

# BIBLIOPHILE

AN  
ILLUSTRATED  
MISCELLANY

by Jane Mount



THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS ARUNDHATI ROY



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# INTRODUCTION

The goal of this book is to triple the size of your To Be Read pile. It's a literary *Wunderkammer*, connecting you with books you might love for all kinds of reasons—because the subject speaks to you, because you found it through a great local library, or because there is a cute cat on the cover. Like a portable, beloved bookstore with aisles full of passionate sheltalkers, this volume contains something for everyone who enters. Each time you open it, you'll find another jewel you didn't know you needed to find until that moment.

I was a shy, dorky kid with few friends and, like many others, turned to books for better worlds. I spent many happy latchkey afternoons reading and drawing. After a degree in anthropology, a short-lived stint in art school, and many years as an internet entrepreneur, I focused on drawing in earnest again. In the small Manhattan apartment my husband and I shared, I set up at our red dining-room table, right next to our packed bookshelves. Overwhelmed by the blankness of the paper before me, I thought, I'll just draw these books right here to get going. A friend stopped by, saw the pictures, and said, "I want to buy all of those right now." I'd never had anyone react so immediately and viscerally to anything I'd made, so I knew there was something to it, to making books look as loved as they are.



Me, after the glasses and braces

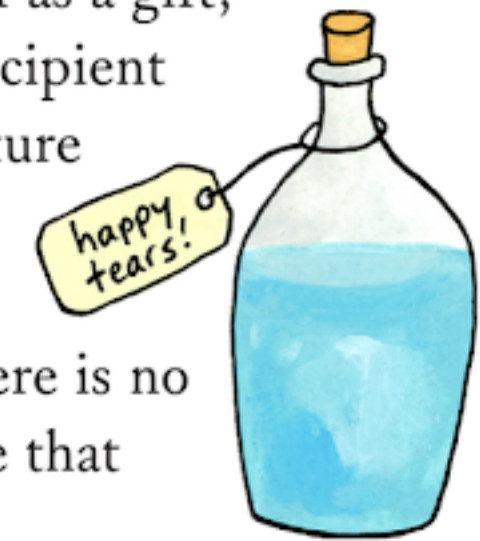


At first I painted books like a dinner-party voyeur, documenting them exactly as they sat on friends' shelves. Eventually I realized it was

← This is my favorite book!  
(Bullseye Books 1996 paperback)

more interesting to ask people which books they'd pick to represent themselves, which books they love the most, which books would live on their Ideal Bookshelves. Everyone has a favorite, maybe the first book they hugged to their chest and told someone else about, or the one that changed the way they saw the world forever after. Many of us have several. Painted together on a shelf, these books tell a story of what we've experienced, what we believe, and who we are.

Soon I began to receive commissions, from bibliophiles wanting to document their true loves, and from others wanting to give a heartfelt gift to their bibliophile true loves. Often, after someone commissions an Ideal Bookshelf as a gift, they write to tell me that the recipient loved it so much—both the picture and the giver's effort to learn the recipient's favorite books—that they cried happy tears. There is no better job in the world than one that inspires happy tears.



Since 2008, I've painted well over a thousand Ideal Bookshelves. That's 15,000 or so book spines, many of them painted multiple times. On the next page, you can see the books I paint most often, in order of frequency from the top down. (*To Kill a Mockingbird* far outstrips the rest, but if you counted all seven books from the Harry Potter series as one, including both US and UK versions, they would be a very close second.) These are true classics, books that change and inspire many people and answer life's questions.

But all sorts of books can do that, and I don't judge. I know that any book, when read at the right moment, might make my life better, might give me a greater understanding of the universe and all the other people in it. I have painted the favorite books of writers, teachers, biologists,

chefs, architects, musicians, kindergartners, retirees, atheists, Buddhists, tattoo artists, grandfathers, and lawyers. People ask me to paint both literary fiction and popular fiction from all genres, plus poetry, essays, memoirs, comics, short stories, travel guides, history books, science books, self-help books, cookbooks, art books, and children's and young adult books (even if the reader is not a child or a young adult). People love what they love.

In this job I have, of course, learned a lot about books. I've read many I would never have otherwise come across, and I've added hundreds to my own proverbial bedside table. With this book I hope to pass some of that knowledge along to you, in many different forms, including tidbits of trivia,

fun quizzes, profiles of bookish folks, tours of lovely bookstores, and, of course, many stacks of excellent, highly recommended books, organized by topic. Feel free to step out of your favorite genres; there are stunning surprises everywhere. Any one (or many!) of these small magical doorways might lead you to love a new book, and to love the new world inside it.

And if you love a book, no doubt many other people love it, too. That shared love connects us and sparks that miraculous feeling of not being alone in the world. Which is exactly the whole point of books, showing us the world as others see it, helping us understand each other, reminding us we're all human.



The Little Prince

ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY

Harcourt, Brace & World

Little Women

LOUIS MAY ALCOCK

PENGUIN CLASSICS DELUXE EDITION

Anne of Green Gables L.M. MONTGOMERY

STEINBECK

EAST OF EDEN

VIKING



J.R.R. TOLKIEN

THE LORD OF THE RINGS

50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Harper Collins

Charlotte Brontë JANE EYRE

Penguin Classics Deluxe Edition

ROWLING

HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE

SCHOLASTIC

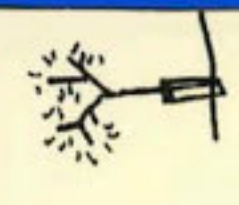
Pride & Prejudice

JANE AUSTEN



the CATCHER in the RYE

J. D. SALINGER



LITTLE, BROWN

The GREAT GATSBY FITZGERALD

SCRIBNERS

HARPER LEE

TO KILL A Mockingbird



HARPER





# KIDS' PICTURE BOOKS

The very first illustrated book for kids was *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*, or *The World of Things Obvious to the Senses Drawn in Pictures*, a textbook created by John Amos Comenius in 1658 to “entice witty children.” Picture books more akin to what we read now appeared in the late 1800s, when English illustrator Randolph Caldecott (for whom the Caldecott Medal is named) created an “ingenious juxtaposition of picture and word,” as Maurice Sendak explained, in which either can continue the narrative. They really took off in the late 1930s and early 1940s when Simon & Schuster began publishing its good-quality but affordable Little Golden Book series and Theodore Geisel started writing as Dr. Seuss.



