wise, so graceful, so rich. I loved *Sea of Tranquility*' Naomi Alderman, author of *The Power In 1912*, eighteen-year-old Edwin St. Andrew crosses the Atlantic, exiled from English polite society. In British Columbia, he enters the forest, spellbound by the beauty of the Canadian wilderness, and for a split second all is darkness, the notes of a violin echoing unnaturally through the air. The experience shocks him to his core. Two centuries later Olive Llewelyn, a famous writer, is traveling all over Earth, far away from her home in the second moon colony. Within the text of Olive's bestselling novel lies a strange passage: a man plays his violin for change in the echoing corridor of an airship terminal as the trees of a forest rise around him. When Gaspary-Jacques Roberts, a detective in the black-skied Night City, is hired to investigate an anomaly in time, he uncovers a series of lives upended: the exiled son of an aristocrat driven to madness, a writer trapped far from home as a pandemic ravages Earth, and a childhood friend from the Night City who, like Gaspary himself, has glimpsed the chance to do something extraordinary that will disrupt the timeline of the universe. *Sea of Tranquility* is a novel that investigates the idea of parallel worlds and possibilities, that plays with the very line along which time should run. Perceptive and poignant about art, and love, and what we must do to survive, it is incredibly compelling.

"Extraordinary"--THE NEW YORKER In the formally innovative tradition of *Grief Is the Thing with Feathers* and *Ducks*, Newburyport comes a dazzlingly original, shot-in-the-arm of a debut that reveals a young woman's every thought over the course of one deceptively ordinary day. She wakes up, goes to work. Watches the clock and checks her phone. But underneath this monotony there's something else going on: something under her skin.elayed in interweaving columns that chart the feedback loop of memory, the senses, and modern distractions with wit and precision, our narrator becomes increasingly anxious as the day moves on: Is she overusing the heart emoji? Isn't drinking eight glasses of water a day supposed to fix everything? Why is the etiquette of the women's bathroom so fraught? How does she define rape? And why can't she stop scratching? Fiercely moving and slyly profound, *little scratch* is a defiantly playful look at how our minds function in--and survive--the darkest moments.

In the follow up to her smart debut, *The Ghost Network*, Catie Disabato creates a vivid portrait of a young woman investigating her best friend's disappearance while navigating codependent friendships, toxic exes, and witchy rituals. Eve has a carefully curated online life, works occasionally, and texts constantly with her best friend, Ezra. Basically, she is an archetypal L.A. millennial. She has also been carrying on a year-long conversation with her deceased friend Miggy over text. But when Ezra goes missing on the anniversary weekend of Miggy's death, Eve feels like her world is shattering. Over a frantic weekend Eve investigates Ezra's disappearance, scouring social media for clues, while drowning her anger and anxiety in drinks, drugs, and spiritual cleansing. Eve starts to spiral as her friends try to convince her that she's overreacting, and ghosts--both real and metaphorical--continue to haunt her. When she uncovers clues to a life Ezra kept hidden, Eve starts to question how much she really knows about her best friend...and herself. In *U UP?* Catie Disabato holds a mirror to the ways the phantom selves we create online permeate our emotional lives and hide our worst traits from everyone, including ourselves.

Named a Best Book of the Year by NPR, O, The Oprah Magazine, Vogue, San Francisco Chronicle, Esquire, Huffington Post, Nylon, Entertainment Weekly, BuzzFeed, Booklist, and The Independent Winner of the California Book Award for First Fiction Los Angeles Times Book Prize Finalist for First Fiction "A quietly brilliant disquisition . . . told in prose that is so startling in its spare beauty that I found myself thinking about Khong's turns of phrase for days after I finished reading."—Doree Shafrir, The New York Times Book Review "One of those rare books that is both devastating and light-hearted, heartfelt and joyful. . . . Don't miss it."—Buzzfeed "Hello, Rachel Khong. Kudos for this

delectable take on familial devotion and dementia."—NPR Her life at a crossroads, a young woman goes home again in this funny and inescapably moving debut from a wonderfully original new literary voice. Freshly disengaged from her fiancé and feeling that life has not turned out quite the way she planned, thirty-year-old Ruth quits her job, leaves town and arrives at her parents' home to find that situation more complicated than she'd realized. Her father, a prominent history professor, is losing his memory and is only erratically lucid. Ruth's mother, meanwhile, is lucidly erratic. But as Ruth's father's condition intensifies, the comedy in her situation takes hold, gently transforming her all her grief. Told in captivating glimpses and drawn from a deep well of insight, humor, and unexpected tenderness, *Goodbye, Vitamin* pilots through the loss, love, and absurdity of finding one's footing in this life.

