

Castle Park Book Exchange 2019

The Air You Breathe by Frances De Pontes Peebles (author of *The Seamstress*)

A deep, complicated love between two very different women lies at the heart of Frances De Pontes Peebles' new novel, *The Air You Breathe*. Dores and Graça grow up on the same sugar-cane plantation in Northern Brazil, but while Dores is the plain but clever daughter of a lowly worker, Graça is the spoiled, lovely daughter of the house, who demands that Dores become her playmate and accomplice. Their unequal friendship continues as the girls' passion for samba takes them to Rio and eventually, Los Angeles, where Graça's voice and Dores's songs bring them international fame – for a time. Peebles's story, inspired in part by the lives of Carmen Miranda and lesbian songwriter Chavela Vargas, lightly traces the history of Brazil from the 1930s to the 1950s as well as Hollywood's prevailing attitudes toward foreign (and female) artists. Her sensitive, poetic writing evokes Brazil's rough beauty and the sensual lure of the music that shapes Dores' and Graça's lives. This is a gorgeous, immersive novel about a bond so strong that it is like air – you can forget it exists, and that it is essential to your life.

The Art of Hearing Heartbeats by Jan-Philipp Sendker

The first book in the Art of Hearing Heartbeats series, this is a passionate love story, a haunting fable, and an enchanting mystery set in Burma. *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats* spans the decades between the 1950s and the present. When a successful New York lawyer suddenly disappears without a trace, neither his wife nor his daughter Julia has any idea where he might be...until they find a love letter he wrote many years ago, to a Burmese woman they have never heard of. Intent on solving the mystery and coming to terms with her father's past, Julia decides to travel to the village where the woman lived. There she uncovers a tale of unimaginable hardship, resilience, and passion that will reaffirm the reader's belief in the power of love to move mountains.

Circe by Madeline Miller (Author of *The Song of Achilles*)

Circe is a bold and subversive retelling of the goddess's story that manages to be both epic and intimate in its scope, recasting the most infamous female figure from the *Odyssey* as a hero in her own right.

Educated by Tara Westover

Tara Westover was 17 the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, she was lacking any formal education, so Tara began to educate herself. *Educated* is an account of the struggle for self-invention. It is a tale of fierce family loyalty and of the grief that comes with severing the closest of ties. With the acute insight that distinguishes all great writers, Westover has crafted a universal coming-of-age story that gets to the heart of what an education is and what it offers: the perspective to see one's life through new eyes and the will to change it.

A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles (author of *Rules of Civility*)

Amor Towles skillfully transports us to The Metropol, the famed Moscow hotel where movie stars and Russian royalty hobnob, where Bolsheviks plot revolutions and intellectuals discuss the merits of contemporary Russian writers, where spies spy, thieves thieve and the danger of twentieth century Russia lurks outside its marbled walls. It's also where wealthy Count Alexander Rostov lives under house arrest for a poem deemed incendiary by the Bolsheviks and meets Nina. Nina is a precocious and wide-eyed young girl who holds the keys to the entire hotel, wonders what it means to be a princess, and will irrevocably change his life. Despite being confined to the hallway of the hotel, the Count lives

an absorbing, adventure-filled existence, filled with capers, conspiracies and culture. Alexander Rostov is a character for the ages--like Kay Thompson's Eloise and Wes Anderson's M. Gustav, he is unflinchingly (and hilariously for readers) devoted to his station, even when forced to wait tables, play hide and seek with a young girl, or confront communism. Towles magnificently conjures the grandeur of the Russian hotel and the vibrancy of the characters that call it home.

Home Fire by Kamila Shamsie

You don't need to recall much about Sophocles' tale of Antigone to be swept up by Kamila Shamsie's plot-driven and lyrical contemporary retelling. Shamsie, a native of Karachi who has written six previous novels, sets *Home Fire* among two Pakistani émigré families living in very different communities in London. Isma Pasha, the devout orphaned daughter of a jihadi fighter, has raised her younger sister and brother in the largely Asian neighborhood of Wembley. Eamonn, the son of the British Home Secretary (a secularized Muslim) has grown up in posh Holland Park. His family has the power to help hers, and their friendship leads inexorably to a dramatic political crisis. The classical antecedents of this story are virtually invisible behind precisely-noticed modern-day details of Twitter trends, tabloid news and text messages. Shifting points of view allow Shamsie to explore the different relationships at stake, from family loyalties to sexual passion, and these intimate connections counterbalance her broader political point. This is a beautifully-written, angry, romantic novel that succeeds in being both timely and timeless.

