



Exercise Your Mind



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Crawford, Matthew. *The World Beyond Your Head*. 2015. In the gambling addict, dead broke at the slot machine, Crawford finds the surprising terminus of a way of thinking traceable to Descartes, Kant, and Locke. These iconic thinkers enshrined at the very center of Western philosophy a ceaseless concern for the autonomy of the individual, untrammelled by authority or tradition. The boundless emancipatory project legitimated by this perspective, Crawford argues, has actually undermined authentic autonomy by fostering an anxious fixation on the self. This fixation, readers learn, subverts truly liberating mastery of real-world skills and sabotages genuine human individuation within a healthy community...A cultural inquiry of rare substance and insight. Copyright 2014 Booklist Review

Gilbert, Elizabeth. *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear*. 2015. For anyone who has ever dreamed of writing a novel, painting a still life, sculpting a statue, or choreographing a dance but hasn't done so, Gilbert has just one question: What's stopping you? Doubt, denial, demands: you name it, the obstacles are many. The world is teeming with people who have a creative passion yet never pursue it. Copyright 2014 Booklist Reviews

Ronson, Jon. *So You've Been Publicly Shamed*. 2015. Is technology moving humankind forward, or does the powerful reach of social media hearken back to the public floggings of the past? The author of *The Men Who Stare at Goats* (2005) and *The Psychopath Test* (2011) takes a hard look at modern-day shaming in his provocative new book. Inspired by an episode where a spambot impersonated him on Twitter, Ronson employs his typical investigatory approach to take the reader on a years-long exploration of humiliation via technology, his curious mind pursuing new avenues of inquiry as they open up. He recounts the real-time Twitter shaming of a disgraced author, which was displayed on a feed the author could see as he was making his apology speech; the race-tinged tweet of a public-relations executive that upended her life; and the story behind a Facebook photo that mightily offended members of the military and their supporters. Beyond that, though, he talks to those involved—both the people shamed and those who acted as instruments for their humiliation—about their motivations, what the experience did to them, and whether they recovered.



Mystery

Boyer, Susan. *Lowcountry Boil*. 2013. When PI Liz Talbot learns that her grandmother has been murdered at her South Carolina island home, she returns to Stella Maris, where she will stay until she can help solve the shocking homicide. Two other factors sway this decision: the ghost of her late best friend from high school is talking to her, and she inherited Gram's house. Her big brother, Blake, who is also chief of police, doesn't want her meddling—as if his hardheaded sister is giving him a choice. Plenty of secrets, long-simmering feuds, and greedy ventures make for a captivating read. Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC

Fitzsimmons, Matthew. *The Short Drop*. 2015 The disappearance of Suzanne Lombard, the 14-year-old daughter of U.S. senator Benjamin Lombard, propels FitzSimmons's suspenseful first novel. Ten years later, Suzanne is still missing, but there's a break in the case. George Abe, the head of a consulting group who once worked for her father (who's now vice president and running for the presidency), persuades former computer hacker Gibson Vaughn, who was Suzanne's childhood friend, to look for her. Gibson works with two of Abe's investigators, an ex-CIA officer and an ex-L.A. police detective, both of whom have serious skills and very little regard for Gibson's abilities. Tossed into the mix is a professional killer whose employers have hired him to dispose of everyone who's searching for Suzanne. The plot builds slowly, but it will keep readers turning

the pages until the end, even though the denouement may come as little surprise to veteran thriller fans. PW Reviews, 2015

Grisham, John. *Rogue Lawyer*. 2015. There comes a moment in this book when the reader is likely to think: "Ah, now I see what he's doing." At first, the novel appears to be a series of tenuously related episodes in the life of defense attorney Sebastian Rudd, who operates his practice out of a customized van and who actively seeks out big cases and doesn't shy away from the media or from breaking the occasional rule. The cases include the murders of two girls; a man on trial for shooting a police officer (during a raid on the man's house); the abduction of a pregnant woman; and a prison break. Copyright 2014 Booklist Reviews