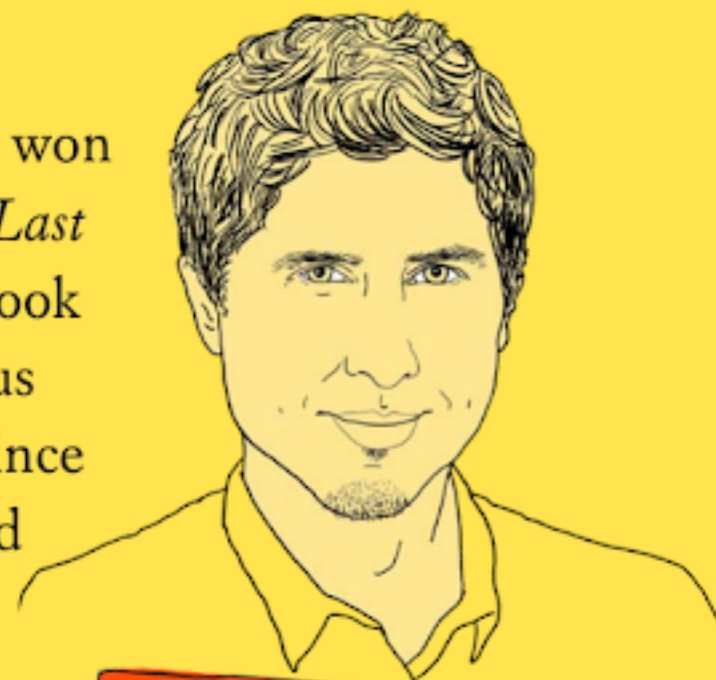
Margaret Wise Brown wrote over a hundred books (including *Goodnight Moon*, *The Runaway Bunny*, and *Little Fur Family*) and lived a short but fascinating life. She spent her entire first royalty check on a cart of flowers; had intense affairs with both men and women;

got engaged to a (much younger) Rockefeller; and was a lifelong beagler, keeping up (on foot) with the hounds as they chased down rabbits (yes, runaway bunnies!). She died at age

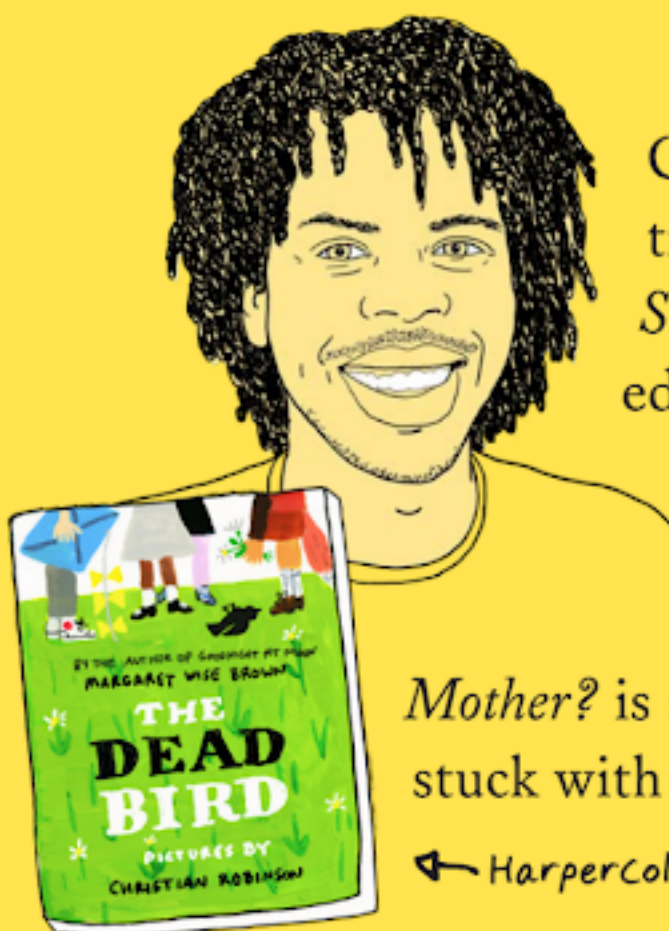
42 of an embolism, the clot released when she kicked up her leg to show a nurse how great she felt after an appendectomy.



In 2016, Matt de la Peña won the Newbery Medal for *Last Stop on Market Street*, a book about a boy riding the bus with his grandmother (since they don't have a car) and learning to appreciate the world along the way.



Putnam  
2015 →  
hardcover



Christian Robinson illustrated *Last Stop on Market Street*, and also a 2016 edition of Margaret Wise Brown's *The Dead Bird*.

He has said that P. D. Eastman's *Are You My Mother?* is a book that has really stuck with him since childhood.

← HarperCollins 2016 hardcover

*I Want My Hat Back* was the first book Jon Klassen both wrote and illustrated.



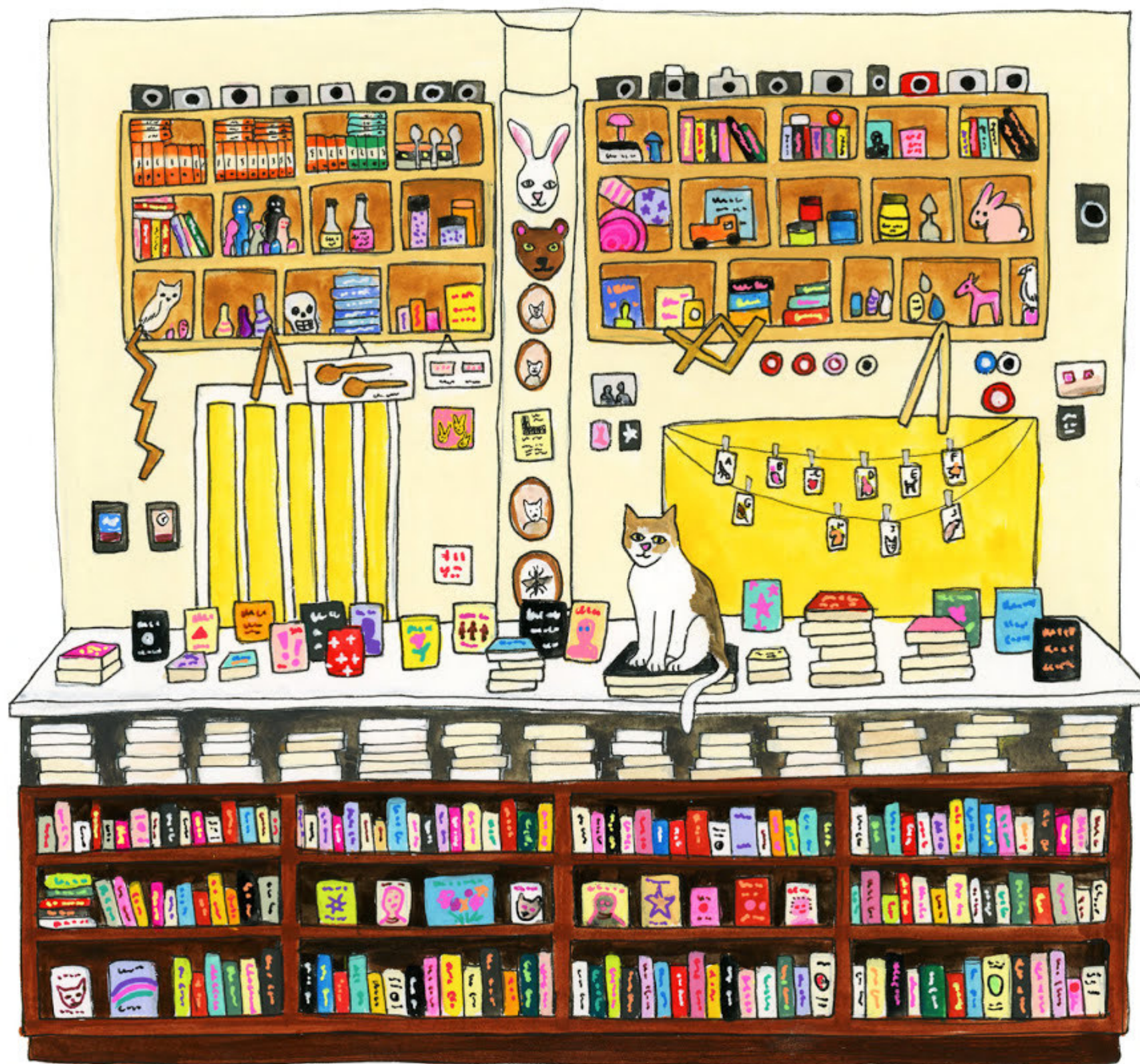
Candlewick  
Press  
2011  
hardcover



## MORE

- *The Little House* by Virginia Lee Burton
- *Miss Rumphius* by Barbara Cooney
- *Click, Clack, Moo* by Doreen Cronin
- *Kitten's First Full Moon* by Kevin Henkes
- *The Poky Little Puppy* by Janette Sebring Lowrey
- *Zen Shorts* by John J. Muth
- *Not a Box* by Antoinette Portis
- *Dragons Love Tacos* by Adam Rubin
- *The Polar Express* by Chris Van Allsburg
- *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen

# BELOVED BOOKSTORES



This cat is named Cake.



