

New American Stories Vintage Contemporaries

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Selected Stories

The New Yorker magazine named Matt Klam one of the twenty best young writers in America, and the seven stories that comprise *Sam the Cat* are all the proof we need. Knowing, perceptive, and wickedly funny, Matt Klam loves his characters but spares them nothing: the swaggering womanizer Sam falls in love with a woman across a crowded room who, upon closer inspection, turns out to be not quite what he expected; a self-doubting young professional attends the posh wedding of his successful friend and delivers a disastrous toast; the chicken one man's girlfriend is preparing for dinner comes to embody the darkly corrosive element in their relationship. These stories crackle with humor, intelligence and style and add up to an outrageously funny, unforgettable debut.

Short People

In "one of the great coming-of-age novels of the twentieth century," an estranged father and son struggle to get by in 1950s Michigan (New York Times–bestselling author Jennifer Haigh). It's 1959 in Flint, Michigan, and sixteen-year-old Alex Housman has just stolen his fourteenth car. Frankly, he doesn't know why he does it. Meanwhile, his divorced father grinds out his night shift at the Chevy plant in nearby Detroit, looking forward to the flask of booze in his glove compartment. Father and son attempt to express their love for each other, even as Alex fills his days juggling cheap thrills and crushing depression. Compelled by reasons he can't put into words, he cruises and steals, running from—and then forcing run-ins with—the police. Broke and fighting to survive, Alex and his father face the realities of estrangement and incarceration as their lives unfold toward a climactic episode that the New York Times considers "one of the most profoundly powerful in American fiction." "A remarkable, gripping first novel." —Joyce Carol Oates, New York Times–bestselling author of *A Book of American Martyrs* "Poignant and beautifully written . . . so true and so excruciatingly painful that one can't read it without feeling the knife's cruel blade in the heart." —The Boston Globe

Self-Help

In their various locales--from Montreal (where a prosthetic leg casts a furious spell on its beholders) to New Mexico (where a Soviet-era exchange student redefines

home for his hosts)--the characters in *Babylon* are coming to terms with life's epiphanies, for good or ill. They range from the very young who, confronted with their parents' limitations, discover their own resolve, to those facing middle age and its particular indignities, no less determined to assert themselves and shape their destinies. *Babylon and Other Stories* showcases the wit, humor, and insight that have made Alix Ohlin one of the most admired young writers working today.

Gryphon

Winner of the PEN/Malamud Award, *Airships* is a “strong, original, tragic and funny” story collection of “the creative Southern tradition” (Alfred Kazin). One of the most revered short story collections of the past fifty years, *Airships* remains a vital text in the history of the American short story. The award-winning contemporary classic features twenty wildly original, exuberant, often hilarious stories that celebrate the universal peculiarities of the new American South—a land of high school band contests where good old boys from Vicksburg are reunited in Vietnam, and petty nostalgia and the incessant pain of disappointed love prevail in spite of our worst efforts. Hailed by none other than Larry McMurtry as “the best young writer to appear in the South since Flannery O’Connor,” Barry Hannah’s immense storytelling gifts are on striking display in this essential work. “Hannah takes fiction by surprise—scenes, shocks, sounds and amazements: an explosive but meticulous originality.” —Cynthia Ozick

The Art of Death

The legendary writer’s first collection in more than ten years—and, finally, the definitive one. A literary event of the highest order. Joy Williams has been celebrated as a master of the short story for four decades, her renown passing as a given from one generation to the next even in the shifting landscape of contemporary writing. And at long last the incredible scope of her singular achievement is put on display: thirty-three stories drawn from three much-lauded collections, and another thirteen appearing here for the first time in book form. Forty-six stories in all, far and away the most comprehensive volume in her long career, showcasing her crisp, elegant prose, her dark wit, and her uncanny ability to illuminate our world through characters and situations that feel at once peculiar and foreign and disturbingly familiar. Virtually all American writers have their favorite Joy Williams stories, as do many readers of all ages, and each one of them is available here.