Schaeffer, Craig. *Harmony Black*. 2016. Harmony Black is much more than your average FBI special agent. In addition to being a practicing witch, she's also an operative for Vigilant Lock, an off-the-books program created to battle occult threats—by any means necessary. Despite her dedication to fighting the monsters threatening society, Harmony has become deeply conflicted about her job. Her last investigation resulted in a pile of dead bodies, and she suspects the wrong people are being punished for it. Amazon, 2016



STEM

Munroe, Randall. *The Thing Explainer*. 2015. It's good to know what the parts of a thing are called, but it's much more interesting to know what they do. Richard Feynman once said that if you can't explain something to a first-year student, you don't really get it. In *Thing Explainer*, Randall Munroe takes a quantum leap past this: he explains things using only drawings and a vocabulary of just our 1,000 (or the ten hundred) most common words. Many of the things we use every day - like our food-heating radio boxes ('microwaves'), our very tall roads ('bridges'), and our computer rooms ('datacentres') - are strange to us. So are the other worlds around our sun (the solar system), the big flat rocks we live on (tectonic plates), and even the stuff inside us (cells). Where do these things come from? How do they work? What do they look like if you open them up? And what would happen if we heated them up, cooled them down, pointed them in a different direction, or pressed this button? Funny, interesting, and always understandable, this book is for anyone -- age 5 to 105 -- who has ever wondered how things work, and why. Amazon, 2016

Parker, Matt. *Things to Make and Do in the Fourth Dimension*. 2014. If you don't believe that mathematics can be fun you should read this book. Parker, a mathematician and stand up comic, takes the reader on an entertaining voyage through many recreational topics. These include some more or less familiar aspects of number theory but also polygonal numbers, packing problems, graph theory, and computer logic and algorithms. The fascinating excursions into geometry and topology including discussions of noncurricular wheels, knot theory, and the geometry of four-dimensional objects are especially noteworthy. Throughout the text, subjects are enhanced by clever problems that immediately grab one's attention. Copyright 2014. Library Journals LLC.



Non-fiction

Anderson, M.T. *Symphony for the City of the Dead*. 2015. This ambitious and gripping work is narrative nonfiction at its best. Anderson expertly sets the scene of the tumultuous world into which Dmitri Shostakovich was born in 1906 and traces his development as an artist and a public figure. He also tells the story of the composer's beloved Leningrad, focusing on the creation and legacy of the symphony written in its honor at the height of World War II. In his author's note, Anderson poses an intriguing

question: "How do we reconstruct the story of someone who lived in a period in which everyone had an excuse to lie, evade, accuse, or keep silent?" The compelling, well-researched narrative relates what is known of Shostakovich's story, what is speculation, what is revisionist history, and what new sources have revealed. The chilling details of the Stalin regime and the plight of the Russian people even before the Germans arrived will be eye-opening to many teen readers. Luann Toth, School Library Journal

Brown, Daniel. *The Boys in the Boat*. 2015. If Jesse Owens is rightfully the most famous American athlete of the 1936 Berlin Olympics, repudiating Adolf Hitler's notion of white supremacy by winning gold in four events, the gold-medal-winning effort by the eight-man rowing team from the University of Washington remains a remarkable story. It encompasses the convergence of transcendent British boatmaker George Pocock; the quiet yet deadly effective UW men's varsity coach, Al Ulbrickson; and an unlikely gaggle of young rowers who would shine as freshmen, then grow up together, a rough-and-tumble bunch, writes Brown, not very worldly, but earnest and used to hard work. Copyright 2012 Booklist Reviews

Hobbs, Jeff. *The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace*. 2014. Rob Peace's father was a very bright drug dealer who served time for murder, leaving Rob in the care of a hardworking mother who wanted more for him than the tough streets of Orange, New Jersey, could provide. Peace started private school in fourth grade, just as his father's trial was beginning, and developed elaborate emotional and psychological strategies to navigate the neighborhood and "Newark-proof" himself. In high school, he undertook ponderous research to prove his father's innocence and eventually won a temporary reprieve on a technicality. His brilliance attracted the attention of a benefactor who made it possible for Peace to go to Yale, where he met and roomed with Hobbs. Copyright 2014 Booklist Reviews

