

# The Florida Bibliophile

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Membership in the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies is included with your FBS membership. The FBS newsletter is now electronic as well as in print. Access a PDF of the Fall 2019 FABS Journal [here](#).



Florida Bibliophile Society  
A community of book lovers

## Minutes of the Florida Bibliophile Society Meeting, March 2020

Gary Simons, FBS Secretary

**O**n March 15, the Florida Bibliophile Society was scheduled to have an “Open Mic” meeting at which members would read poems or short stories, sing songs, or talk about a book or any book-related matter. Unfortunately, the new coronavirus intervened, and to protect us all, that

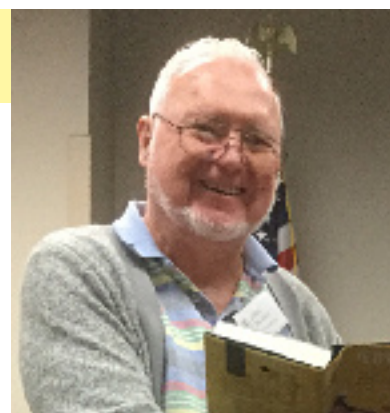
meeting had to be cancelled. Nevertheless, several FBS members have volunteered to put their planned recitations into print. So in the following, for the edification (and hopefully enjoyment) of everyone, are the minutes of our meeting that never was, the “Meeting in Absentia.”

This is what they would have said...

### President Jerry Morris

In my hands are three books:

- *The Caxton Club 1895-1995: Celebrating a Century of the Book in Chicago*
- *Grolier 75: A Biographical Retrospective to Celebrate the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Grolier Club in New York*
- *The Baltimore Bibliophiles at Fifty 1954-2004*

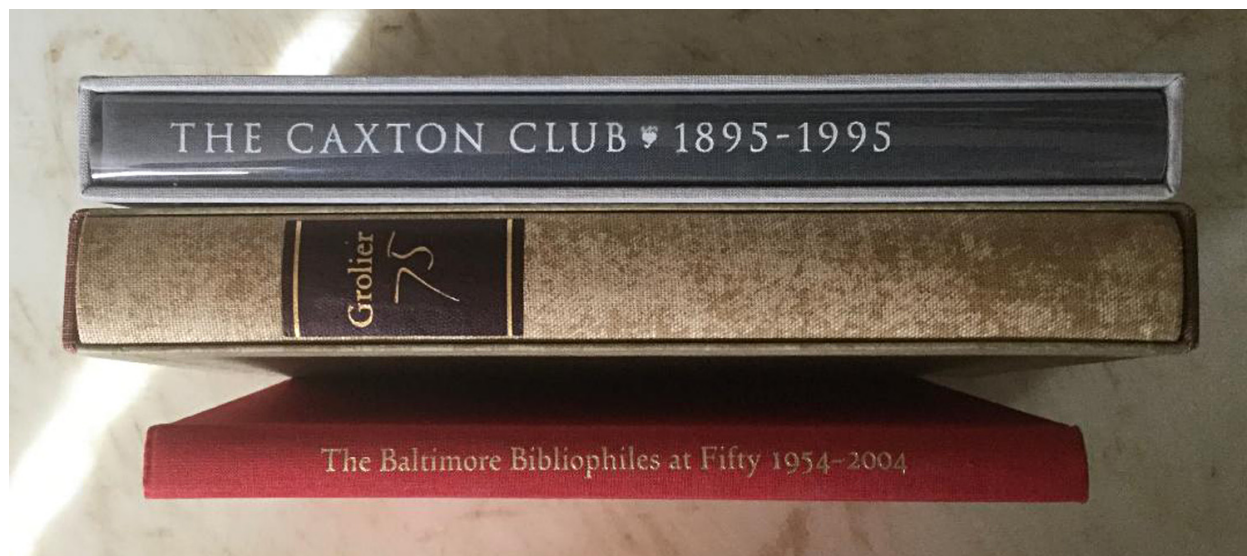


These three books are about the history of three book clubs.

I have room in my hands for one more book, *The First Forty Years of the Florida Bibliophile Society 1983-2023*.

This book has yet to be written. I propose that we write that book. We have three years to do it.

Let's get started!



*March Minutes, continued*

## David Hall

### The Second Coming

By William Butler Yeats (1919)

*[In stentorian tones, please!]*

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The Second Coming!  
Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi  
Troubles my sight: a waste of desert sand;  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
Wind shadows of the indignant desert birds.

The darkness drops again but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?





*March Minutes, continued***Elenora Sabin**

[I had planned to read the opening chapter of my novel in progress, but I fear it would be too long for the newsletter. Instead, I'm sending you a picture of the front cover and the blurb that appears on the back of my most recently published coming-of-age story titled *Cat and Cobra*. It is labeled "An Arucadi Novel," but it is not in the story arc of my Arucadi series. Briefly, Arucadi is the fictional country where the novels take place, and the numbered books in the series are closely related.

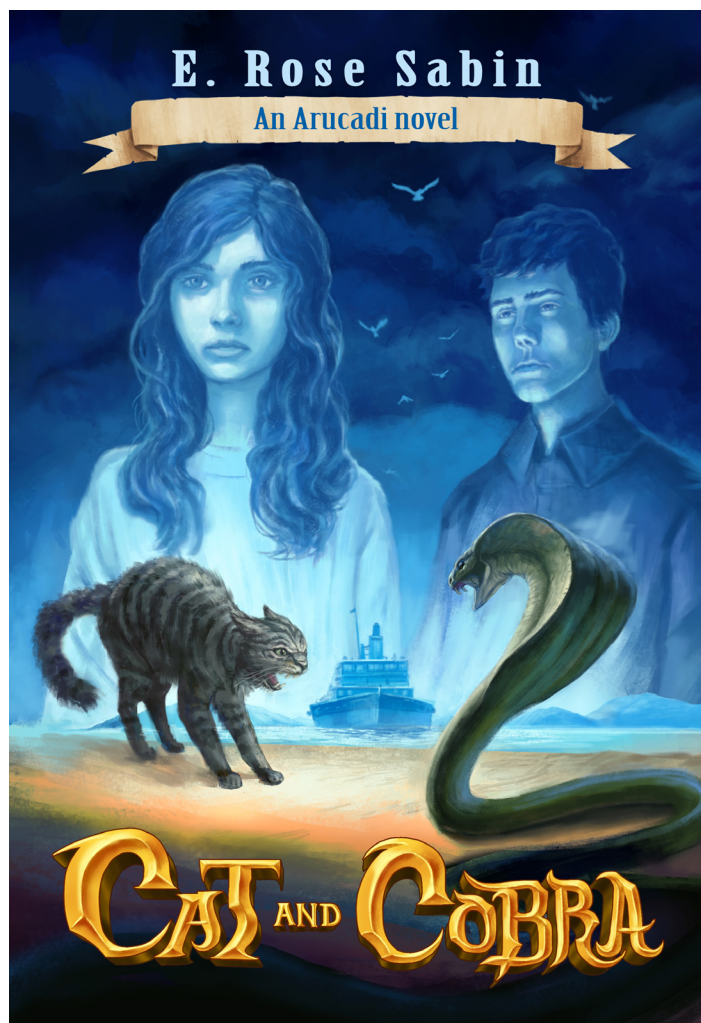
*Cat and Cobra* is more of a standalone – it shares no characters with the other novels and does not point toward the eventual conclusion of the series. However, chronologically, it does fit between Book Four of the series, *Deniably Dead*, and Book Five, *A Perilous Power* (soon to be reissued). –ES]

**A Cat, a Cobra, and a Game of Cards ...**

... bring together in unlikely alliance Elyssa, the daughter of a poor village laundress, and Corbin, the rebellious son of wealthy Lord Carnover, owner of a vast shipping empire. A year ago, the Carnover ship on which Elyssa's father served as first mate was reported lost at sea. Elyssa suspects that she and her mother have been lied to about what happened to the ship. She's been depressed, but after taking in a stray kitten, her life improves. Coincidences, including an encounter in the village market and an afternoon card game she's forced into by Corbin's mother, draw Corbin and Elyssa together. Her desire to solve the mystery of what happened to the lost ship fits neatly with Corbin's search for evidence of illegal business activity he can use to blackmail his father into allowing him to pursue his dream of studying architecture instead of joining the family shipping business. By joining forces, Elyssa and Corbin may find the solution to their problems.

Corbin's life takes a frightening turn after he kicks over a snake charmer's basket, freeing a large and deadly cobra in a crowded open-air market. The snake causes deaths among the fleeing market-goers. In dreams, Corbin inhabits the snake as it kills; fear of the cobra haunts him when he's awake. Elyssa and her cat bring him a way to break free of the snake. In return, Corbin offers Elyssa hope of learning what happened to her father's ship and whether her father might be alive.

As the cat continues to bring Elyssa luck, and the snake continues to place Corbin in deadly danger, a card tournament is arranged that will determine both their fates.



Will the game of Lucky Nines bring Elyssa the good fortune its name promises, or will it mean the dashing of her hopes and of Corbin's too?



*March Minutes, continued*

## Gary Simons

### On the Trail of Locker-Lampson



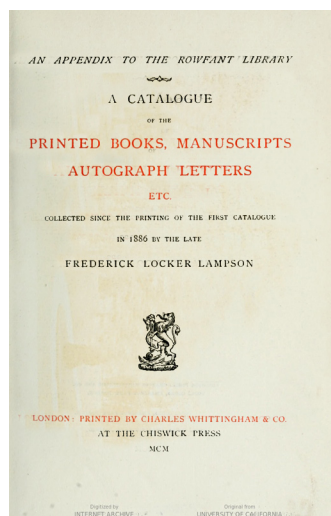
Frederick Locker Lampson

**Last September, when FBS met and discussed our “Summer Treasures,”** I shared my delight on finding a 1920 character study of the Victorian British poet and book collector Frederick Locker, who late in life added the name Lampson, at the “cheap” outside bin of a small London bookshop. As a reminder, history regards Locker as a minor poet but a consummate bibliophile: he is

best known today for the 1886 and 1900 catalogues of the library at his country house, Rowfant, and the consequent adoption of that name by the Rowfant Club in Cleveland.