Monkeys

Minot’s bestselling debut: A moving novel of familial love and endurance in the face of shattering tragedy *Monkeys* is the remarkable story of a decade in the life of the Vincents, a colorful Irish Catholic family from the Boston suburbs. On the surface, they seem happy with their vivacious mother Rosie at the helm. But underneath, the Vincents struggle to maintain the appearance of wealth and stability while dealing with the effects of their father’s alcoholism. When a sudden accident strikes, their love for one another is tested like never before. Written by the bestselling author of *Evening*, *Monkeys* is a powerful story of one family’s

struggle to overcome life-changing tribulations and Minot's wrenching ode to the ties that bind even the most wounded of families. This ebook features a new illustrated biography of Susan Minot, including artwork by the author and rare documents and photos from her personal collection.

Babylon and Other Stories

Ben Marcus achieved cult status and gained the admiration of his peers with his first book, *The Age of Wire and String*. With *Notable American Women* he goes well beyond that first achievement to create something radically wonderful, a novel set in a world so fully imagined that it creates its own reality. On a farm in Ohio, American women led by Jane Dark practice all means of behavior modification in an attempt to attain complete stillness and silence. Witnessing (and subjected to) their cultish actions is one Ben Marcus, whose father, Michael Marcus, may be buried in the back yard, and whose mother, Jane Marcus, enthusiastically condones the use of her son for (generally unsuccessful) breeding purposes, among other things. Inventing his own uses for language, the author Ben Marcus has written a harrowing, hilarious, strangely moving, altogether engrossing work of fiction that will be read and argued over for years to come.

Something Is Out There

More than sixty stories, poems, and essays are included in this wide-ranging collection by the extravagantly versatile Raymond Carver. Two of the stories—later revised for *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*—are particularly notable in that between the first and the final versions, we see clearly the astounding process of Carver's literary development.

New American Stories

"Brisk, ironic scalpel-sharp. A funny, cohesive, and moving collection of stories."
--The New York Times Book Review In these tales of loss and pleasure, lovers and family, a woman learns to conduct an affair, a child of divorce dances with her mother, and a woman with a terminal illness contemplates her exit. Filled with the sharp humor, emotional acuity, and joyful language Moore has become famous for, these nine glittering tales marked the introduction of an extravagantly gifted writer.

Leaving the Sea

The audacious, savagely funny debut of a writer of razor-sharp wit and surprising tenderness: a collection of stories that gives us a fresh take on adolescence, death, sex; on being Jewish-ish; and on finding one's way as a young woman in the world. A New Yorker, trying not to be jaded, accompanies a cash-strapped pot grower to a "clothing optional resort" in California. A nerdy high-schooler has her first sexual experience at Geology Camp. A college student, on the night of her father's funeral, watches a video of her bat mitzvah, hypnotized by the image of the girl she used to be . . . Frank and irreverent, Rebecca Schiff's stories offer a singular view of growing up (or not) and finding love (or not) in today's ever-uncertain

landscape. In its bone-dry humor, its pithy observations, and its thrilling ability to unmask the most revealing moments of human interaction—no matter how fleeting—*The Bed Moved* announces a new talent to be reckoned with. From the Hardcover edition.

The Visiting Privilege

A moving reflection on a subject that touches us all, by the bestselling author of *Claire of the Sea* Light Edwidge Danticat's *The Art of Death: Writing the Final Story* is at once a personal account of her mother dying from cancer and a deeply considered reckoning with the ways that other writers have approached death in their own work. "Writing has been the primary way I have tried to make sense of my losses," Danticat notes in her introduction. "I have been writing about death for as long as I have been writing." The book moves outward from the shock of her mother's diagnosis and sifts through Danticat's writing life and personal history, all the while shifting fluidly from examples that range from Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* to Toni Morrison's *Sula*. The narrative, which continually circles the many incarnations of death from individual to large-scale catastrophes, culminates in a beautiful, heartrending prayer in the voice of Danticat's mother. A moving tribute and a work of astute criticism, *The Art of Death* is a book that will profoundly alter all who encounter it.

Back in the World

A collection of life-affirming tales includes the dystopian "Rollingwood," in which a divorced father struggles with employment while caring for an ailing infant; and the title story, in which a narrator's marriage and sanity unravel in a single breathless sentence.