Kalanithi, Paul. *When Breath Becomes Air*. 2016. Can life remain full and rewarding even while one is living under a death sentence? This is the question now-deceased neurosurgeon Kalanithi asked himself after receiving a late-stage lung cancer diagnosis. Newly married and almost ready to complete his residency, at 34 Kalanithi was faced with a momentous decision: Should he continue with a promising medical career, or fall back on his first love of writing while taking care of his health? Copyright 2014 Booklist Reviews

McCullough, David. *The Wright Brothers*. 2015. Fairly or not, Orville and Wilbur Wright will always be best remembered by the general public for December 17, 1903, the day at Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, when the brothers flew, for the first time, a heavier-than-air vehicle. Of course, the brothers had accomplishments and interesting lives that both preceded and followed that triumphant day, as this fine biography by esteemed historian McCullough shows. McCullough offers an interesting portrait of their youth in Dayton, Ohio, that also serves as an examination of daily life in post-Civil War Middle America. Copyright 2014 Booklist Reviews



Historical Fiction

Diamant, Anita. *Boston Girl*. 2014. Diamant tells a gripping story of a young Jewish woman growing up in early-20th-century Boston. Addie Baum, an octogenarian grandmother in 1985, relates long-ago history to a beloved granddaughter, answering the question: "How did I get to be the woman I am today?" The answer: by living a fascinating life. First reminiscing about 1915 and the reading club she became a part of as a teenager, Addie, in a conversational tone, recounts the lifelong friendships that began at club meetings and days by the seaside at nearby Rockport. She tells movingly of the fatal effects of the flu, a relative's suicide, the



Science Fiction/Fantasy

touchy subject of abortion and its aftermath, and even her own disastrous first date, which nearly ended in rape. Ahead of her time, Addie also becomes a career woman, working as a newspaper typist who stands up for her beliefs at all costs. Copyright 2014 Publisher's Weekly

Doerr, Anthony. *All of the Light We Cannot See*. 2014. Shifting among multiple viewpoints but focusing mostly on blind French teenager Marie-Laure and Werner, a brilliant German soldier just a few years older than she, this novel has the physical and emotional heft of a masterpiece. The main protagonists are brave, sensitive, and intellectually curious, and in another time they might have been a couple. But they are on opposite sides of the horrors of World War II, and their fates ultimately collide in connection with the radio—a means of resistance for the Allies and just one more avenue of annihilation for the Nazis. Set mostly in the final year of the war but moving back to the 1930s and forward to the present, the novel presents two characters so interesting and sympathetic that readers will keep turning the pages hoping for an impossibly happy ending. Marie-Laure and Werner both suffer crushing losses and struggle to survive with dignity amid Hitler's swath of cruelty and destruction. Copyright 2014 Library Journals LLC

Hannah, Kristin. *The Nightingale*. 2015. Character growth and development is a strength of this World War II-set novel, although the middle plods during some sections. Sisters Vianne and Isabelle Mauriac are driven apart by unhealed childhood wounds and clashing personalities. When Isabelle is kicked out of boarding school for the umpteenth time for "rebellious" behavior, her embittered veteran father, in the midst of drowning his own battle scars in bourbon, sends the adolescent to her elder sister's house. Meanwhile, Vianne attempts to find salvation from her past by marrying her teenage sweetheart and relocating to the French countryside where she delights in her garden and her school-age daughter. As Hitler's forces invade, both sisters face challenging choices that will show where their loyalties lie. Copyright 2014 Library Journals LLC