Journalist, party girl, bookworm, artist, muse: by the time she'd hit thirty, Eve Babitz had played all of these roles. Immortalized as the nude beauty facing down Duchamp and as one of Ed Ruscha's Five 1965 Girlfriends, Babitz's first book showed her to be a razor-sharp writer with tales of her own. Eve's *Hollywood* is an album of vivid snapshots of Southern California's haute bohemians, of outrageously beautiful high-school ingenues and enviably tattooed Chicanas, of rock stars sleeping it off at the Chateau Marmont. And though Babitz's prose might appear careening, she's in control as she takes us on a ride through an LA of perpetual delight, from a joint serving the perfect taquito, to the corner of La Brea and Sunset where we make eye contact with a roller-skating hooker, to the Watts Towers. This "daughter of the wasteland" is here to show us that her city is no wasteland at all but a glowing landscape of swaying fruit trees and blooming bougainvillea, buffeted by earthquakes and the Santa Ana winds—and every bit as seductive as she is.

From the author of *Dept. of Speculation*, a dazzling and deadpan new novel about hope and despair, fear and comfort as it plays out in these times of environmental and political turbulence

These eleven short fictions evoke the microcosmic worlds every human relationship contains. A woman is captivated by the stories her boyfriend tells about his exes. A faltering artist goes on a date with a married couple. Twin brothers work out their rivalry via the girl next door. In every one of these tales, we meet indelibly real and unforgettable people, a cast of rebels and dreamers trying to transform themselves, forge new destinies, or simply make the moment last.

An enthralling story of revolution, idealism, and a savage struggle for utopia by one of China's greatest living novelists. In 1898 reformist intellectuals in China persuaded the young emperor that it was time to transform his sclerotic empire into a prosperous modern state. The Hundred Days' Reform that followed was a moment of unprecedented change and extraordinary hope—brought to an abrupt end by a bloody military coup. Dashed expectations would contribute to the revolutionary turn that Chinese history would soon take, leading in time to the deaths of millions. *Peach Blossom Paradise*, set at the time of the reform, is the story of Xiumi, the daughter of a wealthy landowner and former government official who falls prey to insanity and disappears. Days later, a man with a gold cicada in his pocket turns up at his estate and is inexplicably welcomed as a relative. This mysterious man has a great vision of reforging China as an egalitarian utopia, and he will stop at nothing to make it real. It is his own plans, however, which come to nothing, and his "little sister" Xiumi is left to take up arms against a Confucian world in which women are chattel. Her campaign for change and her struggle to seize control over her own body are continually threatened by the violent whims of men who claim to be building paradise.

From the civil war in Biafra to the Kent State shootings to Watergate to Monica Lewinsky, one of the most brilliant polemicists writing today examines the increasing interpenetration of politics and media and what it means for the future of democracy in America.

What really happened in the 2000 presidential election - and can it happen again? It was the most tumultuous and uncertain transition of

power in the history of the United States, and yet, to most Americans, what really happened in the 2000 presidential election remains unclear something went wrong in Florida, but the Supreme Court cleared it up and then, er, everyone was happy . . . right? But who actually won the Florida vote recount? What, exactly, did the Supreme Court decide? Was there truly no dissent? What role did the mass media play? In *Irreparable Harm*, Renata Adler, the long-time star of *The New Yorker* magazine who is also an attorney and a life-long Republican, takes a blistering look at the Bush v. Gore Supreme Court decision, and uncovers numerous problems, including instances where the judges mis-cited their own previous decisions, or reversed them. *Irreparable Harm* is one of three hard-hitting books published by Melville House (*The Road to Illegitimacy*, *Irreparable Harm* and *The Big Chill*) that take a close look at the 2000 election - based on three pieces of investigative journalism originally filed at the time, by three of the country's top journalists. These three insightful books are riveting history. But more importantly, they may help troubled Americans with one of the most pressing questions we face: Can it happen again?

A compact tour de force about sex, violence, and self-loathing from a ferociously talented new voice in fiction, perfect for fans of Sally Rooney, Rachel Cusk, Lydia Davis, and Jenny Offill. Composed almost exclusively of conversations between women--the stories they tell each other, and the stories they tell themselves, about shame and love, infidelity and self-sabotage--*Topics of Conversation* careens through twenty years in the life of an unnamed narrator hungry for experience and bent on upending her life. Touching upon desire, disgust, motherhood, loneliness, art, pain, feminism, anger, envy, and guilt; written in language that sizzles with intelligence and eroticism, this novel introduces an audacious and immensely gifted new novelist.