But for me, at least, finding one book is often the beginning of a trail rather than the end. Learning about the Rowfant library catalogues made me want to acquire them. Unfortunately, the 1886 catalogue is still out of my price range, but last Fall, I acquired a reasonably-priced copy of the 1900 supplement.

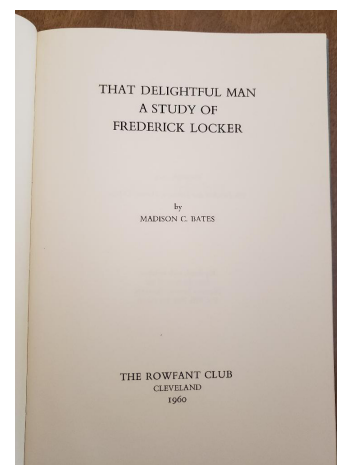
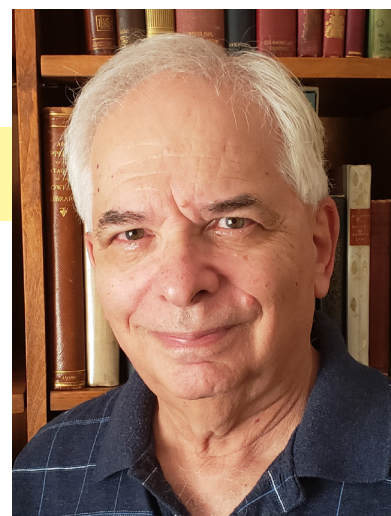
Only 350 copies of this volume were printed, 100 of which went to the Rowfant Club. And now this catalogue has become my favorite “book about books.” The high-quality paper, terra cotta cloth-covered boards, and brown leather spine are all gorgeous and fondle-worthy; the snippets of information on individual volumes are wonderful; and perusing the book is tantamount to entering the world and mind of Locker himself.



The trail continues. At the recent New York Antiquarian Book Fair I found inexpensive copies of two books that interested me: *Proverbs in Porcelain* (1887) by Austin Dobson and *Ballads of Books* (second edition, 1899), edited by Brander Matthews. Against all odds, both of these books were dedicated to Frederick Locker Lampson!

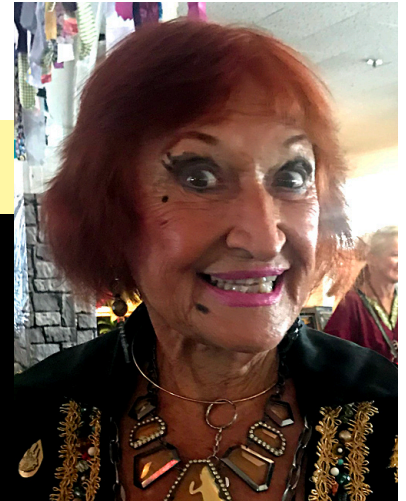
According to another recent find, *That Delightful Man: A Study of Frederick Locker* (by Madison Bates, published by the Rowfant Society in 1960), “Locker’s talent for friendship amounted almost to genius.” Since Locker had many literary friends, there may well be many other books dedicated to him. Of course I want them! – but how to find them? So far I have identified eight books as being dedicated to Locker-Lampson. Copies of the first three have thus far been hard to find, but I either have or have ordered copies of the others.

- *Fliegende Blätter*, James Joseph Sylvester (1876)
- *A Town Garland*, Henry Sambrooke Leigh (1878)
- *Fragments of Verse*, Henrietta Anne Duff (1880)
- *Vignettes in Rhyme*, Austin Dobson (1873)
- *Leisure-Day Rhymes*, John Godfrey Saxe (1875)
- *The Comic Poets of the Nineteenth Century*, William Davenport Adams (1876)
- *Ballad of Books*, chosen by Brander Matthews (1887) / *Ballad of Books*, chosen by Andrew Lang (1888) [respectively American and English editions]
- *Essays about Men, Women, and Books*, Augustine Birrell (1894)



*March Minutes, continued*

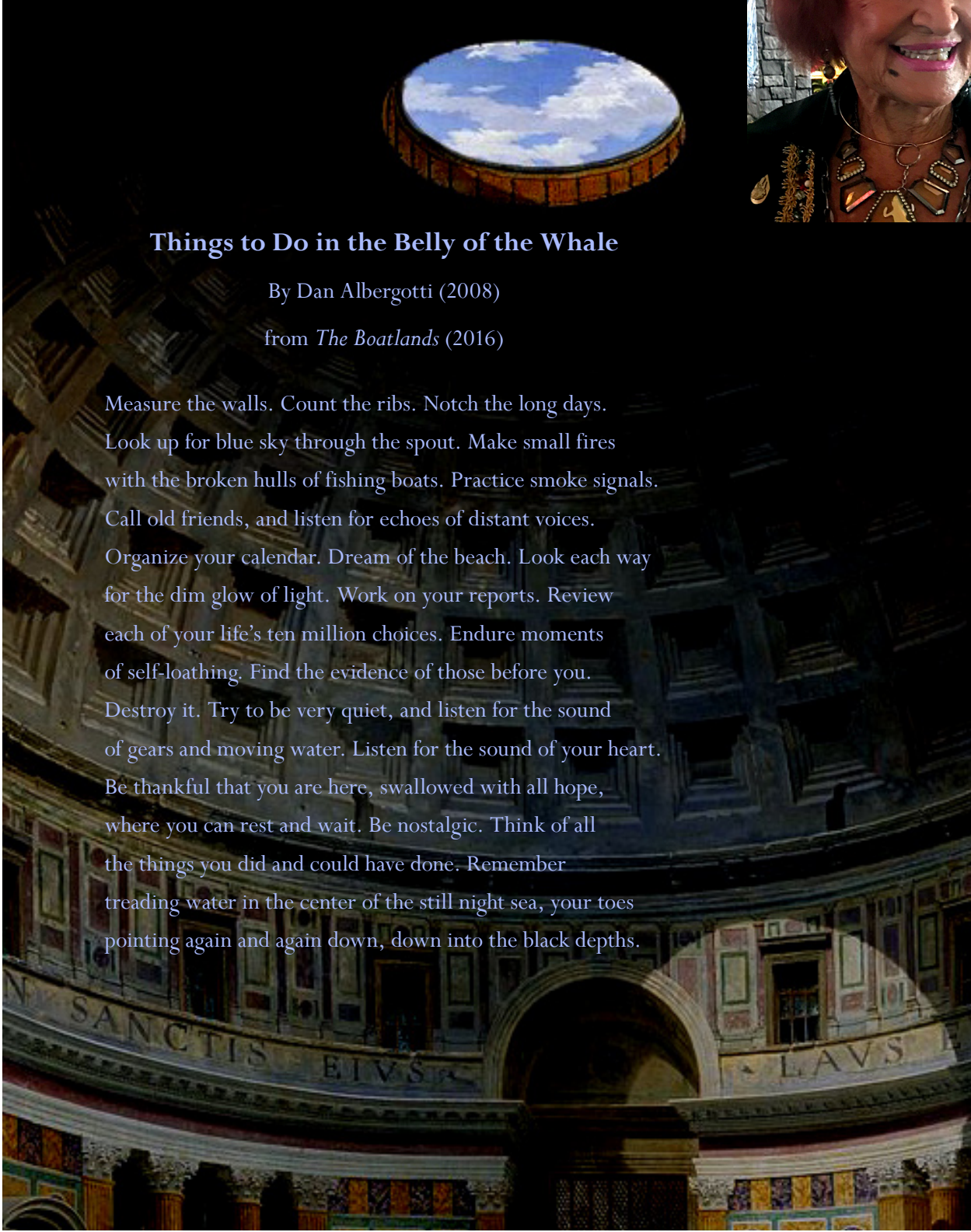
## Jude Bagatti



### Things to Do in the Belly of the Whale

By Dan Albergotti (2008)

from *The Boatlands* (2016)

A large, ornate, circular architectural structure, possibly a dome or a large well, with intricate carvings and a central opening showing a blue sky with clouds. The structure is made of dark stone or wood, with a grid-like pattern of ribs. The central opening is a bright blue circle with white clouds. The surrounding structure is dark and textured, with many small, rectangular openings or niches. The overall impression is one of a vast, ancient, and mysterious space.

Measure the walls. Count the ribs. Notch the long days.  
Look up for blue sky through the spout. Make small fires  
with the broken hulls of fishing boats. Practice smoke signals.  
Call old friends, and listen for echoes of distant voices.  
Organize your calendar. Dream of the beach. Look each way  
for the dim glow of light. Work on your reports. Review  
each of your life's ten million choices. Endure moments  
of self-loathing. Find the evidence of those before you.  
Destroy it. Try to be very quiet, and listen for the sound  
of gears and moving water. Listen for the sound of your heart.  
Be thankful that you are here, swallowed with all hope,  
where you can rest and wait. Be nostalgic. Think of all  
the things you did and could have done. Remember  
treading water in the center of the still night sea, your toes  
pointing again and again down, down into the black depths.



*March Minutes, continued***BonSue Brandvik****Her Opus**

**The highly anticipated day had arrived at last.** She would finally take her place among the elite ranks of published authors. Sure, this wasn't the way she planned to reach writing fame. There would be no book signing tours – at least not for a while. But her genius would be shared with the world and that's all that mattered. She sat tall, trying her best not to fidget as she waited in the meeting room.

For years, she had pandered to literary agents and publishers, submitting brilliant stories in the hope they would publish her babies – each of which, she felt could be her opus. It had taken her a long while to understand how the publishing industry truly operated – and why each of her masterpieces had been rejected. She had suffered through rejection after rejection from self-aggrandizing hypocrites, who preferred, it seemed, to publish a constant stream of garbage. They had obviously been bribed to expound on the virtues of a few select writers, whom they touted as “geniuses,” while disregarding other, superior submissions.