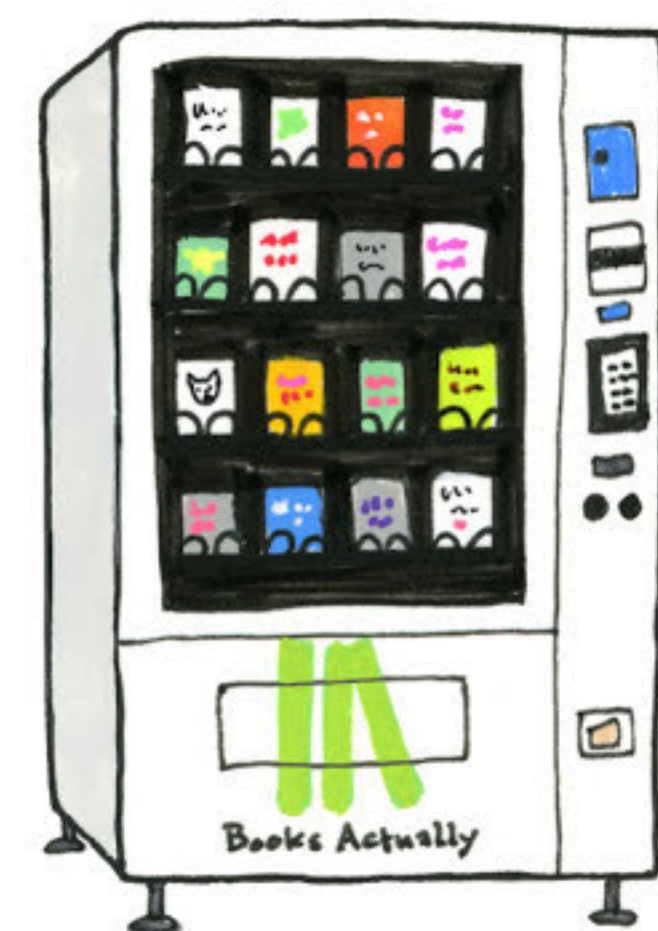
These brilliant appliances were inspired by Penguincubators, vending machines used by Penguin Books in 1930s London.



## BOOKSACTUALLY

Singapore, Singapore

For a single store, BooksActually has a significant presence in Singapore and beyond, presenting books by Singaporean authors in vending machines throughout the city and shipping books across the globe. The store started online and opened its storefront in 2005, with a global and local, new and rare selection. Its vending machines are installed at the National Museum of Singapore, the Singapore Visitor Centre, and the Goodman Arts Centre, headquarters for the National Arts Council. The hope is that even if people don't buy a book right away, they'll start to become familiar with the names of local authors.



## CHARIS BOOKS & MORE

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

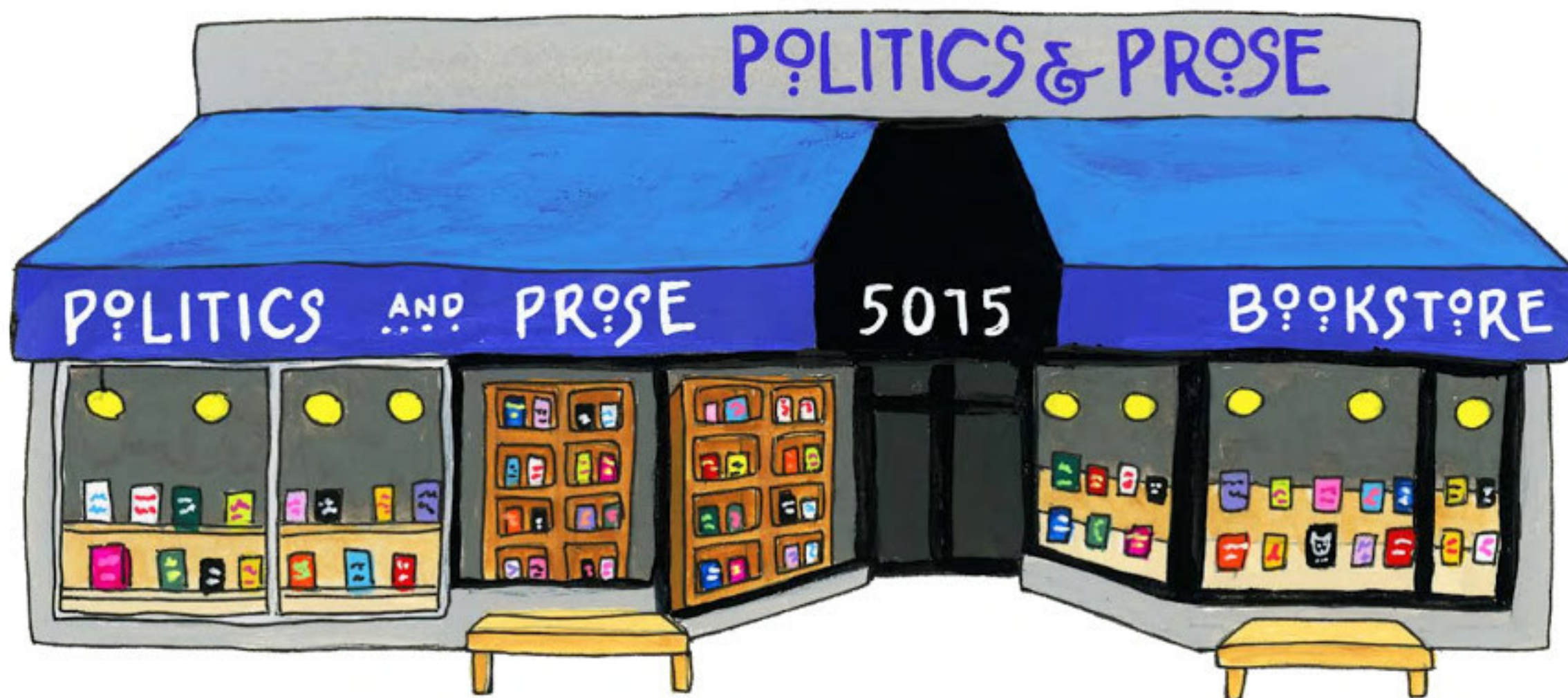
Charis Books & More is one of few feminist bookstores founded in the 1970s that is still open. The stalwart Charis has so far outlasted other iconic shops that opened in an energetic wave during that era, including Old Wives' Tales in San Francisco, New Words in Boston, and Lammas in Washington, DC.

*Charis* means “grace” or “gift.” Founder Linda Bryant chose the name in honor of the friend who gave her the funds to open the store.