The Natural Order of Things

"Fluid, cracked, mordant, colloquial.... Stand[s] by itself as one of our funniest, most telling anatomies of human love and vulnerability." —The New York Times Book Review The celebrated collection of twelve stories from one of the finest authors at work today. A New York Times Book of the Year A National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist Winner of the Salon Book Award A Village Voice Book of the Year "A marvelous collection.... Her stories are tough, lean, funny, and metaphysical.... *Birds of America* has about it a wild beauty that simply makes one feel more connected to life." —The Boston Globe "At once sad, funny, lyrical and prickly, *Birds of America* attests to the deepening emotional chiaroscuro of her wise and beguiling work." —The New York Times "Stunning.... There's really no one like Moore; in a perfect marriage of art form and mind, she has made the short story her own." —Milwaukee Journal Sentinel "*Birds of America* stands as a major work of American short fiction.... Absolutely mastered." —Elle "Wonderful.... These stories impart such terrifying truths." —Philadelphia Inquirer "Lorrie Moore soars with *Birds of America*. A marvelous, fiercely funny book." —Newsweek "Fifty years from now, it may well turn out that the work of very few American writers has as much to say about what it means to be alive in our time as that of Lorrie Moore." —Harper's Magazine

We Others

To American soldiers in Vietnam, "back in the world" meant America and safety. To Tobias Wolff's characters, Back in the World is where lives that have veered out of control just might become normal again. Unfortunately, the men and women in these gripping, pungent, and wonderfully skewed stories have only the vaguest notion of what normal is. A gentle priest finds himself in a Vegas hotel with a hysterical, sun-burned stranger. A show-biz hopeful undergoes a dubious audition in a hearse speeding across the California desert. An aging soldier is distracted from a night of philandering by a gun-toting neighbor and a suicidal enlisted man. As he moves among these unfortunates, Wolff observes the disparity between their realities and their dreams, in ten stories of exhilarating lucidity and grace. Stories included are: "The Missing Person," "Say Yes," "The Poor Are Always With Us," "Sister," "Soldier's Joy," "Desert Breakdown," "Our Story Begins," "Leviathan," and "The Rich Brother." "TerrificThe magic of his fiction cannot be explained. It is the ancient art of the master storyteller."--Tim O'Brien From the Trade Paperback edition.

The Sportswriter

From the Pulitzer and Story Prize winner: sixteen new stories—provocative, funny, disturbing, enchanting—that delve into the secret lives and desires of ordinary people, alongside retellings of myths and legends that highlight the aspirations of the human spirit. Beloved for the lens of the strange he places on small town life, Steven Millhauser further reveals in Voices in the Night the darkest parts of our inner selves to brilliant and dazzling effect. Here are stories of wondrously imaginative hyperrealism, stories that pose unforgettably unsettling what-ifs, or that find barely perceivable evils within the safe boundaries of our towns, homes, and even within our bodies. Here, too, are stories culled from religion and fables: Samuel, who hears the voice of God calling him in the night; a young, pre-enlightenment Buddha, who searches for his purpose in life; Rapunzel and her Prince, who struggle to fit the real world to their dream. Heightened by magic, the divine, and the uncanny, shot through with sly and winning humor, Voices in the Night seamlessly combines the whimsy and surprise of the familiar with intoxicating fantasies that take us beyond our daily lives, all done with the hallmark sleight of hand and astonishing virtuosity of one of our greatest contemporary storytellers. From the Hardcover edition.

Notable American Women

James Michener Fellowship winner Joshua Furst's widely acclaimed debut collection explores the perils and paradoxes of childhood in ten harrowing, moving, and surprising stories, offering a rare and unsentimental depiction of the lives of American youth. In "The Age of Exploration," two boys experience the world so differently--Billy through science; Jason with fantastical powers of imagination--that they sense their lives will stray irrevocably away from each other. In "Red Lobster," which won the Nelson Algren Award, a gaggle of children try to please the father who has rounded them up from their various homes to take them to a fateful dinner. And in the collection's climactic story, "Failure to Thrive," a maternity ward

nurse takes compassion too far. Emotionally astute, brilliantly written, these stories mark the arrival of a powerful new voice in American literature. From the Trade Paperback edition.