McLain, Paula. *Circling the Sun*. 2014. McClain fictionalizes the grandly adventurous, passionate, and scandalous life of British East African Beryl Markham, the first licensed woman horse trainer and breeder on the continent and an intrepid, record-setting pilot. Markham resolutely finds her way to daredevilry and terror, love and ostracism as she undertakes the sort of risky and exhilarating things men do even as she suffers through disastrous marriages, homelessness, and a complicated and wrenching entanglement with coffee grower and writer Karen Blixen and Denys Fitch Hatton, the exciting and elusive man they both love. McClain creates a seductive work of popular historical fiction. Copyright 2014 Booklist Reviews

Moyes, Jojo. *The Girl You Left Behind*. 2013. Moyes (*Me before You*, 2012) writes with such clarity that one can almost see the eponymous 100-year-old painting at the center of her wonderful new novel. Also crystal clear are the emotions that protagonist Liv Halston attaches to the portrait. Gifted to Liv by her late husband, David, in celebration of their wedding, *The Girl You Left Behind* becomes a personal icon, embodying all that was good about their brief marriage. What is less clear is the painting's provenance and who has the right to assert ownership. Will Liv's notion of ownership unravel when the artist's heirs sue to reclaim what they call ill-gotten goods, seemingly misappropriated by German soldiers during WWI? Copyright 2013 Booklist Reviews



Guskin, Sharon. *The Forgetting Time*. 2016. In *The Forgetting Time*, we bond right away with Janie, a lonely, 39-year-old architect, and psychiatrist Anderson, who is grieving over the death of his wife and adjusting to an appalling diagnosis of primary

progressive aphasia. This form of dementia will slowly and inexorably destroy his command of language, a cruel fate amplified by Anderson's ardent devotion to his controversial research into "the survival of consciousness after death," specifically reincarnation. As Anderson struggles to continue his investigations of children who remember past lives, we rejoin Janie, who is now a single mother wrung down to raw nerves by the inexplicably disruptive behavior of her strangely precocious, anxious son, Noah, who is forever asking for his "other mother." In vivid flashbacks, we accompany Anderson as he meets families with children who remember past lives in Thailand and India, where reincarnation is part of the culture, unlike America, where his findings are summarily dismissed by his colleagues. As Anderson, Janie, and Noah follow the clues in Noah's enigmatic "memories," unlikely under-siege relationships develop as the searchers cross racial boundaries. Guskin poses key and unsettling questions about love and memory, life and death, belief and fact. Copyright 2014 Booklist Reviews

King, Stephen. *Bazaar of Bad Dreams*. 2015. Renowned author King's impressive latest collection wraps 20 stories and poems in fascinating commentary. Each work's preface explains what inspired it and gives readers insight into King's writing methods, with occasional tidbits of his daily life. The stories themselves are meditations on mortality, destiny, and regret, all of which showcase King's talent for exploring the human condition. Realistic and supernatural elements sit side by side. This introspective collection, like many of King's most powerful works, draws on the deepest emotions: love, grief, fear, and hope. Copyright 2015 Publisher's Weekly

Swyler, Erika. *The Book of Speculation: A Novel*. 2015. When a mysterious book detailing the history of a traveling circus arrives on the doorstep of newly unemployed librarian Simon Watson, he discovers his family's lineage includes tarot readers, professional mermaids, and misfortune. Simon soon grows obsessed with the show and its characters, like the young Wild Boy who eventually grows into a seer's apprentice, and his mermaid love, Evangeline. But tragedy lurks behind the costumes and tricks. Generations of women in the Watson family have committed suicide by drowning on July 24, and Simon fears that his card-reading sister, Enola, will be next. Copyright 2014 Library Journals LLC

Wiseman, Ellen Marie. *What She Left Behind*. 2013. Ten years ago, Izzy Stone's mother fatally shot her father while he slept. Devastated by her mother's apparent insanity, Izzy, now seventeen, refuses to visit her in prison. But her new foster parents, employees at the local museum, have enlisted Izzy's help in cataloging items at a long-shuttered state asylum. There, amid piles of abandoned belongings, Izzy discovers a stack of unopened letters, a decades-old journal, and a window into her own past. Amazon 2013