"Reading *How Literature Saved My Life* is like getting to listen in on a really great, smart, provocative conversation. The book is not straightforward, it resists any single interpretation, and it seems to me to constitute nothing less than a new form." —Whitney Otto In this wonderfully intelligent, stunningly honest, painfully funny book, acclaimed writer David Shields uses himself as a representative for all readers and writers who seek to find salvation in literature. Blending confessional criticism and anthropological autobiography, Shields explores the power of literature (from Blaise Pascal's *Pensées* to Maggie Nelson's *Bluets*, Renata Adler's *Speedboat* to Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*) to make life survivable, maybe even endurable. Shields evokes his deeply divided personality (his "ridiculous" ambivalence), his character flaws, his woes, his serious despairs. Books are his life raft, but when they come to feel un-lifelike and archaic, he revels in a new kind of art that is based heavily on quotation and consciousness. And he shares with us a final irony: he wants "literature to assuage human loneliness, but nothing can assuage human loneliness. Literature doesn't lie about this—which is what makes it essential." A captivating, thought-provoking, utterly original way of thinking about the essential acts of reading and writing.

Brings together all of Kael's writings for *The New Yorker* over the past four years, including her famous profile of Cary Grant and her reviews of some two hundred films of the late 1970s

'What do you get when a writer of extreme intelligence, insight, style and beauty chronicles the lives of self-absorbed hedonists - *The Great Gatsby*, *Bright Lights*, *Big City*, and now *Neon in Daylight*. Hermione Hoby held me spellbound' Ann Patchett, author of *COMMONWEALTH* 'Hoby is so good at unpacking all the strange dynamics at work in sex and desire' Emma Cline, author of *THE GIRLS* 'The perfect book with which to while away those hot summer nights' Independent 'Expect *Gatsby*-esque hedonism and lyricism' Evening Standard 'You will be transfixed' The Pool 'Smart, shimmering ... glinting with pocketable images and insights ... A vibrant rush of a novel' Observer A New York summer so hot the air is turning yellow. Kate, a young woman newly arrived from London ... is determined to become the kind of person who is up for it and down for it - and not remotely troubled over how those two semantically opposed phrases could have come to mean the same

thing. In the sweltering city, she encounters Bill, a once-lauded now booze-sodden novelist, and Inez, his teenage daughter who makes extra cash catering to the sexual fantasies of men she has met online - and falls into a complex infatuation with them both.

Winner of the Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award, this is one of the defining books of the 1970s, an experimental novel about a young journalist trying to navigate life in America. When *Speedboat* burst on the scene in the late '70s it was like nothing readers had encountered before. It seemed to disregard the rules of the novel, but it wore its unconventionality with ease. Reading it was a pleasure of a new, unexpected kind. Above all, there was its voice, ambivalent, curious, wry, the voice of Jen Fain, a journalist negotiating the fraught landscape of contemporary urban America. Party guests, taxi drivers, brownstone dwellers, professors, journalists, presidents, and debutantes fill these dispatches from the world as Jen finds it. A touchstone over the years for writers as different as David Foster Wallace and Elizabeth Hardwick, *Speedboat* returns to enthrall a new generation of readers.

“Haunting and provocative . . . Rowland’s writing is compelling and masterful.” —Delia Ephron, author of *The Lion Is In Once*, there were many transcriptionists at the Record, a behemoth New York City newspaper, but new technology has put most of them out of work. So now Lena, the last transcriptionist, sits alone in a room—a human conduit, silently turning reporters’ recorded stories into print—until the day she encounters a story so shocking that it shatters the reverie that has become her life. This exquisite novel, written by an author who spent more than a decade as a transcriptionist at the New York Times, asks probing questions about journalism and ethics, about the decline of the newspaper and the failure of language. It is also the story of a woman’s effort to establish her place in an increasingly alien and alienating world. “The Transcriptionist is suffused with prescient insight into journalism, ethics, and alienation . . . A thought provoking, original work.” —New York Journal of Books “Rowland seems that rare thing, the naturally gifted novelist . . . [She] deftly maps a very specific kind of urban loneliness, the inner ache of the intelligent, damaged soul who prefers the company of ideas and words to that of people . . . That urge—to make words holy—is at the heart of this novel’s strange, sad beauty.” —The Washington Post “The Transcriptionist holds many pleasures . . . [and] can be read through many lenses . . . Rowland plays with the notions of truth and reliability . . . Sharp and affecting.” —The New York Times Book Review “A strange, mesmerizing novel . . . about the decline of newspapers and the subsequent loss of humanity—and yes, these are related.” —Booklist, starred review “Ambitious and fascinating . . . Disturbing and powerful.” —Library Journal “Entering the city Rowland creates, with its tightly strung dialogue and soulful, lonely citizens, is a memorable experience.” —The Boston Globe “Unforgettable. Written with such delight, compassion, and humanity it’s newsworthy.”—Alex Gilvarry, author of *From the Memoirs of a Non-Enemy Combatant*