Sam the Cat

“In twenty-nine separate but ingenious ways, these stories seek permanent residence within a reader. They strive to become an emotional or intellectual cargo that might accompany us wherever, or however, we go. . . . If we are made by what we read, if language truly builds people into what they are, how they think, the depth with which they feel, then these stories are, to me, premium material for that construction project. You could build a civilization with them.” —Ben Marcus, from the Introduction Award-winning author of *Notable American Women* Ben Marcus brings us this engaging and comprehensive collection of short stories that explore the stylistic variety of the medium in America today. *Sea Oak* by George Saunders *Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned* by Wells Tower *Do Not Disturb* by A.M. Homes *The Girl in the Flammable Skirt* by Aimee Bender *The Caretaker* by Anthony Doerr *The Old Dictionary* by Lydia Davis *The Father’s Blessing* by Mary Caponegro *The Life and Work of Alphonse Kauders* by Aleksandar Hemon *People Shouldn’t Have to be the Ones to Tell You* by Gary Lutz *Histories of the Undead* by Kate Braverman *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine* by Jhumpa Lahiri *Down the Road* by Stephen Dixon *X Number of Possibilities* by Joanna Scott *Tiny, Smiling Daddy* by Mary Gaitskill *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men* by David Foster Wallace *The Sound Gun* by Matthew Derby *Short Talks* by Anne Carson *Field Events* by Rick Bass *Scarliotti* and *the Sinkhole* by Padgett Powell From the Trade Paperback edition.

Our Story Begins

With only TAMMY - a slightly tearful computer with self-esteem issues - a software boss called Phil - Microsoft Middle Manager 3.0 - and an imaginary dog called Ed for company, fixing time machines is a lonely business and Charles Yu is stuck in a rut. He's spent the better part of a decade navel-gazing, spying on 39 different versions of himself in alternate universes (and discovered that 35 of them are total jerks). And he's kind of fallen in love with TAMMY, which is bad because she doesn't have a module for that. With all that's on his mind, perhaps it's no surprise that when he meets his future self, he shoots him in the stomach. And that's a beginner's mistake for a time machine repairman. Now he's stuck in a time loop, going in circles forever. All he has, wrapped in brown paper, is the book his future self was trying to press into his hands. It's called *How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe*. And he's the author. And somewhere inside it is the information that could save him.

Like Life

Following *Like You’d Understand, Anyway*—awarded the Story Prize and a finalist for the National Book Award—Jim Shepard returns with an even more wildly diverse collection of astonishingly observant stories. Like an expert curator, he populates the vastness of human experience—from its bizarre fringes and lonely,

brehtaking pinnacles to the hopelessly mediocre and desperately below average—with brilliant scientists, reluctant soldiers, workaholic artists, female explorers, depraved murderers, and deluded losers, all wholly convincing and utterly fascinating. A “black world” operative at Los Alamos isn’t allowed to tell his wife anything about his daily activities, but he can’t resist sharing her intimate confidences with his work buddy. A young Alpine researcher falls in love with the girlfriend of his brother, who was killed in an avalanche he believes he caused. An unlucky farm boy becomes the manservant of a French nobleman who’s as proud of his military service with Joan of Arc as he’s aroused by the slaughter of children. A free-spirited autodidact, grieving her lost sister, traces the ancient steps of a ruthless Middle Eastern sect and becomes the first Western woman to travel the Arabian deserts. From the inventor of the Godzilla epics to a miserable G.I. in New Guinea, each comes to realize that knowing better is never enough. Enthralling and unfailingly compassionate, *You Think That’s Bad* traverses centuries, continents, and social strata, but the joy and struggle that Shepard depicts with such devastating sensitivity—all the heartbreak, alienation, intimacy, and accomplishment—has a universal resonance. From the Hardcover edition.

The Bed Moved

Nominated for the National Book Award in 1974, this haunting, profoundly disquieting novel manages to be at once sparse and lush, to combine Biblical simplicity with Gothic intensity and strangeness. It is the story of Kate, despised by her mother, bound to her father by ties stronger and darker than blood. It is the story of her attempted escapes—in detached sexual encounters, at a Southern college populated by spoiled and perverse beauties, and in a doomed marriage to a man who cannot understand what she is running from. Witty, erotic, searing acute, *State of Grace* bears the inimitable stamp of one of our finest and most provocative writers.

The Picador Book of Contemporary American Stories

The Chang family comes to the United States with no real intention of staying; however, when the Communists take over China in 1949, Ralph Chang begins to look at the American dream in a whole new light.