Zevin, Gabrielle. *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry*. 2014. A.J. Fikry is the owner of Island Books on Alice Island (think Martha's Vineyard) near Hyannis, MA. Over his porch hangs the faded sign "No Man Is an Island; Every Book Is a World." A.J. is a young widower, struggling to keep the bookstore afloat and his increasingly lonely life intact. Matchmaking attempts by the islanders for Fikry have failed miserably. His prickly reactions to friends and customers have discouraged attempts to help him heal. Even the publishers' sales reps who call on the store cringe at his strident and curmudgeonly manner. Then one day A.J. discovers in his store a child abandoned by her mother, and his life takes a surprising turn. Maya is a bright and precocious two-year-old who steals his heart. As word spreads of his efforts at single parenting, the store becomes a community focus once again, and everyone takes a hand in raising young Maya—including a charming rep who had been so gruffly chased away. Copyright 2014 Library Journals LLC

Johansen, Erika. *The Queen of the Tearing (end of trilogy)*. 2015. Princess Kelsea has been hiding in the forests of the Tearing since her mother's death, training for the role she will have to play when she turns 19 and becomes the queen. But once Kelsea arrives in the capital and proves her right to the throne, her troubles begin. Her uncle had been acting as regent, and the alliance he made with the sorcerous Red Queen of neighboring Mortmesne is the first thing Kelsea decides to change. She will have to find allies fast as her actions threaten to plunge her kingdom into war. Copyright 2014 Library Journals LLC

Mitchell, David. *Slade House*. 2015. It would have been better if Nathan Bishop and his mother, Rita, had never found the house off Slade Alley, where Rita had been invited to perform piano for some distinguished guests, including Yehudi Menuhin. They might have missed it altogether had it not been for a helpful passerby directing them to the small iron door through which they found the impressive home of Lady Grayer. After that October in 1979, mother and son were never seen again. Following a lead to their disappearance nine years later, Det. Gordon Edmonds entered through the same improbable door in the wall, met and interviewed the attractive owner, and was also never seen again. Since that time, every nine years on the last Saturday in October, another disappearance occurs. Behind these mysteries are Jonah and Norah Grayer, telepathic twins who seek to achieve immortality through the souls of the recently disappeared. Copyright 2015 Library Journals LLC

Faber, Michel. *The Book of Strange New Things*. 2015. Peter Leigh has been hired by the mysterious USIC corporation to travel to a newly colonized planet, Oasis, light years away. His job will be to minister to the indigenous population and establish a rapport. He leaves his beloved wife, Bea, behind, their only link a kind of interstellar e-mail. He finds the Oasins eagerly awaiting his arrival and singing "Amazing Grace." (A previous missionary had disappeared.) The Oasins beg for readings from the Bible, or, as they call it, "the book of strange new things." Peter becomes more and more immersed in his mission and building his church, to the detriment of his health and his connection with Bea. Meanwhile, word from home becomes more and more worrisome. Tidal waves, earthquakes, toppling economies, and violence wreak havoc with lives and faith. And finally, the true reason for the Oasis colony comes into question, and Peter must make a decision—to stay or go. Copyright 2014 Booklist Reviews

Weir, Andy. *The Martian*. 2014. Weir combines the heart-stopping with the humorous in this brilliant debut novel about an astronaut stranded on Mars. When its mission is scrubbed as a result of a powerful windstorm, the team of Ares 3 move from their habitat to the ascent vehicle. In transit, Mark Watney's spacesuit is punctured by debris, knocking him unconscious and disabling the suit's biosign monitor so that he appears to be dead. When he regains consciousness, Mark realizes that his crew has left him: "I'm pretty much fucked." Now all he has to do is survive, reestablish communications, find a source of food, and last until the next mission to Mars. Like TV's *MacGyver*, Mark does have a few potatoes, lots of duct tape, and plenty of resourcefulness. If only Mars would stop trying to kill him and the crew had left behind something other than disco music and 1970s sitcoms for entertainment. Copyright 2013 Library Journals LLC