It didn't matter how hard she tried to shine light on her work, either. Once, disguised as a delivery person, she attempted to sneak her work onto a literary agent's desk. Another time, she dressed like a panda bear and offered praise for her manuscripts via a singing telegram. She had even offered one publisher a bribe. Well, not a bribe in the traditional sense of the word. She didn't have any money. But she had offered the agency a cut of her royalties that was twice the going rate. Even that hadn't been enough.

It had finally become evident that the only way to get rid of these unfair oppressors was to blow up the system – literally. She had written a marvelous story about the caper, wherein she outlined every step of her brilliant plan. Her fingers had flown

across the keyboard as if possessed. She was certain it would be her opus. When the masses read it, they would understand that she had been forced to take action. They would recognize her exceptional talent and applaud her for outwitting the unjust publishing industry.

Making her final preparations, she could barely contain her excitement. Oh, sure, there was no getting around the fact that, in addition to scores of literary agents and publishers, the blast would kill other people – busboys, servers, and unlucky people who chose to visit the convention that day. But in her heart, she believed the collateral damage was a small price to pay in order to rid the world of corruption within the publishing industry. There was no telling how much work from brilliant, previously suppressed writers, like herself, would now earn recognition in literary circles around the world.

Anticipating that her missive would shoot to the top of all the coveted best-seller lists immediately following the blast, she had delivered her story, along with several other pieces of her prized work, directly to the *New York Times*.

Unfortunately, her submission had fallen into the hands of a moron at the newspaper. Instead of publishing her work, he had contacted the authorities. In hindsight, she decided that it had been a mistake to hand-deliver the package, but how could she have trusted the post office to handle her work with the respect it deserved?

She had been daydreaming about the many prestigious awards she would finally and rightfully earn, when the SWAT Team stormed in, stopping her from obliterating the convention center. The police hadn't been able to grasp the necessity of her





*March Minutes, continued*

actions. Then again, they weren't artists, whose work had been stifled by the powers-that-be for decades. Despite her many attempts to explain the misunderstanding, they had taken her into custody. And rather than publishing her prized work, they called it "evidence" and said it would be used to convict her of several, serious crimes.

She submitted to psychiatric examinations, but unfortunately, the psychiatrists turned out to be little more than mental slugs, none of whom comprehended the absolute necessity of her actions. When they took her into the courthouse, she smiled. Reporters hung out there. Surely, they'd hear about her case and publish her story. Even if her words were edited to fit within a newspaper column, she was certain her talent would shine through.

But there had been no reporters.

She'd attempted to defend herself – to keep her court-appointed attorney from arguing that she was not responsible for her actions, due to mental illness. She had screamed protests until she was blue in the face, but it did no good. The imbecile used her continual outbursts to substantiate his false claims and the incompetent judge agreed with him.

There would be no sensationalized trial. The masses would never learn about her brave attempts to free the publishing industry from corruption. The court system had successfully conspired with the publishing industry to lock her away, denying her the fame she so justly deserved.

She wasn't sure how long she'd been kept captive here. They'd tried to trick her into writing more stories, but she was no fool. She tore up every tablet they provided until they finally gave up. She knew this place was teeming with people who would love to read over her shoulder and steal her dazzling ideas.

Yet, a professional with her exceptional abilities couldn't stop writing any more than she could cease breathing. Her only option was to begin memorizing her work. She'd been doing it for a few weeks now. At least she thought it was weeks,

but it could be months – or perhaps even years. It didn't matter. The important thing was that she had written dozens of stories – all of which were stored safely in the vault of her mind.

It took much longer than she had expected for someone to approach her about publishing her work, but it had finally happened. The day she'd waited for, prayed for – was willing to kill for, had arrived. Today, all of her hard work was about to pay off. Someone had contacted her keepers to ask about publishing, not just one of her stories, but her story. A memoir. She had written hundreds of romances, thrillers, westerns, mysteries, fantasies, poems, and even the crime drama that retraced the steps of her plan to destroy the publishing empire. But a memoir? A story about herself? She was flattered beyond words.

Someone must have read her work, recognized its genius, and realized how evil the publishing industry had been to reject it. A person like that would understand that she had no choice but to try to destroy as much of that corrupt, sadistic system as possible.

The moment she agreed to today's meeting, she started writing the memoir in her mind. It would be the best story she'd ever written. Her true opus. Once published, the masses would clamor to read the rest of her work. Loyal fans would demand her release from this horrible place. They'd all scoff at that so-called late, great agent who had called her plots "confusing and ludicrous" and described her writing as "a compilation of disjointed thoughts and grammatical errors, strung together with incorrect punctuation." Unlike the police, they'd understand that her act of stabbing that agent in the heart had been nothing short of poetic justice.

She heard voices drifting down the hallway and perked up. The door opened and a young girl entered with two huge men flanking her. While surprised at the youth of the reporter, she smiled. This was her moment to shine – to finally get the recognition she had craved for so long.

"You can set up your recorder on the table," one of



*March Minutes, continued*

the men said, not even bothering to make formal introductions. “She can’t reach you from over there, but be careful. Stay in your chair and press this buzzer if you need help or want to leave. We’ll be right outside.”

“Thank you,” the girl replied, casting a wary glance across the table.

She had imagined this day over and over in her mind, but it had never begun like this. She couldn’t even shake the girl’s hand, what with the jacket tying her arms to her chest and her legs chained to the floor. Still, she was determined to make the best of it. After all, plenty of other famous writers had suffered for their art. She sat mute, searching her crowded mind for the perfect greeting, but for the first time in her life, words failed her.

“I’m not sure how much they told you,” the girl began, “but I’m working on my doctorate in criminal psychology, and I’m hoping to include the case study of your breakdown in my thesis. I don’t want you to worry about a thing. I promise to keep your name out of it, so you’ll remain completely anonymous. And don’t be concerned about your inability to write, either. I can fix it. Just tell me in your own words... what motivated you to murder that literary agent and attempt to take the lives of so many renowned people in the publishing industry?”

She tried to process the girl’s words. Anonymous? Inability to write? Confused, she fought to remain focused. This was her moment. She blocked everything the girl had said from her mind, thinking only of her masterpiece – her true opus. No matter what brought them together, once the girl heard her memoir, she would have no choice but to publish the amazing story.

She closed her eyes and began to read her opus out loud – the masterpiece she had committed to memory. She barely paused to take a breath. She didn’t stop until she finished.

The odd thing was that she didn’t actually remember finishing the memoir. She didn’t remember the girl leaving. She didn’t even remember them bringing her to this new room.

How much time had gone by since the interview? Hours? Days? Weeks?

She glanced up when an orderly’s face appeared at the small, open window in the door of the padded cell. “I have a letter for you,” he announced as he pushed a single sheet of paper through the opening.

She watched the letter drift to the floor, a frown clouding her face. She thought a publishing contract would be thicker. Still, with trembling fingers, she picked it up.

It was from the girl.

“I’m sorry to have left without a proper goodbye,” the letter began, “but the orderlies and I were unable to convince you to stop rambling. I wanted to inform you that I’ve decided not to include your case study in my thesis after all. It would simply require too much time to make sense of what you were trying to say. However, I do wish you well and, as you are certain to spend the rest of your life confined to this hospital for the criminally insane, I would like to suggest that you use your time wisely. Perhaps you could learn how to write. I’m sure the hospital library has several good books on that topic, written by some of the most esteemed authors the publishing industry has to offer.”

As the letter drifted to the floor, in pieces resembling confetti, she tried to erase the words from her mind. It proved impossible. Her brain was just too powerful. The content of the letter continued to taunt her, no matter how many times she banged her head against the padded walls.

Then, like fireworks lighting a dark sky, a new story filled her thoughts. It would be the most magnificent work in her immense collection of treasured manuscripts. It would be about a gifted, yet misunderstood writer who, after being unjustly convicted of crimes, escaped her captors and sought vengeance on every single person who had ever wronged her.

She smiled.

No doubt, the few survivors she left alive in the publishing industry would fight for the right to publish her opus.



*March Minutes, continued***Ben Wiley****BookStories**

Ben Wiley volunteers at the Friends of Largo Library Bookstore. Here are 10 vignettes of bookstore encounters.

**1. Reading Boy**

A young boy and his grandmother frequently come in the bookstore to browse and buy. His self-assurance around adults and language reminds me so much of myself at that age. Before the bookstore, they were down at the cafe where he was reading out-loud the menu to her. I could hear it all as he was very distinct and precise. When he came into the bookstore, I complimented him on his excellent reading skills. He matter-of-factly acknowledged it, said he was in 3rd grade, and had taught himself to read (his grandmother said nothing one way or the other). I commented to him, “You even said the big word ‘quesadilla’ correctly with the Spanish double L pronounced like a Y.” He smiled, as if to say, “of course I did,” then turned to his granny and said, “You know lots of 3rd graders say that word wrong. They say it like it’s quesa-DILLA.” I laughed to myself, thinking that at that age, I was just as language-precocious, and just as smug and self-satisfied about it.

**2. Reader... I Married Him**

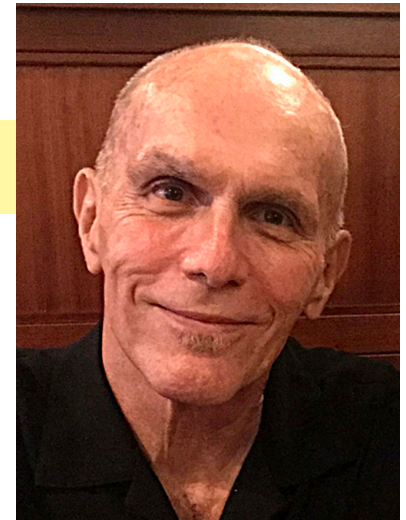
A 50-something couple came into the bookstore, purchased a few of the popular and cheesy James Patterson novels, and then commented

sheepishly, “Our daughter is getting married, and she wants a literary theme to the reception.” I immediately thought of the possibilities of great novels filled with weddings, all those Jane Austen books with grooms in morning coats and brides in empire waists, mumbling vicars and stumbling groomsmen, all living happily ever after.