Typical American

Frank Bascombe has a younger girlfriend and a job as a sportswriter. To many men of his age, thirty-eight, this would be a cause for optimism, yet Frank feels the pull of his inner despair and especially of his recent losses - his preferred career has ended, his wife has divorced him, and a tragic accident took his elder son. In the course of this Easter weekend, Frank will lose all the remnants of his familiar life, though he will emerge heroic with spirits soaring. This is a magnificent novel that propelled Richard Ford into the first rank of American writers.

What Becomes

A New York Times Notable Book "A warmly disposed yet unsentimental chronicler

of American lives. Some [stories are] poignant and disturbing, and all of them highly readable." --The New York Times Book Review "One of our best storytellers." --San Francisco Chronicle "Baxter lovingly teases anguish, humor, and heart-rending beauty out of clear, unaffected sentences." --The Washington Post Since the publication of his first story collection in 1984, Charles Baxter has slowly gained a reputation as one of America's finest short story writers. Gryphon brings together sixteen classics with seven new stories, giving us the most complete portrait of his achievement. From the bestselling author of *The Feast of Love*.

First Love and Other Sorrows

Combines ten original works with twenty-one classic tales that chronicle the unexpected revelations that occur in the lives of characters ranging from a teacher abducted by a student's father to an attorney taking a difficult deposition.

The Flame Alphabet

In *Like Life's* eight exquisite stories, Lorrie Moore's characters stumble through their daily existence. These men and women, unsettled and adrift and often frightened, can't quite understand how they arrived at their present situations. Harry has been reworking a play for years in his apartment near Times Square in New York. Jane is biding her time at a cheese shop in a Midwest mall. Dennis, unhappily divorced, buries himself in self-help books about healthful food and healthy relationships. One prefers to speak on the phone rather than face his friends, another lets the answering machine do all the talking. But whether rejected, afraid to commit, bored, disillusioned or just misunderstood, even the most hard-bitten are not without some abiding trust in love.

State of Grace

Follows the tragedies of the residents of a Jesuit school-dominated community over the course of a Halloween weekend, from a doomed quarterback who questions his faith to a former headmaster who suffers a terrible betrayal.

Unaccustomed Earth

In *New American Stories*, the beautiful, the strange, the melancholy, and the sublime all come together to show the vast range of the American short story. In this remarkable anthology, Ben Marcus has corralled a vital and artistically singular crowd of contemporary fiction writers. Collected here are practitioners of deep realism, mind-blowing experimentalism, and every hybrid in between. Luminaries and cult authors stand side by side with the most compelling new literary voices. Nothing less than the American short story renaissance distilled down to its most relevant, daring, and unforgettable works, *New American Stories* puts on wide display the true art of an American idiom.

Airships

The stories of *Unaccustomed Earth* focus on second-generation immigrants making

and remaking lives, loves and identities in England and America. We follow brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, friends and lovers, in stories that take us from Boston and London to Bombay and Calcutta. Blending the individual and the generational, the exotic and the strikingly mundane, these haunting, exquisitely detailed and emotionally complex stories are intensely compelling elegies of life, death, love and fate. This is a dazzling work from a masterful writer.

Birds of America

Included in this short story collection is "The Sisterhood of the Night", now a major motion picture. From the bestselling author of *Martin Dressler*, this volume explores the magnificent obsessions of the unfettered imagination, as well as the darker, subterranean currents that fuel them. With the panache of an old-fashioned magician, Steven Millhauser conducts his readers from the dark corners beneath the sunlit world to a balloonist's tour of the heavens. He transforms department stores and amusement parks into alternate universes of infinite plentitude and menace. He unveils the secrets of a maker of automatons and a coven of teenage girls. And on every page of *The Knife Thrower and Other Stories*, Millhauser confirms his stature as a narrative enchanter in the tradition of Nabokov, Calvino, and Borges.

Sorry Please Thank You

These short stories filled with "narrative grace and rare craftsmanship" chronicle the loss of innocence and the anguish of young love (*San Francisco Chronicle*). *First Love and Other Sorrows* is the hauntingly beautiful debut collection of short stories from American master Harold Brodkey. Written when the author was in his twenties, these strong, affecting tales recall the intoxicating joy of young, springtime love, while lamenting the betrayal of dreams and false ideals in the glaring light of reality. Set in the Midwest during the 1950s, *First Love and Other Sorrows* centers around a Jewish family that has recently lost its patriarch—and with him the world of privilege. Through the eyes of a son, a sister, and a mother—each one struggling to find a foothold in both family and society—these stories explore class prejudice, obsessive love, and the tragic foibles and emotional truths of being human. *First Love and Other Sorrows* is masterful fiction from an extraordinary literary artist.