Charis Books formalized its educational and social justice programming in 1996 with Charis Circle. This nonprofit arm works with artists,



authors, and activists to bring over 250 events a year—writing groups, poetry open mics, children’s story hours, yoga classes, and intersectional meetings—to Atlanta’s feminist communities.



## POLITICS AND PROSE

Washington, DC, USA

Politics and Prose does have roots in politics: Carla Cohen opened the store after losing her job with the Carter administration, and one of the current owners, Lissa Muscatine, was an adviser to Hillary Clinton. But it doesn’t specialize in politics, as some early would-be customers assumed. The store offers books about pretty much everything. Its name was just supposed to sound unpretentious while honoring its DC home.

Politics and Prose is known for its author talks, hosting writers ranging from Trevor Noah to Drew Barrymore, Neil Gaiman to Celeste Ng. Thankfully, readers everywhere can watch them on the Politics and Prose YouTube channel (and thousands do!).

# BOOKSTORE CATS

The ancient Egyptians trained cats to attack papyrus-loving pests, thereby establishing the world's first book-attending felines. Since then, cats have kept mice and rats out of bookstores. They seem especially good at protecting the comfortable chairs so often found in great independent shops.



## NIETZSCHE

The Book Man  
*Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada*

Nietzsche was adopted from Safe Haven animal shelter in 2008. He loves kids! And going for rides in their strollers.

Emma  
↙



## EMMA & ENDER

Recycle Bookstore  
*San Jose, California, USA*

↘  
Ender

## TILSA

Librería El Virrey  
*Lima, Peru*



## STERLING

Abraxas Books  
*Daytona Beach, Florida, USA*

When just a tiny stray kitten, Sterling ran out in front of Abraxas owner James D. Sass's car, and he's lived in the store ever since.



## TINY THE USURPER

Community Bookstore  
*Brooklyn, New York, USA*

He got his name by ousting another cat, Margery, from bookstore management. He even has his own Instagram feed, @tinytheusurper!



## SADLEIR

David Mason Books  
*Toronto, Ontario, Canada*



**AMELIA**  
The Spiral Bookcase  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,  
USA

She is named after both children's book star Amelia Bedelia and Amelia Pond from *Doctor Who*.



**HERBERT**

King's Books  
Tacoma, Washington,  
USA

King's Books had a contest to name their new adopted friend in 2015 and ultimately paid homage to local literary hero Frank Herbert.

Zeus  
↙



**ZEUS & APOLLO**

The Iliad Bookshop  
North Hollywood, California, USA  
They are brothers, born in 2014.



Apollo  
↙

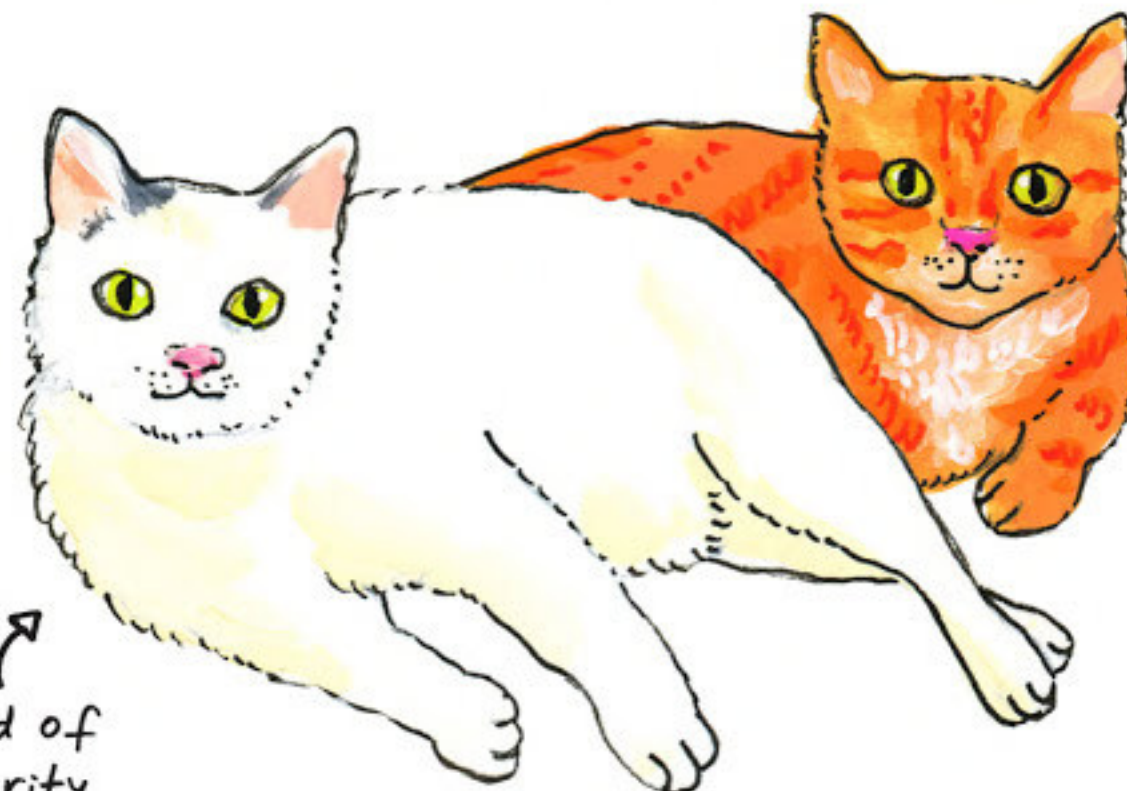
**JACK**  
Copperfield's  
Healdsburg, California,  
USA



**PIERRE, HEAD OF SECURITY  
& UPTON SINCLAIR,  
APPRENTICE SECURITY**

The Kelmscott Bookshop  
Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Head of Security  
↙



Apprentice Security  
←



# FORMATIVE FAVES



The first books we read all on our own often stick with us more than any others, especially those written for young (impressionable) readers about young (wise, powerful, or adventurous) protagonists.



Meg Murry was one of science fiction's first female protagonists. Madeleine L'Engle felt that was one reason many publishers rejected *A Wrinkle in Time* before Farrar, Straus & Giroux acquired and published it in 1963.

Meg and her braces, glasses, mousy hair, and ability to do complex math problems in her head have since inspired legions of girls (and boys!), especially ones who feel like they don't quite fit in.

This is the Farrar, Straus & Giroux 1963 hardcover, designed by Ellen Raskin. She designed more than 1,000 book covers, wrote 16 books, including "The Westing Game," and illustrated more than 30.

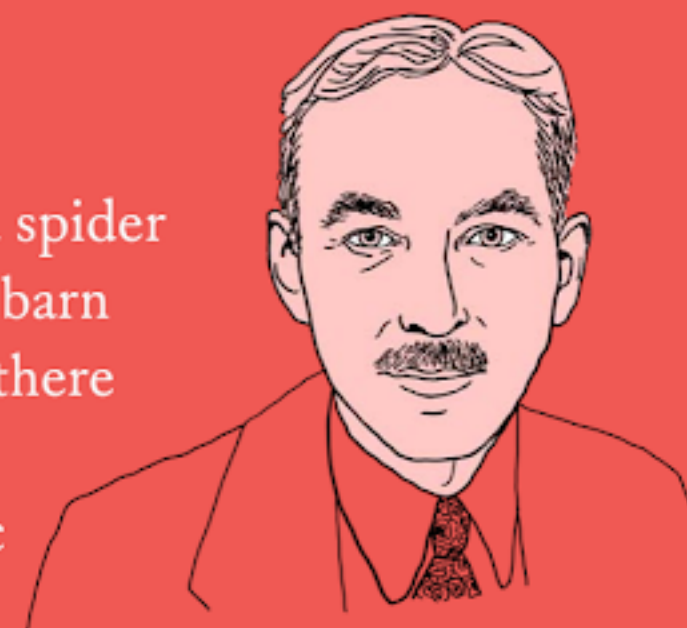


*Smile* is Raina Telgemeier's graphic novel memoir of her experience in middle school after she tripped and fell on her face, really screwing up her teeth. She has a long dental history and some very poignant memories about growing up, friendship, and trying to be normal.