Austen famously observes, “it is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.” Books so often extol and celebrate marital bliss that they must be good omens for a prospective husband and wife.



But then, I began to remember all those other books with disastrous weddings and marriages. There is that unfortunate business in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* when Jane discovers Rochester's secret lurking in the attic. Well, “I declare the existence of an impediment,” indeed! Don't forget delusional Emma in *Madame Bovary* who wants a romantic torch-lit midnight wedding but instead has to





*March Minutes, continued*

endure a three-day wedding party, a gustatory orgy Flaubert describes as filled with “sirloin, chicken, veal, three legs of mutton, and a roast suckling pig.” She later poisons herself. Then there are the poor unfortunates in Thomas Hardy’s *Far from the Madding Crowd* where Fanny the bride waits at All Souls Church while Frank the groom waits at All Saints Church. Tragedy ensues. Poor Miss Havisham in Dickens’s *Great Expectations* certainly did not get what she expected and instead is left at the altar and wears the same old tattered wedding gown the rest of her life. Finally Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* features an unhappy bride pining after the unattainable Vronsky, and after she gets him, she throws herself in front of a train.

Whew, maybe a literary theme is not the best way to go for a wedding and reception after all, do you think? But just as I started to suggest that to the parents of the bride, he explained, “We want something classy, something that looks like real books, so we could scatter them around the church and reception hall for the literary effect. You have any of those Reader’s Digest Condensed Books?”



### 3. Existential Crisis

A young college-age fellow – said his name was Dominic – came in and browsed through the Philosophy section, buying Camus’ *The Stranger*, the powerful novel where a disaffected and unemotional Frenchman in Algeria murders an innocent anonymous Arab on the beach. He’d read it before but wanted to read it again. Dominic’s purchasing of this book led to my discussion with

him of that followup book called *The Meursault Investigation* by Kamel Daoud.

I enjoy books where a peripheral character in one book gets his own book for his own story. Thus, in *The Meursault Investigation*, the story is told from the perspective of the grieving brother of the anonymous Arab, and we hear quite a different view from that of the colonialist Camus. Books like *Finn* by Jon Clinch where Huckleberry Finn’s good-for-nothing father now gets to tell his own story, or *March* by Geraldine Brooks, the story of the missing father in *Little Women*, away at war. Then there’s *Ahab’s Wife* by Sena Jeter Nasland. This time the story is told from the perspective of the wife who stays home while her monomaniacal husband chases the great whale.

Dominic seemed quite taken by the notion of dual dueling stories on the same incident. I hope he locates that book and comes back to report on them to me.



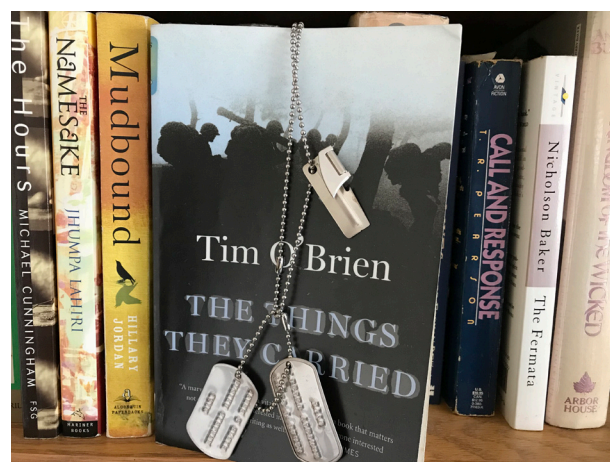
### 4. Let’s Go Surfing Now, Everybody’s Learning How

A 60-something fellow came in looking for surfing magazines. He said they used to have surfing magazines upstairs in the Teen room, but they no longer carry them and wondered if they’d been put on our magazine shelves. We had none. I asked if he surfed? He said yes, not much here on the Gulf coast but more often on the Atlantic side – nowhere near as much as he used to in his younger days.

*March Minutes, continued*

I asked him if he knew the prize-winning memoir *Barbarian Days*? He replied, “By William Finnegan?” I said yes, and off we went discussing that book (2016 Pulitzer for Biography and Autobiography), a mesmerizing book of Finnegan’s reflections on his surfing days, in California and worldwide, with so much lyrical language about water, tides, crests, surfaces, and the physics of the wave. I told him there was a bit more about surfboards and the quality of water than I needed to know but the exploration of lifestyle was fascinating.

Still there’s so much surfing jargon that spoke to the insiders, and he agreed that’s the way it is. Surfers have their own language for sure! He kept talking about the younger surfers at Clearwater Beach or over on the Atlantic coast, referring to them as “rubber people” since they can flex and bend their bodies, immediately react to the waves, and surf hour after hour, unlike 60-something surfers whose once youthful bodies and response have long ago lost their rubbery flexibility!



## 5. The Things He Still Carries

A fellow came into the Friends Bookstore, glanced through the military shelves and purchased *The Things They Carried*, that famous novel of Viet Nam by Tim O’Brien. The customer was mid-60s, bit of a scraggly beard, dressed in army fatigues, some chest medals, bandana, clearly a Viet Nam vet still holding on to his time there, still agitating for recognition, still working to release POWs and

perhaps release his own demons. This was nothing he said explicitly, but it was all in his clothing and demeanor.

When he put the book on the table to purchase, I commented on the book and its justified fame, its powerful story about the ongoing legacy and burdens of that searing war. We talked about that a bit. He asked me if I had been in Nam, and I said no, that I had a medical disability at the time, then also a high lottery number, but I had some acquaintances who had served there.

We chatted a bit and he said many men claim to have been there when they weren’t. He went on to tell me that when men say they have been in Nam, he’ll ask them if they were assigned the P-38. If they reply affirmatively, “Oh yeah, I was on that carrier” or “Oh yeah, I was in that squadron” or “Oh yeah, I was in that area of the country.” Then he knows they’re liars, just pretending. He went on to explain that “P-38” was military slang GIs have used since World War II, slang for a can opener! Glad I had answered honestly. I told him to come back and tell me what he thought about the book after reading it.



## 6. New Meaning to ‘Millennials’

You never know what esoteric treasure you might find in the Friends Bookstore! A woman came up to the desk with five *Archaeology* magazines, a scholarly publication from the Archaeological Institute of America. The journal is filled with stories of ancient, millennia-old cultures



*March Minutes, continued*

and artifacts such as “Rites of the Scythians,” “Cuneiform: The World’s Oldest Writing,” “Exploring Ancient DNA,” “Romans on the Bay of Naples,” “Birthplace of the Olympics,” “Vasco da Gama’s Lost Ship,” “Backyard Birdbath Identified as Roman Pottery,” “Blick Mead Yields 7,000 Year Old Dog’s Tooth,” etc. As she paid for these marvelous essays and more, she drily, wryly commented, “These archeology magazines are for my 90-year-old dad. They’ll make him feel young!”

**7. Solemn**

Youngsters often come in our library bookstore, and I go out of my way to encourage these young readers, especially the boys, who seem to need an extra push to engage with books and the printed word.

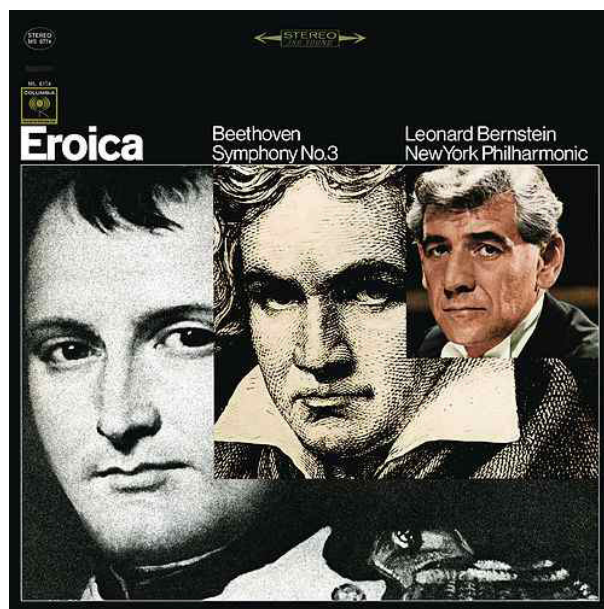
I recall one time in the fourth grade, while waiting to catch the bus home in the afternoon, I stood – reading of course – and came across a word I didn’t recognize. I had no hesitation in approaching the nearest adult, this time, a lunchroom lady still in her sensible shoes, white dress, and hairnet, also waiting for her ride. I pointed out the passage to her and asked her to identify the word I didn’t know.

She glanced at the page, and without missing a beat, replied “Solemn.” No other comment or explanation or definition, but her flat, unsmiling voice intoned the word like Solomon himself proclaiming holy writ. I was impressed. I knew what the word meant when I heard it, but I just didn’t recognize it in print, nor knew that was how

it was to be pronounced with that odd ‘m’ and ‘n’ side by side.

She had spoken the very word “solemn” in an imposing, stately way – solemnly if you will – and that brief interaction is still memorable to me fifty years on. I wondered later if that was intentional to assist my expanding vocabulary, or maybe she was simply tired and bored and deeply uninterested in this 4th grader at the end of her day likely filled with steam tables, overcooked green beans, and cafeteria chaos.

Clearly, I was a boy impressed by language and its mysteries, so one never knows when the slightest interaction and encouragement with children and language can pay huge dividends for that child. Bookstores – especially used bookstores with their inexpensive and abundant offerings – are sanctuaries and treasure troves for children, both those predisposed to love language and those still tiptoeing gingerly at the edges of unsure literacy.

**8. Roll Over, Beethoven**

Looking through our bookstore’s vinyl offerings the other day and seeing the manly miens of Napoleon, Beethoven, and Bernstein as they came together on this classical symphony recording, I remembered yet another time in school when I was confused by vocabulary, thinking I knew more than I did.