The Anchor Book of New American Short Stories

From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author: the essential stories across three decades that showcase his indomitable imagination. Steven Millhauser's fiction has consistently, and to dazzling effect, dissolved the boundaries between reality and fantasy, waking life and dreams, the past and the future, darkness and light, love and lust. The stories gathered here unfurl in settings as disparate as nineteenth-century Vienna, a contemporary Connecticut town, the corridors of a monstrous museum, and Thomas Edison's laboratory, and they are inhabited by a wide-ranging cast of characters, including a knife thrower and teenage boys, ghosts and a cartoon cat and mouse. But all of the stories are united in their unfailing power to surprise and enchant. From the earliest to the stunning, previously unpublished

novella-length title story—in which a man who is dead, but not quite gone, reaches out to two lonely women—Millhauser in this magnificent collection carves out ever more deeply his wondrous place in the American literary canon.

The Pier Falls

In *The Flame Alphabet*, the most maniacally gifted writer of our generation delivers a novel about how far we will go in order to protect our loved ones. The sound of children's speech has become lethal. In the park, adults wither beneath the powerful screams of their offspring. For young parents Sam and Claire, it seems their only means of survival is to flee from their daughter, Esther. But they find it isn't so easy to leave someone you love, even as they waste away from her malevolent speech. On the eve of their departure, Claire mysteriously disappears, and Sam, determined to find a cure for this new toxic language, presses on alone into a foreign world to try to save his family.

The Car Thief

Twenty-three unforgettable short stories from one of America's most celebrated literary masters. John Updike once said of his friend and fellow writer Andre Dubus: "[He] is a shrewd student of people who come to accept pain as a fair price for pleasure, and to view right and wrong as a matter of degree." Dubus's characters are depicted in all their imperfection, but with the author's requisite tenderness and compassion. After all, they are just as human as we are, and there is much to learn from their complicated, tragic, irrepressible lives. Including such acclaimed masterworks as 'A Father's Story', 'Townies', 'The Winter Father', and 'Killings', the short stories and novellas compiled here represent the best work of one of our most accomplished and acutely sensitive authors. Dubus's *Selected Stories* is an anthology unmatched in its collective portrayal of the human condition. This ebook features an illustrated biography of Andre Dubus including rare photos and never-before-seen documents from the author's estate.

How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe

The author of the widely praised debut novel *How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe* returns with a hilarious, heartbreaking, and utterly original collection of short stories. A big-box store employee is confronted by a zombie during the graveyard shift, a problem that pales in comparison to his inability to ask a coworker out on a date . . . A fighter leads his band of virtual warriors, thieves, and wizards across a deadly computer-generated landscape, but does he have what it takes to be a hero? . . . A company outsources grief for profit, its slogan: "Don't feel like having a bad day? Let someone else have it for you." Drawing from both pop culture and science, Charles Yu is a brilliant observer of contemporary society, and in *Sorry Please Thank You* he fills his stories with equal parts laugh-out-loud humor and piercing insight into the human condition. He has already garnered comparisons to such masters as Kurt Vonnegut and Douglas Adams, and in this new collection we have resounding proof that he has arrived (via a wormhole in space-time) as a major new voice in American fiction.

How It Ended

New York Times Bestseller B.J. Novak's *One More Thing: Stories and Other Stories* is an endlessly entertaining, surprisingly sensitive, and startlingly original debut that signals the arrival of a brilliant new voice in American fiction. A boy wins a \$100,000 prize in a box of Frosted Flakes—only to discover that claiming the winnings might unravel his family. A woman sets out to seduce motivational speaker Tony Robbins—turning for help to the famed motivator himself. A new arrival in Heaven, overwhelmed with options, procrastinates over a long-ago promise to visit his grandmother. We meet Sophia, the first artificially intelligent being capable of love, who falls for a man who might not be ready for it himself; a vengeance-minded hare, obsessed with scoring a rematch against the tortoise who ruined his life; and post-college friends who try to figure out how to host an intervention in the era of Facebook. Along the way, we learn why wearing a red T-shirt every day is the key to finding love, how February got its name, and why the stock market is sometimes just . . . down. Finding inspiration in questions from the nature of perfection to the icing on carrot cake, *One More Thing* has at its heart the most human of phenomena: love, fear, hope, ambition, and the inner stirring for the one elusive element just that might make a person complete. Across a dazzling range of subjects, themes, tones, and narrative voices, the many pieces in this collection are like nothing else, but they have one thing in common: they share the playful humor, deep heart, sharp eye, inquisitive mind, and altogether electrifying spirit of a writer with a fierce devotion to the entertainment of the reader.