No one burned hotter than Eve Babitz. Possessing skin that radiated “its own kind of moral laws,” spectacular teeth, and a figure that was the stuff of legend, she seduced seemingly everyone who was anyone in Los Angeles for a long stretch of the 1960s and '70s. One man proved elusive, however, and so Babitz did what she did best, she wrote him a book. *Slow Days, Fast Company* is a full-fledged and full-bodied evocation of a bygone Southern California that far exceeds its mash-note premise. In ten sun-baked, Santa Ana wind-swept sketches, Babitz re-creates a Los Angeles of movie stars distraught over their success, socialites on three-day drug binges holed up in the Chateau Marmont, soap-opera actors worried that tomorrow’s script will kill them off, Italian femmes fatales even more fatal than Babitz. And she even leaves LA now and then, spending an afternoon at the house of flawless Orange County suburbanites, a day among the grape pickers of the Central Valley, a weekend in Palm Springs where her dreams of romance fizzle and her only solace is Virginia Woolf. In the end it doesn’t matter if Babitz ever gets the guy—she seduces us.

THE STORY: The home of the Blackwoods near a Vermont village is a lonely, ominous abode, and Constance, the young mistress of the place, can't go out of the house without being insulted and stoned by the villagers. They have also composed a nasty s  
“Tense, moving, and hilarious . . . [A] dark jewel of a novel.” —Francine Prose, O, The Oprah Magazine Three husbands have left her. I.R.S. agents are whamming on her door. And her beloved cat has gone missing. She's back and forth between Melanie, her secluded Southern town, and L.A., where she has a weakening grasp on her job as a script doctor. Having been sacked by most of the studios and convinced that her dealings with Hollywood have fractured her personality, Money Breton talks to herself nonstop. She glues and hammers and paints every item in her place. She forges loving inscriptions in all her books. Through it all, there is her darling puzzling daughter who lives close by but seems ever beyond reach, and her son, the damaged victim of a violent crime under police protection in New York. While both her children seem to be losing all their battles, Money tries for ways and reasons to keep battling. Why Did I Ever is a book of piercing intellect and belligerent humor. Since its first publication in 2002 it has had a profound impact, not only on Robison's devoted following, but on the shape of the contemporary novel itself.

The Dud Avocado follows the romantic and comedic adventures of a young American who heads overseas to conquer Paris in the late 1950s. Edith Wharton and Henry James wrote about the American girl abroad, but it was Elaine Dundy's Sally Jay Gorce who told us what she was really thinking. Charming, sexy, and hilarious, The Dud Avocado gained instant cult status when it was first published and it remains a timeless portrait of a woman hell-bent on living. “I had to tell someone how much I enjoyed The Dud Avocado. It made me laugh, scream, and guffaw (which, incidentally, is a great name for a law firm).” —Groucho Marx “[The Dud Avocado] is one of the best novels about growing up fast...” -The Guardian

SpeedboatNew York Review of Books

One of The New York Times Book Review's “10 Best Books of 2021” Shortlisted for the 2021 International Booker Prize A fictional examination of the lives of real-life scientists and thinkers whose discoveries resulted in moral consequences beyond their imagining. When We Cease to Understand the World is a book about the complicated links between scientific and mathematical discovery, madness, and destruction. Fritz Haber, Alexander Grothendieck, Werner Heisenberg, Erwin Schrödinger—these are some of luminaries into whose troubled lives Benjamín Labatut thrusts the reader, showing us how they grappled with the most profound questions of existence. They have strokes of unparalleled genius, alienate friends and lovers, descend into isolation and insanity. Some of their discoveries reshape human life for the better; others pave the way to chaos and unimaginable suffering. The lines are never clear. At a breakneck pace and with a wealth of disturbing detail, Labatut uses the imaginative resources of fiction to tell the stories of the scientists and mathematicians who expanded our notions of the possible.

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