*March Minutes, continued*

I had seen Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 Eroica on an album cover in my high school library, but I read it as Beethoven's *Erotica*, so it immediately got my attention. Eroica or Erotica – the very similarity of the vaguely familiar words made me a little queasy. I didn't know how music could be erotic, but since I thought I knew what "erotic" meant (forbidden, sinful, something to do with glands), I figured I would give it a listen.

Embarrassed by the whole notion of erotic arousal and the occasional unplanned appearance of same, I kept the album cover hidden as if it were pornography (which I had never seen except for the pin-up calendars in my Uncle David's greasy garage) as I made my way home on the school bus. I slipped into my upstairs room quietly to place the record on the turntable and gently lowered the needle to the spinning plastic disk.

I awaited arousal. I listened to the whole hour-long symphony, both sides of a 33 1/3 stereophonic LP, hoping for some suggestive spark, some soaring strings or throaty drum that might evoke whatever my teenage body conceivably found erotic. I was clueless as to how symphonic music could be arousing, but I gave it a chance.

Of course, there's nothing remotely erotic about Napoleon's heroic career as conceived by Beethoven in E flat major — thus The (H)Eroica Symphony — so I returned the album greatly disappointed. And confused. And unaroused. Here was a clear case of my simultaneously knowing too much and knowing too little.

Words could be intriguing and puzzling at the same time, in fact, pretty much the same responses — appealing and appalling — that I had to my evolving 15-year-old mind and body.

## 9. Hidden Pages, Obscure Meanings

When I recently came across a copy of W. Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* in the library bookstore, I recalled a high school encounter with words that made little sense to me. My high school English teacher, Mrs. Pearliss Pruitt, had a copy of



*Of Human Bondage* — #66 in Modern Library's 100 Best Novels of the 20th Century — on the classroom shelf. (Mrs. Pruitt is the same English teacher who often said that she enjoyed a joke just as much as anyone, then thought it was the height of cleverness to joke with us, "After you pine, balsam." The pun never failed to elicit confused shrugs from the class, yet I still remember it 50 years later.)

I picked up the book, glanced through it, and found that the last few pages had been pasted over with blank pieces of paper. Supposedly there was something in this book so scandalous and corrupting of the young that it had to be hidden away, even if the book were still available on the shelf. Maybe it was done intentionally to titillate the uninitiated, like telling a child not to read something, knowing that's exactly what he'll do. Oh, those clever English teachers. I signed it out immediately and took it home.

It's the coming-of-age story of Philip Carey, a sensitive young man, born with a clubfoot and consumed by an intense longing for love, art,

*March Minutes, continued*

experience. He goes to boarding school, struggles to fit in, fails to become an artist in Paris, attends medical school, and begins a tortured love affair with a cold-hearted London waitress. Gee, that sounded just like my high school life story (OK, not really) but my family always did say I was just too damn sensitive. The book has been turned into multiple movie versions (1934, 1946, 1964). It was the '34 film that made Bette Davis a star and featured Leslie Howard as Philip. The novel and the film scandalized the nation with its gritty realism of loose women who abandon their babies and a gruesome death from syphilis (changed to TB in the movie). It's a raw exposé of the price of passion when we are in bondage to our emotions. Again, like being in high school.

Anyway, after getting the book home, I didn't bother to read any of the thick paperback but held it over a steaming teakettle and managed to get the cover-up off the pages so I could read what was underneath. But the hidden passages didn't seem that remarkable or scandalous to me — just Sally and Philip chatting while walking, then something unspecified is said as she darkens and he blanches. The reader is left to put two and two together, and my literary-addition skills then were limited.

Of course, Maugham is intentionally oblique as this is 1915 literature for puritanical, sexually-repressed America. (D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterly's Lover* hadn't yet been published and made its way to America, even in bowdlerized form, with its frequent use of "fuck" and "cunt" and a penis nicknamed John Thomas.) So Maugham's obliqueness and my own immaturity — as reader and human being — left me clueless. Certainly, there was nothing there to compel me to read any more of this indecipherable book where the characters spoke in circles and the text was indefinite and vague. In fact, I've never read the entire book, only the last few pages that had been pasted over to protect my youthful innocence!

Looking for smut or dirty words or strange bedroom behavior in London and Paris (at this point, all bedroom behavior was strange to me, not

just Anglo-French), I found nothing but meaningless words on those final pages. In my eyes, there was nothing warranting a cover-up, nothing about women as sensuous beings, youthful premarital sex, feared accidental pregnancies and illegitimate babies, potential abortions, abandoned careers, destroyed lives. And I could not understand Philip's tired resignation to abandon his career because "the simplest pattern, that in which a man was born, worked, married, had children, and died, was likewise the most perfect."

I was too young and inexperienced for this book. Reading the concealed words, I fathomed none of this, yet, all was there, just beneath the darkening and blanching. Clearly, this time I wasn't sensitive enough. I reglued the paper to the book, none the wiser, and returned the unread novel to the shelf. It has stayed unread.



## 10. Crazy Talk I've Heard People Say in the Bookstore

We occasionally have folks come into the library bookstore looking for a particular book, but they can't remember the author or title or plot or genre. They do recall the color or size of the book, or they remember who recommended it or where they were when they saw it last. Take a look sometime at a delightful book called *Weird Things Customers Say in Bookshops* by Jen Campbell (London, 2012) followed by her *More Weird Things Customers Say in Bookshops* (London, 2013). Clearly, there are enough weird things said in bookstores to fill two

*March Minutes, concluded*

books, maybe more. Here's some crazy talk I've heard in our Friends Bookstore, and a few examples from the books too:

- I don't remember the title, but it had a blue cover.
- Did Anne Frank ever write a sequel? (from *Weird Things...*)
- Why did you put Hillary Clinton's book in non-fiction? It's all made-up lies.
- Would you mind if I took this cookbook home so I can try out the recipe first?
- I'm going on a cruise, so I'm buying these 20 Harlequin romances.
- Why do you have these books by Darwin and Dawkins? They're atheists.
- Can you recommend a book? I just got out of jail and would like something not too demanding.
- Do you have Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Six*? No, I'm sure it's *Nineteen Eighty-Six*. I remember it because that was the year I was born. (from *Weird Things...*)
- You have more books on Bill Clinton than on George Bush. Why?
- Your sign says this book is a best-seller. But I've seen this same book here for a month.
- This bag says "10 Romance Novels \$1." Why are they so cheap?
- I don't like this label you use here, "Christian Fiction."
- I don't use an e-reader. Are the books in Kindle hardback or paperback? (from *Weird Things...*)
- Would you mind if I took a couple of books down to the cafe to read while I have lunch?
- Do you have any novels by Justin Bieber?
- Why don't you have any books on Scientology? I'll bring you some.
- I'm looking for a magazine called *Chicks & Ammo*.
- All the self-help books are for women. Don't men need help too?
- Why is *To Kill a Mockingbird* under Classics? I hated that book in high school.
- Do you believe in science fiction?
- I don't think you should have books on the circus or zoos because they mistreat animals.
- I thought *Hunger Games* was a book about eating disorders.
- Are all the homosexual books in with normal fiction? (from *Weird Things...*)
- The jigsaw puzzle box says it has 1,000 pieces. Can you guarantee it?
- I can get cheaper books at the flea market.
- I'm decorating my living room in earth-tones. Do you have any earth-tone books?
- Do you have *Lionel Ritchie and the Wardrobe*? (from *Weird Things...*)
- My husband donated books here, but he gave you the wrong ones. Can I get them back?
- I don't like your plastic bags from Dollar Store. They have a smell.
- Why do you put so many books on the bottom shelf?
- Do you have the book called *Hamlet for Dummies*? My son is studying it in school but doesn't want to read it.

The March meeting adjourned on page 17.

Thank you for your kind attention.





## In Memory of Lost Libraries

**I**n 2017, the retreating forces of ISIS – the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria – set fire to two of the greatest libraries in Iraq: the Mosul Central Library and the Mosul University Library. These were two more in ISIS’s many acts of cultural assassination in the region. In the Mosul University Library alone, a million books were lost, some dating back 1,000 years.

In response to the burning of these libraries, there has been an outpouring of generosity across the globe. One of these efforts is Edmund de Waal’s *Library of Exile* exhibition. Unveiled to “great acclaim” at the Venice Biennale 2019, *Library of Exile* is making its final appearance at the British Museum, Mar. 12–Sept. 3, 2020.

The Mosul libraries are not the focus of the exhibition, but they have important affinities with it – authors may be suppressed by exiling them, or their works may be destroyed. As the title suggests, *Library of Exile* focuses on the former: authors who have written in exile, estranged from their societies for messages intolerable to oppressive regimes.

By contrast with the remnants of the Mosul libraries, the *Library of Exile* is pristine, its structure covered with pure white liquid porcelain. On the exterior walls are carved the names of libraries lost through the centuries. The interior



Interior of the Mosul University Library after retreating ISIS forces burned it.

walls are lined with shelves that contain volumes selected by de Waal or contributed by visitors during the exhibition’s tour in Venice, Dresden, and, finally, London. The collection now includes over 2,000 books from 90 countries in dozens of original languages and in translation, covering 2,000 years, with titles from Ovid and Tacitus to T. S. Eliot and Judith Kerr.

De Waal described *Library of Exile* as “the most personal and significant thing I’ve done.” For de Waal, the exhibition resonates with contemporary events and his family’s history of loss in war. De Waal’s great-grandfather’s library was looted in World War II. But there was a greater loss: in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, de Waal’s family, the Ephrussi, controlled a banking empire on the scale of the Rothschilds – but in the turmoil of two World Wars, it was all lost, except for a collection of 247 netsuke which became the basis of de Waal’s book *The Hare with Amber Eyes: A Family’s Century of Art and Loss* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010).

When *Library of Exile* closes in September, its books will be donated to the Mosul University Library with the help of Book Aid International.

The British Museum will host numerous events connected with the exhibition while it is open. Not headed to London? You can browse the books in *Library of Exile* at the [online exhibition site](https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/library-of-exile).



Edmund de Waal sits in his work the Library of Exile, a place for contemplation.