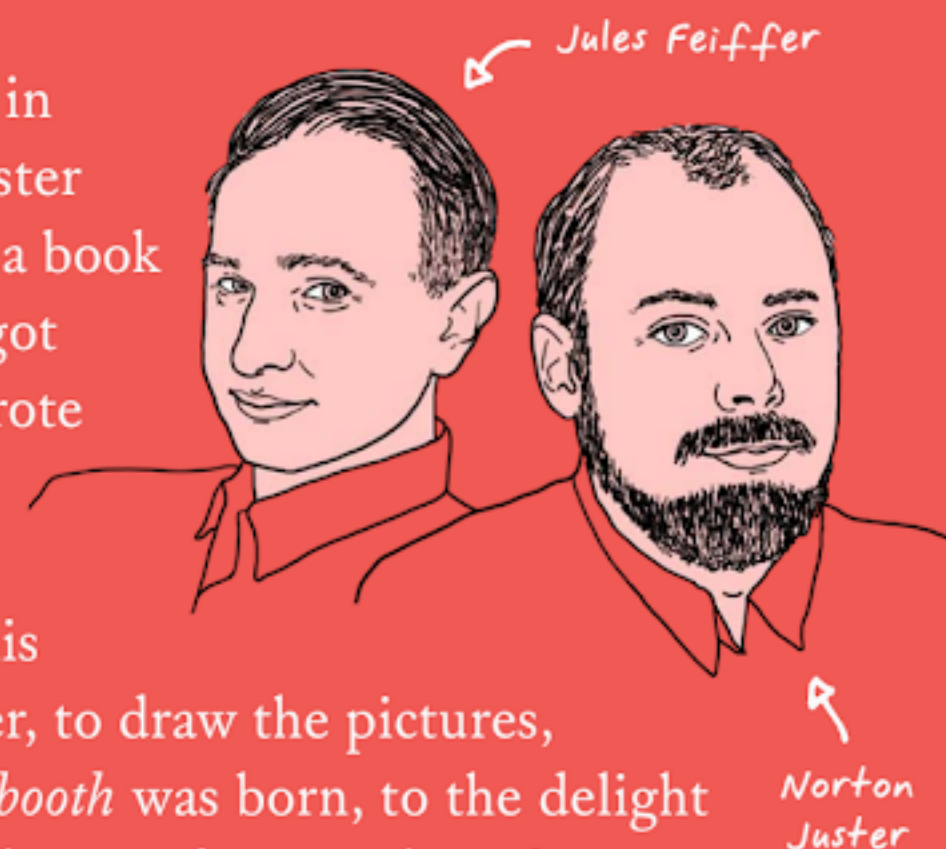
The pint-size front door of Wild Rumpus Books, in Minneapolis, was built especially for kids, so adults must shrink like Alice to enter. One of several bookstores around the US that carries books just for young readers, it also boasts pet cats, chickens, chinchillas, and a cockatiel.



In 1949, E. B. White saw a spider spinning an egg sac in the barn at his Maine farm (where there were also pigs). When she disappeared, he cut the sac loose and took it back to his New York City apartment. A couple of weeks later, hundreds of baby spiders crawled out, and White let them spin webs all over his dresser and mirror until, eventually, his cleaning lady had had enough. Three years later, *Charlotte's Web* was published, becoming what many consider the greatest children's book of all time.



As a young architect in Brooklyn, Norton Juster won a grant to write a book about cities. But he got bored. Instead, he wrote about a bored boy who discovers the world. Juster asked his neighbor, Jules Feiffer, to draw the pictures, and *The Phantom Tollbooth* was born, to the delight of smart kids everywhere and everywhen since.



## MORE

- *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt
- *The House with a Clock in Its Walls* by John Bellairs
- *The Penderwicks* by Jeanne Birdsall
- *Awkward* by Svetlana Chmakova
- *Half Magic* by Edward Eager
- *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame
- *Sunny Side Up* by Jennifer L. Holm
- *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson
- *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen



# BELOVED BOOKSTORES

## STRAND BOOKSTORE

New York City, New York, USA

Located in the East Village of Manhattan, Strand Bookstore has the slogan “18 Miles of Books,” which equates to over 2.5 million of them organized on three floors. All the newest titles are there at great prices, of course, and it buys and sells used and rare books, too. But the art book section on the second floor might be the best part.

If you want to work at Strand, no matter what the job, you have to take a quiz to prove your book knowledge. It’s only 10 questions but makes applicants very nervous. Fred Bass (one of the owners) called it “a very good way to find good employees.”



*Strand is also known for its tote bags, designed by lots of different people. And it sells bookish socks, enamel pins, patches, and pretty much anything else a booklover could want.*

## WANT TO TAKE THE QUIZ?

Here’s an old version of it (the current one is secret, of course!).  
Match the book with the author.

- 1) *The Histories*
- 2) *Brave New World*
- 3) *The Poisonwood Bible*
- 4) *A Wrinkle in Time*
- 5) *Wise Blood*
- 6) *Infinite Jest*
- 7) *White Teeth*
- 8) *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*
- 9) *The Sound and the Fury*
- 10) *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*

- A) David Foster Wallace
- B) Walker Percy
- C) Flannery O’Connor
- D) William Faulkner
- E) Zadie Smith
- F) Herodotus
- G) Barbara Kingsolver
- H) Haruki Murakami
- I) Aldous Huxley
- J) Madeleine L’Engle
- K) None of the above

ANSWERS  
1-F, 2-I, 3-G, 4-J, 5-C, 6-A, 7-E, 8-K (Raymond Carver), 9-D, 10-H



JACQUELINE WOODSON The House You Pass on the Way PUFFIN

THE EVOLUTION OF CALPURNIA TATE KELLY HENRY HEST

LOUISE FITZ HUGH HARRIET THE SPY Jivank-Deluxe Editions

WILLIAMS-GARCIA ONE CRAZY SUMMER

Grace Lin WHERE THE MOUNTAIN MEETS THE MOON Little Brown

Julie of the Wolves Jean Craighead George

Pippi Longstocking ASTRID LINDBLAD GREEN VIKING

MALALA YOUSAFZAI I Am Malala

ALICE IN WONDERLAND LEWIS CARROLL PENGUIN CLASSICS

JAMIESON ROLLER GIRL Dial

ANNE FRANK - DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL - THE DEFINITIVE EDITION

Anne of Green Gables L.M. MONTGOMERY

CLEARY BEEZUS AND RAMONA

THE SECRET GARDEN FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT Lippincott

ACEVEDO THE POET X HARPER TEEN

NNEDI OKORAFOR AKATA WITCH speak

Alanna The First Adventure PIERCE

Philip Pullman HIS DARK MATERIALS

Little Women Levia MAY AL CO TT PENNIN CLASSICS DELUXE EDITION

IGNOTOFSKY WOMEN IN SCIENCE

THE SECRET OF THE OLD CLOCK CAROLYN KEENE 1 GROSSET & DUNLAP 9701

HEIDI JOHANNA SPYRI

Island of the Blue Dolphins ROALD DAHL MATILDA O'Dell HMC6

# BOOKISH PEOPLE RECOMMEND

## TRAVIS JONKER

Elementary school  
librarian at Wayland  
Union Schools,  
Michigan, USA

*El Deafo*  
by Cece Bell

Harry N. Abrams →  
2014 hardcover, design  
by Caitlin Keegan & Chad W.  
Beckerman, art by Cece Bell



“James Joyce said, ‘In the particular is contained the universal.’ I can think of no greater example of this than Cece Bell’s graphic novel memoir, *El Deafo*. This story of Bell’s childhood after hearing loss is deeply personal, yet hits on themes of friendship and acceptance that every reader will relate to. It’s so masterfully executed that the Newbery committee took notice, and awarded it an honor—the very first for a graphic novel.”