Once Upon A River by Diane Setterfield (author of *The Thirteenth Tale*)

Once Upon a River is a glorious tapestry of a book that combines folklore and science, magic and myth. Suspenseful, romantic, and richly atmospheric, this is a beguiling tale, full of twists and turns like the river at its heart, and just as rich and intriguing.

It is a swift and entrancing, profound and beautiful novel about how we explain the world to ourselves, ourselves to others, and the meaning of our lives in a universe that remains impenetrably mysterious.

The Only Woman in the Room by Marie Benedict (author of *The Other Einstein* and *Carnegie's Maid*)

She possessed a stunning beauty. She also possessed a stunning mind. Could the world handle both? Her beauty almost certainly saved her from the rising Nazi party and led to marriage with an Austrian arms dealer. Underestimated in everything else, she overheard the Third Reich's plans while at her husband's side, understanding more than anyone would guess. She devised a plan to flee in disguise from their castle, and the whirlwind escape landed her in Hollywood. She became Hedy Lamarr, screen star.

But she kept a secret more shocking than her heritage or her marriage: she was a scientist. And she knew a few secrets about the enemy. She had an idea that might help the country fight the Nazis...if anyone would listen to her.

A powerful novel based on the incredible true story of the glamour icon and scientist whose groundbreaking invention revolutionized modern communication,

Pachinko by Min Jin Lee

In 1930s Korea, an earnest young woman, abandoned by the lover who has gotten her pregnant, enters into a marriage of convenience that will take her to a new life in Japan. Thus begins Lee's luminous new novel PACHINKO--a powerful meditation on what immigrants sacrifice to achieve a home in the world. PACHINKO confirms Lee's place among our finest novelists.

Rediscovering Travel by Seth Kugel

By captivating millions during his six-year, fifty-country tenure as the *New York Times*'s "Frugal Traveler," Seth Kugel has become one of our most internationally beloved travel writers. While his famously unassuming journeys around the globe have forged a signature philosophy of whimsy and practicality, they have also revealed the seemingly infinite booby traps of on-the-grid tourism. In a book with widespread cultural reverberations, Kugel takes the modern travel industry to task, determined to reignite humanity's age-old sense of adventure that has virtually been vanquished by the spontaneity-obliterating likes of Google Maps, TripAdvisor, and Starwood points. Woven throughout with vivid tales of his perfectly imperfect adventures, *Rediscovering Travel* explains—often hilariously—how to make the most of new digital technologies without being shackled to them. For the tight-belted tourist and the first-class flyer, the eager student and the comfort-seeking retiree, Kugel shows how we too can rediscover the joy of discovery.

Small Fry by Lisa Brennan-Jobs

Born on a farm and named in a field by her parents—artist Chrisann Brennan and Steve Jobs—Lisa Brennan-Jobs' childhood unfolded in a rapidly changing Silicon Valley. When she was young, Lisa's father was a mythical figure who was rarely present in her life.

Small Fry is Lisa Brennan-Jobs' poignant story of childhood and growing up. Scrappy, wise, and funny, young Lisa is an unforgettable guide, marveling at the particular magic of growing up in this family, in this place and time, while grappling with her feelings of illegitimacy and shame. Part portrait of a complex family, part love letter to California in the seventies and eighties, *Small Fry* is an enthralling story by an insightful new literary voice.

Other Recommended Titles

The Alice Network and ***The Huntress*** by Kate Quinn

Becoming by Michelle Obama

The Girl With 7 Names by Hyeonseo Lee

The Island of Sea Women and ***Tea Girls of Hummingbird Lane*** by Lisa See

Little Fires Everywhere by Celest Ng

Lost Roses and ***Lilac Girls*** by Martha Hall Kelly

Next Year in Havana by Chanel Cleeton

The Orphan's Tale by Pam Jenoff

The Overstory by Richard Powers

Snow Child by Eowyn Ivey

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/where-the-crawdads-sing-author-delia-owens/>