Sources: *The Guardian*; Reuters; *New Yorker*; British Museum; edmunddewaal.com



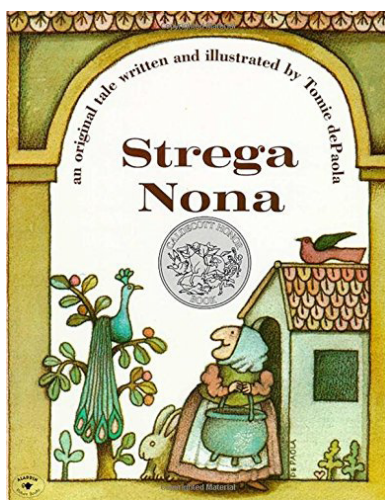
## Tomie dePaola, 1934–2020, Author and Illustrator

**T**homas Anthony “Tomie” dePaola was an American writer and illustrator who created more than 260 children’s books. He received the Children’s Literature Legacy Award for his lifetime contribution to American children’s literature in 2011.

DePaola was born in Meriden, Conn. His father was a barber, and his mother was a homemaker. DePaola knew from age 4 that he wanted to be an artist – he credited his mother’s consistent reading aloud to him every night as a great influence. He would go on to study at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn (which named him “one of the top 125 Pratt icons of all time” in 2012), the California College of Arts in Oakland, and Lone Mountain College



Tomie dePaola (Jim Cole/AP)



in San Francisco. He taught in the art and theater departments of colleges in California, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

DePaola’s work is exemplified by his best-known book, *Strega Nona* (1975; Caldecott Award, 1976). It’s a cautionary tale on the lines of *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*. In this case,

*Strega Nona’s* helper, Big Anthony, deluges a small town in Calabria with pasta from *Strega Nona’s* magic pot – a process he knows how to start, but not how to stop. (DePaola’s grandparents were from Calabria.) Big Anthony should have listened to *Strega Nona*!

*Strega Nona* appears in 11 dePaola books – all well received... except for those few libraries that refused to carry books that treated witchery in a positive light. DePaola knew that children did not care about such things. The world he created, often drawn from his own experiences, delighted children and appealed to their desire to do good, to understand the rules, and to have fun.

The setting of many of dePaola’s books is “vaguely  
Sources: *New York Times*; *New Yorker*; [tomie.com](http://tomie.com)

Renaissance-ish,” with people dancing in town squares, milking goats, cooking in three-footed pots. It’s the simple world of the fairy tale – unrelated to modern life, but easily accessible to the imagination. The people in these books are not so simple, and their characters drive stories that have charm and depth.

Despite his early interest, he had to hold on to that goal through the concerns of his parents and the suspicion of his peers. DePaola told this story in *Oliver Button Is a Sissy* (1979), about a boy who didn’t like “to do things that boys are supposed to do,” and instead liked to read books and draw pictures” and “sing and dance and make believe he was a movie star.”

Like dePaola, Oliver’s talent and determination win the admiration of his peers and the support of his parents. And in dePaola’s case, his sustained joy in his work and his degree of success were the final proof that he took the right path. His millions of readers have no doubt.

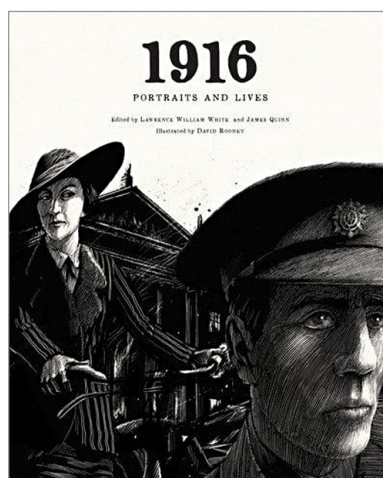
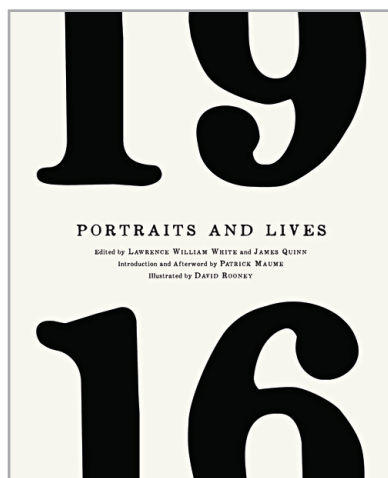


In *Michael Bird-Boy* (1975), the eponymous hero in his daily costume seeks the source of pollution that is making his animal friends sad and blocking the moon – an artificial honey factory – a problem Michael solves with the help of some bees.





## *Remembering Easter, 1916. Dublin.*



### *1916: PORTRAITS AND LIVES* From the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin: An Online Exhibition / A Printed Book

**IRISH HISTORY AND IRISH POLITICS** were changed utterly during Easter week in Dublin City, 1916. And never did a small populist rebellion carry such lasting significance. The Easter Rising also gave to Global Literature an iconic poem by William Butler Yeats (“I write it out in a verse”). Honoring this historical event, the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, has constructed an impressive online exhibition on the Rising’s principal figures: [\*1916: Portraits And Lives\*](#). A [printed book](#) on the subject is also available, edited by Lawrence William White & James Quinn, illustrated by [David Rooney](#) (42 portraits), with Introduction and Afterword by Patrick Maume.



### [Full Text of Yeats’s Poem](#)

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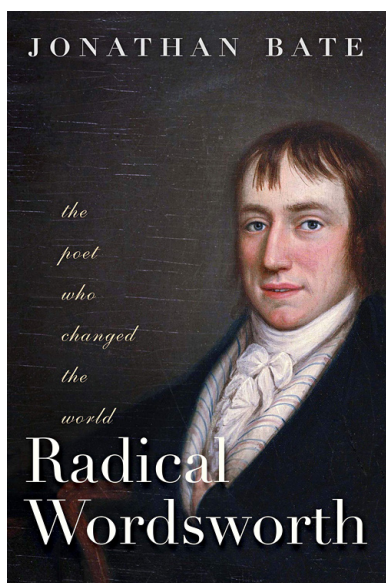
Contributed by **Maureen E. Mulvihill**, FBS member and 2012-2015 FBS Vice President. A specialist on early Irish women writers, Maureen has enjoyed two recent intersections with the Royal Irish Academy. She contributed “Mary Shackleton Leadbeater” to the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, 9 vols (Royal Irish Academy, 2009) and she recently acquired an uncommon copy of the *Charter and Statutes of the Royal Irish Academy* (Dublin, 1786; 1818 edition), restored (2020) in a deluxe edition by David H. Barry (Griffin Bookbinding, St Petersburg, FL.). Irish writers in the Mulvihill Collection include Swift, Maria Edgeworth, Mary Tighe (Lytton Strachey copy), Yeats, and a fine letterpress broadsheet of the *Proclamation of the Irish Republic* (Dublin, 24 April 1916; Newark, Delaware: Lead Graffiti, 2016).



## Books in Brief

### Radical Wordsworth: The Poet Who Changed the World

Jonathan Bate  
Yale Univ. Press  
608 pp., Apr. 2020



On the 250th anniversary of Wordsworth's birth comes a highly imaginative and vivid portrait of a revolutionary poet who embodied the spirit of his age

Published in time for the 250th anniversary of William Wordsworth's birth, this is the biography of a great poetic genius, a revolutionary who

changed the world. Wordsworth rejoiced in the French Revolution and played a central role in the cultural upheaval that we call the Romantic Revolution.

He and his fellow Romantics changed forever the way we think about childhood, the sense of the self, our connection to the natural environment, and the purpose of poetry. But his was also a revolutionary life in the old sense of the word, insofar as his art was of memory, the return of the past, the circling back to childhood and youth. This beautifully written biography is purposefully fragmentary, momentary, and selective, opening up what Wordsworth called "the hiding-places of my power."



**Sir Jonathan Bate** is Foundation Professor of Environmental Humanities at Arizona State University and a senior research fellow at Oxford University, where he was formerly provost of Worcester College.



Sources: Yale

### Cross Of Snow: A Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Nicholas A. Basbanes  
Knopf  
480 pp., June 2020

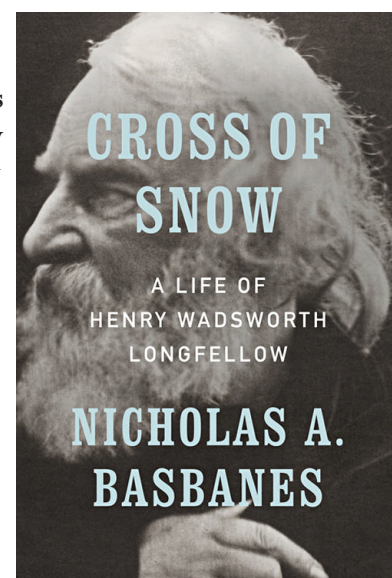
This is the most noteworthy literary biography of America's best-loved 19<sup>th</sup>-century poet in more than fifty years and a much-needed reassessment for the 21<sup>st</sup> century of a writer whose stature and celebrity were unparalleled in his time, whose work helped to explain America's new world not only to Americans but to Europe and beyond.

*Cross of Snow* is the result of over 12 years of research, including access to never-before-examined letters, diaries, journals, notes. In this portrait of a bold artist, experimenter of poetic form and an innovative translator, Basbanes reveals the life, the times, the work, and the soul of the man who shaped the literature of a new nation with countless poems, sonnets, stories, essays, and translations, becoming one of the foremost literary figures of his day.



**Nicholas A. Basbanes** is well-known to bibliophiles for his books *On Paper*, *Patience and Fortitude*, and *A Gentle Madness*, all widely read and praised. Basbanes is an award-winning investigative journalist and was

literary editor of the *Worcester Sunday Telegram*. His articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *Smithsonian*. He is the author of eight books.