You Think That's Bad

A. L. Kennedy's remarkable new collection of stories shows us exactly what becomes of the broken-hearted. She reveals the sadness, violence, hurt, and terror, but also the redemption of love, and she does so with enormous human compassion, wild leaps of humour, and the brilliantly original linguistic skill that distinguishes her as one of the world's finest writers. Always attuned to the moment of epiphany, these twelve stories are profound, intimate observations of men and women whose lives ache with possibility. Each story is a dramatization of the instant in a life that exposes it all; love and the lack of love, hope and the lack of hope. These men and women are perfectly ordinary people whose marriages flounder; who sit on their own in a cinema watching a film with no soundtrack; who risk sex in a hotel with an anonymous stranger. They conceal tenderness and disappointment, vulnerability and longing, griefs and wonders. Devastating and funny, intimate and profound, the stories in *What Becomes* are further proof that Kennedy is one of the most dazzling and inventive writers of her generation.

The Knife Thrower

Collection of interesting short stories from authors such as Joyce Carol Oates and Raymond Carver.

One More Thing

From the prizewinning novelist and world-renowned short-story writer, the author

of 2008's universally acclaimed novel *Peace* ("A brilliant one-act drama depicting the futility and moral complexity of combat" —The New York Times), eleven indelible new tales that showcase the electrifying artistry of a master. A husband confronts the power of youth and the inexorable truths of old age. A son sits by his mother's bedside determined to give her what she needs in her final days, even though doing so means breaking his own heart. A brief adulterous tryst illuminates the fragility of our most intimate relations. A young man returns in the face of crisis to the parents he once rejected. A divorced young woman dealing with slowly increasing despair develops an obsession about a note that fell from the pocket of a man who came to eat in the café where she works. A wife whose husband has been shot must weather a terrible snowstorm with her two sons, as well as a storm of doubt about the extent of his involvement in a crime. Richard Bausch's stories contend with transfixing themes: marital and familial estrangement, ways of trespass, the intractable mysteries and frights of daily life in these times, the uncertainty of knowledge and truth, the gulfs between friends and lovers, the frailty of even the most abiding love—while underlining throughout the persistence of love, the obdurate forces that connect us. His consummate skill, penetrating wit, and unfailing emotional generosity are on glorious display in this fine new collection.

Fires

From Mark Haddon, author of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *A Spot of Bother*, and *The Red House*, nine dazzling stories diverse in style but united in emotional power. The tales in Mark Haddon's lyrical and uncompromising new collection take many forms—Victorian adventure story, science fiction, morality tale, contemporary realism—but they all showcase his virtuoso gifts as a stylist and the deep well of empathy that made his three bestselling novels so compelling. The characters here are often isolated physically or estranged from their families, yet they yearn for connection. In aggregate the stories become a meditation on the essential aloneness of the human condition but also on the connections, however tenuous and imperfect, that link people to one another. In the title story, an unnamed narrator describes with cool precision a catastrophe that strikes a seaside town, both tearing lives apart and bringing them together. In the prizewinning story "The Gun," a boy's life is marked by the afternoon he encounters a semiautomatic pistol belonging to his friend's older brother; in "The Island," a Greek princess is abandoned on an island by her abductor; in "The Boys Who Left Home to Learn Fear," a group of adventurers travel deep into the Amazonian jungle but discover the gravest danger lurking among their own number; and in "The Woodpecker and the Wolf," a woman wonders whether she has chosen to travel to Mars only to escape the entanglement of human relationships back here on Earth. Drawing inventively from history, myth, folktales, and modern life, *The Pier Falls* showcases Haddon's immense gifts of invention and penetrating insight. From the Hardcover edition.

Voices in the Night

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