Knopf  
1986 hardcover

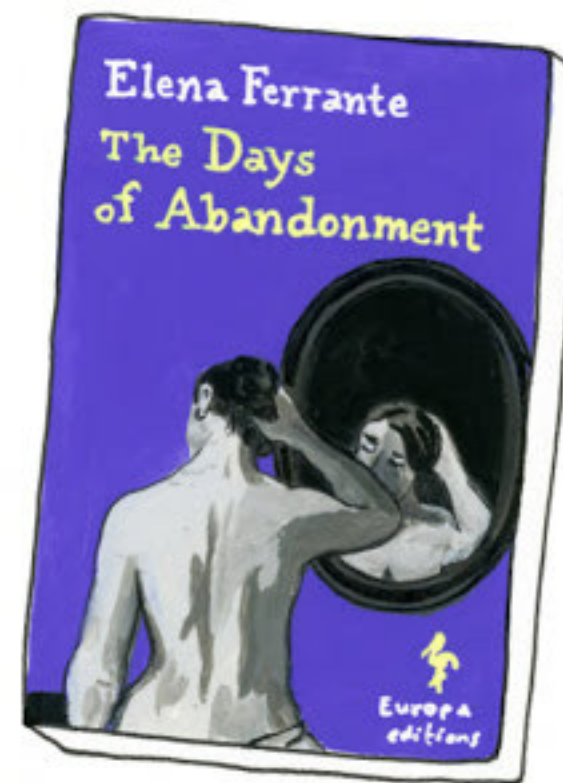
## MARIS KREIZMAN

Editorial director of  
Book of the Month

*Anagrams*  
by Lorrie Moore

“*Anagrams* broke apart all my expectations about what a novel could do. As you might guess from the book’s title, it presents many different

versions of its wonderfully flawed heroine, and maintains a delicate balance between funny and sad. It is eminently quotable, and it is definitive proof that puns can be profound.”



*The Days of Abandonment*  
by Elena Ferrante

Europa Editions 2005 paperback,  
← art by Emanuele Ragnisco

“*The Days of Abandonment* is always my first recommendation when people ask if they would enjoy the undertaking of reading Elena

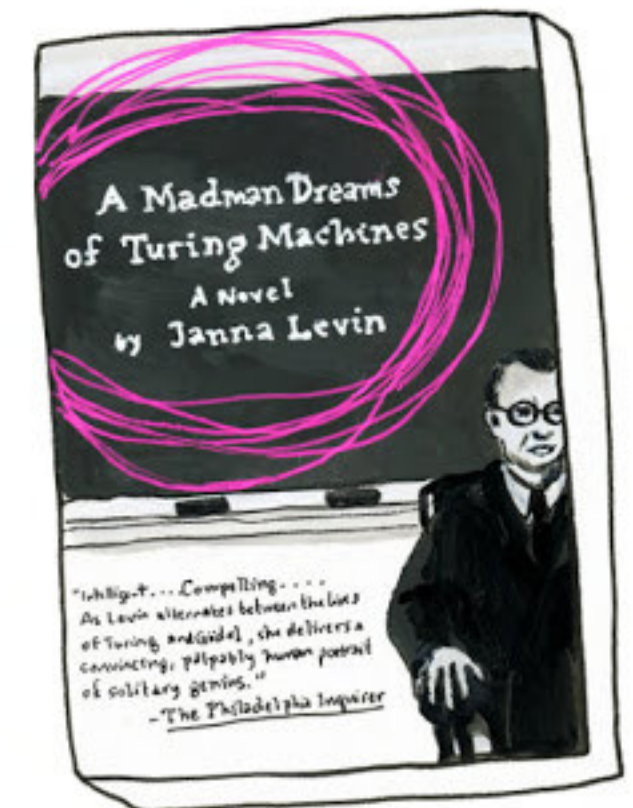
Ferrante’s Neapolitan novels. A short, dark, angry as hell, insanely evocative glimpse into the life of a woman trying to hold it together (barely) after her husband leaves her, *The Days of Abandonment* is the perfect introduction to Ferrante’s brutal yet magical world. If it punches you right in the gut in a way that somehow feels simultaneously like pleasure and pain, you will be a Ferrante fan for life.”

## MARIA POPOVA

Reader, writer, and founder  
of brainpickings.org, which  
is included in the Library of  
Congress permanent archive of  
culturally valuable materials

*A Madman Dreams  
of Turing Machines*  
by Janna Levin

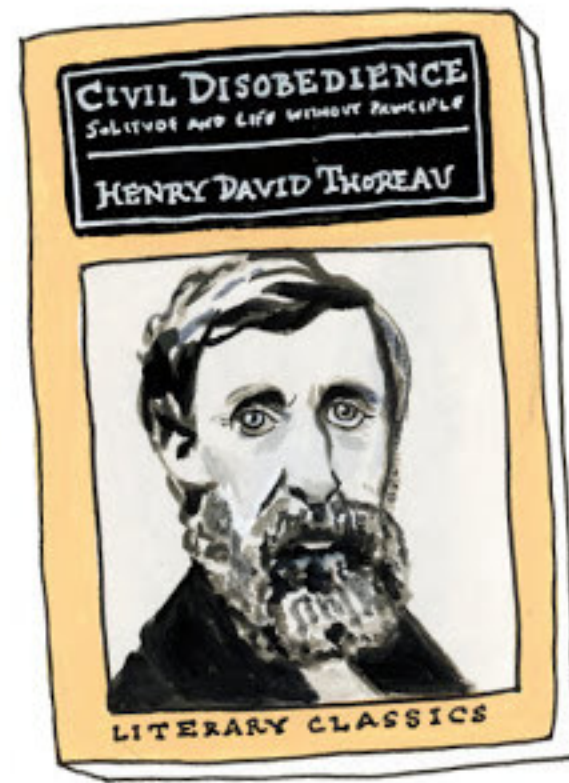
“The ideas of mathematician Kurt Gödel and computing pioneer Alan Turing fundamentally unsettled and reshaped modern life. Astrophysicist and author Janna Levin—one of the most poetic prose writers of our time—twines their parallel lives into a stunning novel exploring the limits of logic, the elusive nature of truth, and the roiling relationship between genius and madness.”