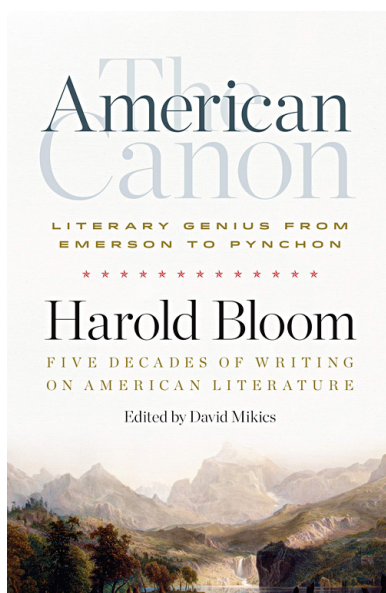
Sources: Penguin

*Books in Brief, continued***The American Canon: Literary Genius from Emerson to Pynchon**

Harold Bloom and David W. Mikics

Library of America

436 pp., Oct. 2019



**Harold Bloom (1930–2019)** “a colossus among critics” (*New York Times*). In a career of more than 50 years and in his landmark studies *The Anxiety of Influence* and *A Map of Misreading* as well as best-sellers *The Western Canon* and *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, Bloom transformed our view of the masterworks of western literature.

This collection of Bloom’s

writing, assembled by David Mikics (*Slow Reading in a Hurried Age*), reveals the surprising connections among 47 essential American writers across more than two centuries. These essays, often hard to find and long unavailable, weave a compelling portrait of American literary genius and its influence on American culture. For example, Bloom explains how Emerson’s emphasis on self-reliance led to the American classic *Moby-Dick* and Wallace Stevens’s modernist “The Auroras of Autumn,” but it can also lead to an American spirit of extremism. Bloom reminds us how our most indispensable writers have shaped our sense of who we are, and how they can summon us to be better versions of ourselves.

**David Mikics** is the Moores Distinguished



Professor of English at the Univ. of Houston and a distinguished critic of American literature. He is author of *Bellow’s People: How Saul Bellow Made Life into Art* and other books.



Sources: Library of America

**How Books Came to America: The Rise of the American Book Trade**

John Hruschka

Penn State Univ. Press

248 pp., Jan 2012

**Despite the challenges of 150 years of new media and repeated predictions of the book’s demise, books remain popular – Americans buy more than eight million**

**books each day.** In *How*

*Books Came to America*

John Hruschka traces the American book trade from European contact, through the growth of regional book trades in the early English colonies, to

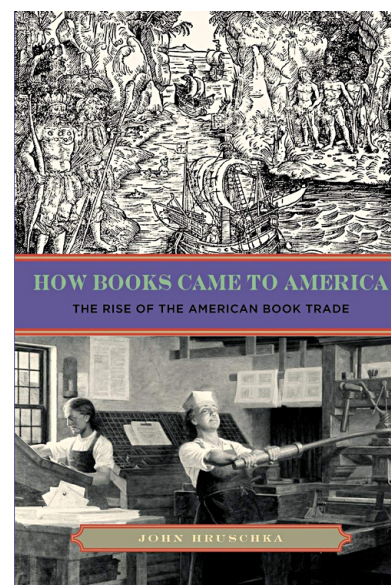
national book trade that emerged after the American Civil War and flourished in the twentieth century. He examines the variety of technological, historical, cultural, political, and personal forces that shaped the American book trade, paying particular attention to the contributions of the German bookseller Frederick Leypoldt and his journal, *Publishers Weekly*. Hruschka focuses on how books are manufactured and sold, rather than how they are written and read. It is the story of the people who created and influenced the book business in the colonies and the United States and made the American book trade the unique commercial institution it is today – the famous: Benjamin Franklin, Robert Hoe, the Harpers, Henry Holt, and Melvil Dewey – and the obscure: Joseph Glover, Conrad Beissel, and Frederick Leypoldt.



**John Hruschka** is Assistant Professor of English Composition at Penn College of Technology and the author of several books on the publishing industry.



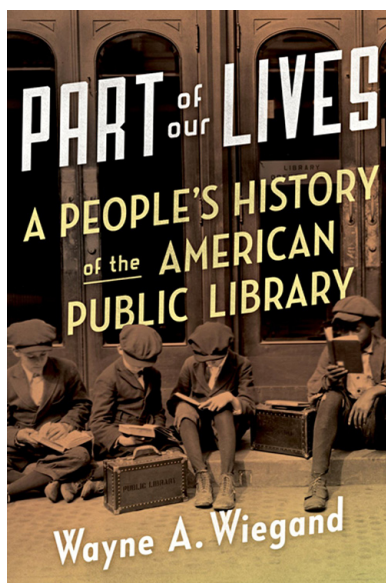
Sources: Penn State Univ. Press; Penn. College of Tech.





*Books in Brief, concluded***Part of Our Lives: A People's History of the American Public Library**

Wayne Wiegand  
Oxford Univ. Press  
344 pp., June 2017



Since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the future of the public library was very much in doubt, their numbers and use have increased. Two thirds of Americans visit a public library at least once a year. Since colonial times, libraries have adapted to better serve their communities.

In *Part of Our Lives*, Wayne Wiegand delves into why Americans love

their libraries. The book traces the history of the public library, featuring records and testimonies from as early as 1850. Rather than analyzing the words of library founders and managers, Wiegand listens to the voices of everyday patrons who cherished libraries. Drawing on newspaper articles, memoirs, and biographies, *Part of Our Lives* paints a clear and engaging picture of Americans who value libraries not only as civic institutions, but also as public places that promote and maintain community. Wiegand demonstrates that, although cultural authorities (including some librarians) have often disparaged reading books considered not “serious,” the commonplace reading materials users obtained from public libraries have had a transformative effect for civic and cultural leaders to the common people.



**Wayne A. Wiegand** is the F. William Summers professor emeritus at the School of Information at Florida State University and one of the nation's leading library historians.

Sources: Barnes and Noble

**The Card Catalog: Books, Cards, and Literary Treasures**

Carla Hayden  
Chronicle Books  
224 pp., Apr. 2017

Cataloging information was a technological breakthrough in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From the French use of playing cards because they were a standard size to Dewey's categorization of books, the evolution of the card catalog is fascinating.

The Library of Congress, originally derived from Thomas Jefferson's

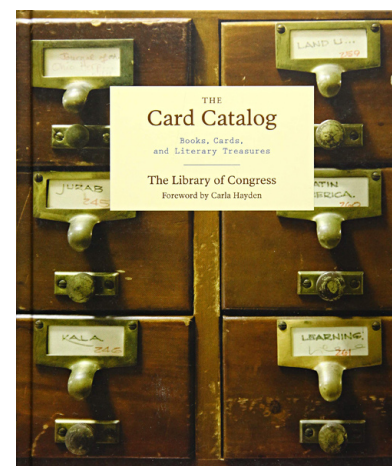
personal library, used Jefferson's filing system until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Then, the Library of Congress transitioned to a modern card catalog system, and for decades that was the principal means of access to the Library's massive collections. The last cards printed for use at the Library of Congress were filed on Dec. 31, 1980.

*The Card Catalog* brings booklovers an enriching tribute to the catalog and the books and other materials it documented. Featuring more than 200 images of original catalog cards, first edition book covers, and photographs from the library's magnificent archives, this collection is a visual celebration of the rarely seen treasures in one of the world's most famous libraries and the brilliant catalog system that has kept it organized. Packed with engaging facts on literary classics – from *Ulysses* to *The Cat in the Hat* to Shakespeare's First Folio to *The Catcher in the Rye* – this package is an ode to the enduring importance of books.



**Carla Hayden** was sworn in as the 14<sup>th</sup> Librarian of Congress on Sept. 14, 2016, the first woman and the first African-American to lead the national library.

Sources: Chronicle Books; Library of Congress; Goodreads








*Reading — a journey*, by Donald Gensler for Mural Arts Philadelphia



## This Month's Writers and Contributors

Many thanks to those who contributed words, pictures, and ideas to this month's newsletter!

Jude Bagatti  
BonSue Brandvik  
David Hall  
Jerry Morris  
Linda Morris  
Maureen E. Mulvihill  
Carl Mario Nudi  
Elenora Sabin  
Gary Simons  
Ben Wiley  
Barry Zack, SAC


Have an idea for an article for *The Florida Bibliophile*? Contact Charles Brown, [cmbrown@atlantic.net](mailto:cmbrown@atlantic.net), to submit or for assistance in preparing your article. 

## Join FBS!

If you love books, take your interest to the next level by joining a group of dedicated book lovers (i.e., bibliophiles). You will meet serious collectors, dealers, scholars, and readers, and you will discover a lively, enjoyable group. You will find contact emails on the last page of this newsletter.




Membership is \$50 per year. You can find a membership form on our website. It will give you the address to which to send your filled-out form and payment.

Joining FBS also makes you a member of our national organization, the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies. 

## Write for Your Newsletter!



Your input and content are needed. FBS is about participation, about discoveries, about passionate interests, and sometimes the deliciously obscure. Why not write about it!? 

## Upcoming Events

### April 2020



### Lola Haskins, Poet

**Physical event canceled – Watch for the May issue of *The Florida Bibliophile* for a presentation of Lola's work.**

Returning to FBS for National Poetry Month is award-winning Florida poet Lola Haskins, featuring poems from her latest collection, *Asylum: Improvisations on John Clare*.

In 1841, the English poet John Clare broke out of the asylum in High Beach, Essex, and walked almost 100 miles to his home village of Helpston. Lola Haskins has taken Clare's circumstance and journey as a framework for the poems in her latest collection, *Asylum Improvisations on John Clare*, published in 2019 in the prestigious University of Pittsburgh Poetry Series. In addition to new poems, *Asylum* collects poems that Haskins has written throughout her career that had not yet found a home. Altogether, the new collection retraces both John Clare's journey and Haskins's own, or as she might say, her series of journeys.



### May 2020

### FBS Annual Banquet

**May 17 event on hold – Members will be informed well in advance of date confirmation, postponement, or cancellation.**





## Florida Book Events Calendar

*Know about any events of interest to book lovers? Send corrections and additions to Charles Brown, [cmbrown@atlantic.net](mailto:cmbrown@atlantic.net)*

Due to coronavirus concerns and in response to the shelter-in-place order current in Florida, no book events will be possible in Florida into May. The Florida Book Events Calendar will return when confirmed event dates are available.

In lieu of our usual book events calendar, the following pages contain a number of activities, mostly of a book-related nature, that you may enjoy now, while you may have some extra time, and after the crisis is over.

### How to Help Librarians and Archivists From Your Living Room

[adapted from the Atlas Obscura blog]

Many institutions are awash in documents but not so much in identification, sorting, or transcription assistance.

#### Newberry Library – an independent research library in Chicago

The Newberry's substantial holdings include thousands of original documents related to American history. The Newberry needs your help deciphering handwritten letters and diaries and turning them into searchable resources. Library staff are hoping to transcribe [51,259 pages in all](#), and only about 40 percent is complete. Brush up on the library's [preferred transcription practices](#), and log on to dive into the lives of American families in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries.

#### Bentham Project at University College London

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) was an English philosopher, jurist, and social reformer regarded as the founder of modern utilitarianism: “it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong.” Bentham left a prodigious pile of writings. [The Bentham Project](#) at University College London has already worked through some 23,000 pages of the philosopher's musings, and they need your help tackling several thousand more. You can find the whole list of yet-

to-be-transcribed work here ([http://transcribe-bentham.ucl.ac.uk/td/Category:Untranscribed\\_Manuscripts](http://transcribe-bentham.ucl.ac.uk/td/Category:Untranscribed_Manuscripts)).

#### Community Oral Histories, Menus, and Atlases at the New York Public Library

The New York Public Library has a vast trove of [oral histories](#) about life in the boroughs, and is seeking folks to tidy up the transcripts generated by a speech-to-text tool. It's a group effort – once a user tinkers with a line, others must listen and agree on the transcription. Grab some headphones and spend time with residents of Harlem, SoHo, Greenwich Village, and other neighborhoods that have seen rapid, seismic change.

You can also tune in to hundreds of [community stories](#) and listen to people wax nostalgic about the neighborhood institutions they have loved. You can peruse and transcribe the dishes on thousands upon [thousands of menus](#), or take a stroll around [historical insurance atlases](#) and add addresses, correct building footprints, and more.

#### Madam C. J. Walker Collection at the Smithsonian Institution

Projects that need your help include the papers of [astronaut Sally Ride](#) and notebooks where women at the old Harvard College Observatory recorded [their celestial computations](#). The namesake of the collection, Madam C. J. Walker (1867–1919), was an American entrepreneur, philanthropist, and political, social activist and America's first female self-made millionaire. She made her money and her mark on American culture by developing cosmetics for African-Americans. Along the way, she trained thousands of other African-American women. The [documents that need transcription](#) or OCR proofing include hundreds of magazines and other publications that document African-American history.





*Calendar, concluded***Scenic Byways at the National Archives**

The National Archives contain thousands of photographs taken along specially designated scenic byways. You can visit every corner of the U.S. in these photographs. Help is needed to [identify the content of the images](#). Among the [450+ projects](#) at the National Archives are transcription of an [867-page court case](#) brought against Charlie Chaplin and many speeches by Franklin D. Roosevelt, and much more.

**Rosa Parks Papers and Spanish Legal Documents at the Library of Congress**

The Library of Congress's By the People project needs help transcribing [Rosa Parks's papers](#), including her correspondence with her husband and mother, as well as a vast collection of 17th- and 18th-century [Spanish legal documents](#) (written in English, Spanish, and Latin). Other popular projects include transcribing [letters to Abraham Lincoln](#) and the [papers of Clara Barton](#), founder of the American Red Cross.

**Zooniverse: Crowd-Sourced Research**

Zooniverse is the mother of all cloud-sourced research projects. The range of participatory projects runs the gamut of interests. They are currently highlighting [Bash the Bug](#), in which users classify lab results that will help researchers identify strains of *Tuberculosis* that are antibiotic resistant. It is key to remember that when we have moved past the coronavirus pandemic, tuberculosis and similar diseases will continue to injure and kill millions of people a year. Just as novel viruses are an emerging threat to humankind, so is antibiotic resistance. Users sign up for one or more projects. Instructional materials are brief and clear, and users are working within minutes. Many projects are available in Arts, Biology, Climate, History, Language, Literature, Medicine, Nature, Physics, Social Science, and Space.

A few of the projects that will be of interest to readers of this newsletter include:

[Plant Letters](#) – Track plant species, locations, and scientists hidden in 19<sup>th</sup>-century handwritten letters.

[The American Soldier](#) – Transform this one-of-a-kind collection of reflections on war and military service by American soldiers who served during the Second World War.

[Notes from Nature: WeDigFLPlants](#) – Build the historical database for plant diversity and distribution in Florida.

[Macdonald Dictionary](#) – Help us transcribe names and supporting information in the G. R. Macdonald Dictionary of Canterbury Biographies.

[Star Notes](#) – Transcribe the groundbreaking work of early women astronomers.

[African-American Civil War Soldiers](#) – Transcribe the military records of African-American soldiers in the American Civil War.

[Anti-Slavery Manuscripts](#) – Sort and transcribe correspondence between anti-slavery activists in the 19th century into texts that can be more easily read and researched by students, teachers, historians, and big data applications.

[Scribes of the Cairo Geniza](#) – Hidden for centuries in an attic in Cairo, over 300,000 fragments of pre-modern and medieval Jewish texts – from everyday receipts to biblical works – have yet to be fully deciphered. The first step is to sort the fragments by scribe type and level of difficulty, which is a visual recognitions project, but you may also attempt some transcription, if you know a little Hebrew or Arabic.

**Univ. of Oxford Book History Podcasts**

Can't make it to Rare Book School? Maybe the next best thing is this set of 17 book history podcasts that cover many topics in the history of the book. Titles include the book trade in the 15th century, digital typography, and the book trade in Venice and Florence. The podcasts are generally accessible for the nonspecialist.



## Florida Bibliophile Society, 2019–2020 Season



David Hall

**September 15 • FBS Members: Treasures We Found during the Summer Break.** FBS members shared about recent acquisitions and brought books for a fascinating afternoon of show and tell.

**October 27 • Mary Kay Watson: Tangled Shakespeare.** Mary Kay recently published a book of imaginative illustrations to accompany *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She presented her book, discussed her process, and supplied materials for a brief workshop introducing the audience to Zentangle drawing.

**November 17 • Jonathan Chopan: Imagining the Other: On Writing outside the Self.** Mr. Chopan, an Associate Professor of Creative Writing at Eckerd College, read from his recent book, *Veterans Crisis Hotline*, and took questions from the audience.

**December 15 • FBS Holiday Party.** FBS members Ben and Joyce Wiley hosted a wonderful holiday party at their home in Largo.

**January 19 • Jerry Morris: My Books About Books Collection.** Jerry is president of FBS and an accomplished book collector. Among other areas, Jerry collects Books About Books, a fascinating topic. His collection currently numbers more than 1,300 books, and as promised, he didn't miss a one!

**February 16 • Mark Harris: Collecting Comics.** For many people, comics are still a lighthearted collectible, but they are now widely recognized for their potential for serious business, art, and literature. Mark, an avid and knowledgeable collector, began with the 1938 advent of modern comics and outlined their history to the present day as well as that of the industry and the dynamics of collecting.

**March 15 • FBS Open Mic – physical event canceled.** Many FBS members are also writers. In lieu of a physical meeting, members contributed to a “meeting in absentia,” which was presented in the April issue of *The Florida Bibliophile*. It's all on paper, but if you know us, you can hear the voices, the laughter, and the appreciative applause!

**April 19 • Lola Haskins, Poet – Readings from *Asylum* – physical event canceled.** Lola delighted us with her readings in National Poetry Month 2017. She returns to FBS in 2020. Her most recent book, *Asylum: Improvisations on John Clare*, was published in the prestigious Pitt Poetry Series. The April meeting of FBS has been canceled due to coronavirus concerns; however, with Lola's gracious assistance, a full virtual account of her virtual presentation will appear – for real! – in the May issue of *The Florida Bibliophile*.

**April 24–26 • Florida Antiquarian Book Fair – canceled.** The 2020 Florida Antiquarian Book Fair has been canceled due to coronavirus precautions. Look for the nation's third largest book fair to return in 2021!

**May 17 • ANNUAL FBS BANQUET – on hold.** We are watching guidance about gatherings carefully. Frankly, a banquet date in May is doubtful, but members will be notified well in advance to confirm the May 17 date, a postponement, or cancellation.

All meetings are held at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday afternoon unless otherwise announced.



## Endpaper • “Most Remarkable Occurrences”



We could never have (confidently) predicted that we would be here, in one of the biggest shared events in the history of our species. There have been other pandemics, but we have never been able to be as aware of them, globally, as we are now.

We are almost all at home, sheltering in place. We're all on diets – news diets, that is – trying to get enough information to sift through the recommendations, reports, and statistics, while not becoming overwhelmed.

To mask or not to mask – that is the question!

Handy tip: When not needed for your nose and mouth, you can use a mask to cover your eyes.

Prayerfully, our collective and individual efforts will limit the impact, and the collective response has been heartening. Nevertheless, an event of this scale will result in changes, some of which we can imagine and some which we can't. We will probably wash our hands more often, and when masks are

readily available again, we may start keeping a few of them in the medicine cabinet.

I can only guess how many books will be written – fiction and nonfiction. If writers of both types have speculated about such an event, here it is. I think about Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* – he was five in 1665, the year that the bubonic plague came to London. Fifty years later, he would write a systematic, well-researched account of that event. It takes time to understand.

We look forward to returning to our meetings, hearing an interesting presentation, talking over coffee and a sweet or two, and laughing over dinner at some crowded restaurant.

Meanwhile, we have more time to read a book, call a friend, enjoy a movie. It's enough for now.

See you at the bookstore... after a while!

Charles

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Unattributed material has been prepared by the editor.

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