Anchor 2007  
paperback, design  
by Peter Mendelsund

*Civil Disobedience*  
by Henry David Thoreau

“A century and a half ago, a young Transcendentalist poet, outraged by the inhumanity of slavery and the horrors of the Mexican American War, penned a manifesto for using civil disobedience to advance justice—a politically and socially wakeful masterpiece that would go on to influence such transformers of culture as Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr.”



Prometheus Books  
1998 paperback

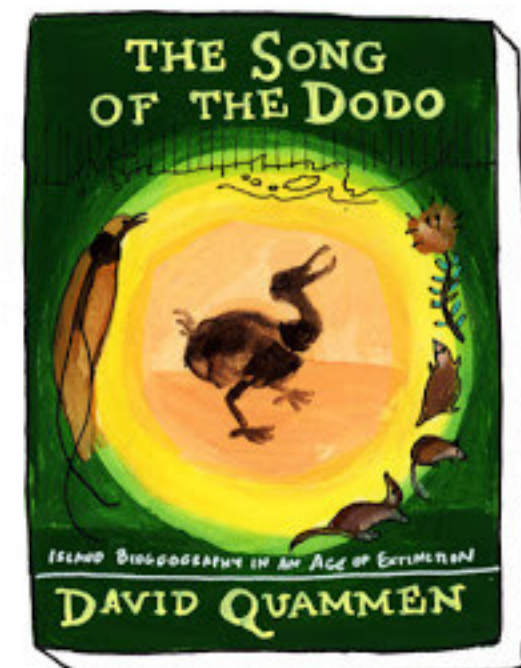
redeemingly, ‘Heroes: Likely and Unlikely’ all around us.

While not quite a-thousand-and-one tales, there are more than enough here for a hundred bed-times snuggled up with a little loved one or a single binge on a beach or by a fire. I’m sure your library has other folklore anthologies, possibly with prettier pictures, yet it’s unlikely there are any as carefully curated and continually surprising, amusing, affirming, and powerful as this one.”

### ADAH FITZGERALD

Owner of Main Street Books  
in Davidson,  
North Carolina, USA

*The Song of the Dodo*  
by David Quammen



Scribner 1997  
paperback, design by  
Calvin Chou, art  
by Walter Ford

“Quammen superbly blends exquisite biographies of Charles Darwin and his nemesis and underdog Alfred Wallace with fascinating accounts of strange, contemporary creatures whose existential vulnerability is a real warning to each of us about the consequences of habitat destruction.”



Pantheon 1986 hard-  
cover, art by Philippe  
Weisbecker

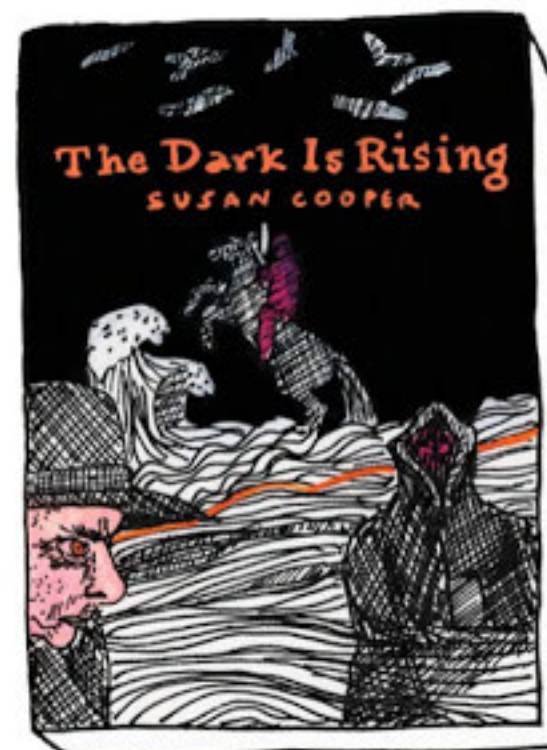
### ANDREW MEDLAR

Assistant commissioner  
for collections at the Chicago  
Public Library and past  
president of the Association  
for Library Service to  
Children

*Favorite Folktales  
from around the World*  
edited by Jane Yolen

“Stories have power. (If they didn’t, this book wouldn’t exist.) Perhaps their greatest is connecting us, and this deliciously thick treasury gathered by an esteemed wordsmith follows those threads of human experiences across the globe, making it clear that billions of us have many feelings, questions, and hopes in common.

From stories about stories (the Ashanti ‘How Spider Obtained the Sky God’s Stories’) to ‘The End of the World’ (from the White River Sioux), Yolen organizes in order to illuminate. Her categories affirm that there are ‘Tricksters, Rogues, and Cheats’ from Jamaica to Japan, no shortage of ‘Numskulls and Noodleheads’ on every continent, ‘Shape Shifters’ on both sides of the equator, and,



Atheneum 1972  
hardcover, art by  
Alan E. Cober

### JULIA HOBART

Bookbuyer at the Bookloft  
in Great Barrington,  
Massachusetts, USA

*The Dark Is Rising*  
by Susan Cooper

“I read it as a kid, and it has stuck with me. As an adult I have reread the whole series and listened to the audiobook several times, and it still is as enjoyable as the first time.”



# COMING OF AGE

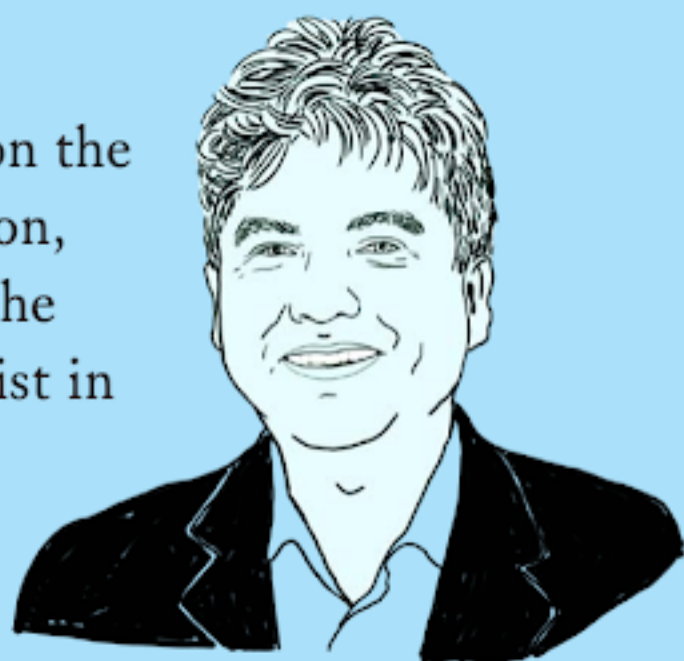
Our poor hearts, it's a wonder they ever make it through those rough teen years when we find out what the world is really like and must figure out who we really are. These books share the pain and power of that growth and change.



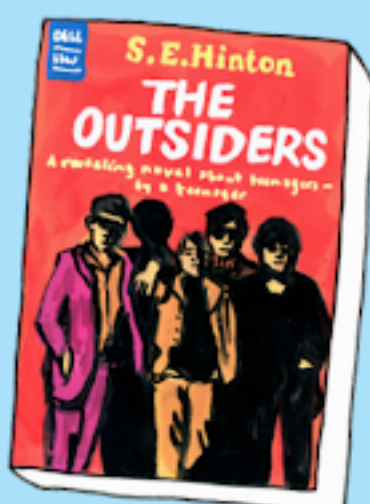
Ember 2017 paperback, art by Good Wives and Warriors, design by Natalie C. Sousa

Nicola Yoon wrote *Everything, Everything* over three years, working between 4 and 6 a.m. Her husband, David Yoon, illustrated the book, and she has said that her experience falling in love with him made it easy for her to write the tender love story. In 2017 a film version was released.

Sherman Alexie grew up on the Spokane Indian Reservation, as does Arnold Spirit Jr., the nerdy cartoonist protagonist in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (with drawings by Ellen Forney). Alexie also wrote the screenplay for the movie *Smoke Signals*, the first all-Native American production.



Susan Eloise Hinton started writing *The Outsiders* when she was only 15 years old; it was published when she was 19.



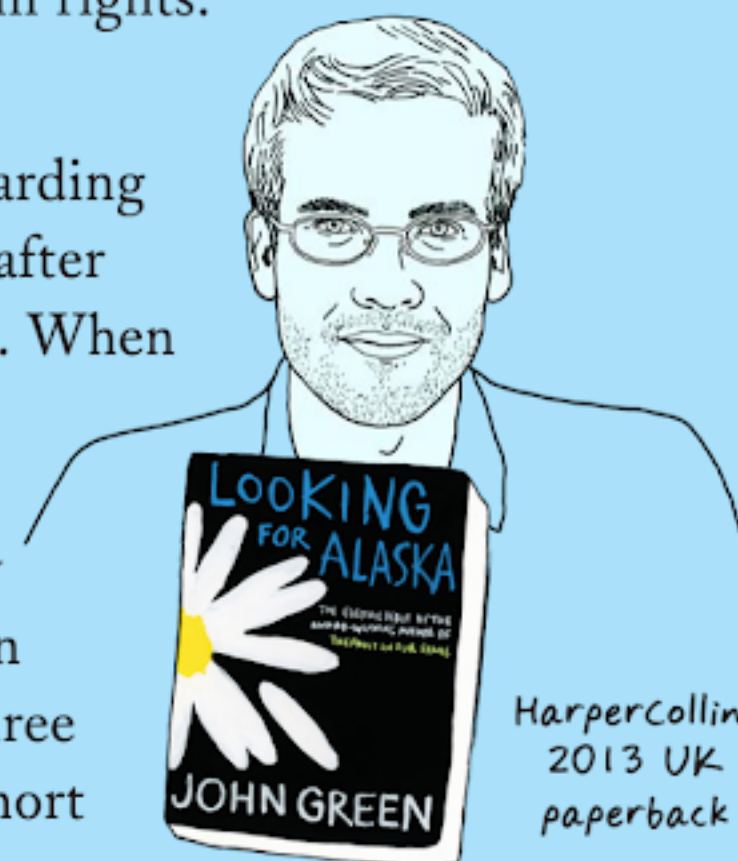
Dell 1971 paperback →



Angie Thomas read a lot as a child, but less as a teen, because she didn't see herself in books. She feels that publishers assumed that "black kids don't read" and so books about black characters wouldn't sell. Thomas's book *The Hate U Give* is helping change that

misconception; 13 publishing houses bid for it, and Fox 2000 bought the film rights.

John Green modeled the boarding school in *Looking for Alaska* after one he attended in Alabama. When he's not writing, Green and his brother, Hank, are the Vlogbrothers, "raising nerdy to the power of awesome" on YouTube. They have over three million followers for their short videos about pretty much everything, from condom failure to Pokemon.



HarperCollins 2013 UK paperback

Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* is a semiautobiographical collection of poetic vignettes about life as a Latina teenager in Chicago. Published in 1984, it has since been translated into 20 languages. Cisneros currently lives in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, with four dogs.



## MORE

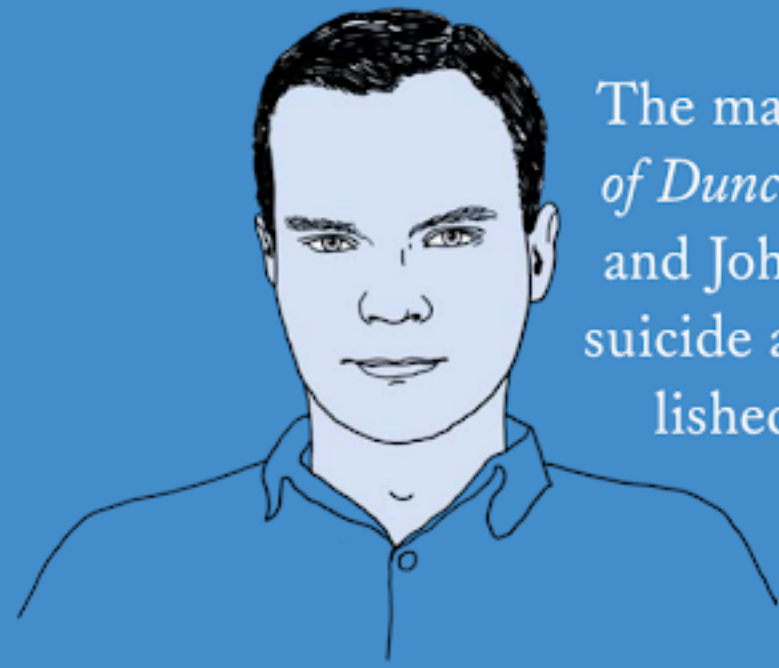
- *Some Assembly Required* by Arin Andrews
- *Nine Years Under* by Sheri Booker
- *The Power of One* by Bryce Courtenay
- *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Díaz
- *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* by Heidi W. Durrow
- *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
- *Silver Sparrow* by Tayari Jones
- *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles
- *King Dork* by Frank Portman
- *The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole* by Sue Townsend

# CULT CLASSICS

A cult book might be panned by critics but evangelized by fans, hated by half the people who read it while the other half feel it's their favorite book of all time. Cult books are sometimes experimental, sometimes culturally fringy, often funny, and definitely life-changing for those they strike.



Chip Kidd created the 1989 first-edition dust jacket for Katherine Dunn's brilliant *Geek Love* when he was a junior designer at Knopf; he considers it a "personal breakthrough." In clever homage to the Binewskis (the book's charming family of sideshow freaks), he added a fifth leg to the Knopf borzoi logo at the bottom of the spine, which no one caught until after publication.



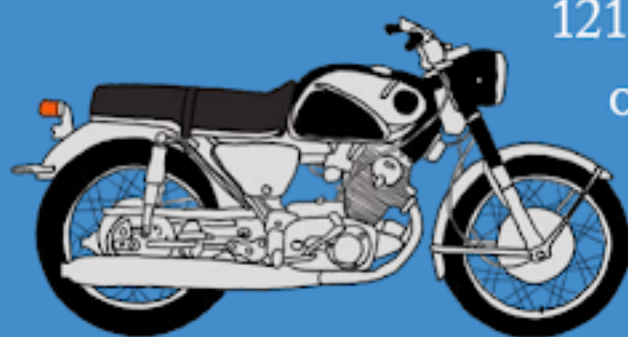
The manuscript for *A Confederacy of Dunces* was repeatedly rejected, and John Kennedy Toole committed suicide at 31, not living to see it published (with the help of Walker

Percy) a decade later.

The book immediately became a cult hit and eventually a commercial one. In 1981, Toole posthumously won the Pulitzer Prize, and today a statue of his flannel-shirted star, Ignatius J. Reilly, stands on Canal Street in New Orleans, under the clock where he waited for his mother in the book's opening scene.



*Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* is in the Guinness World Records for being rejected by 121 publishers, more than any other best-selling book.

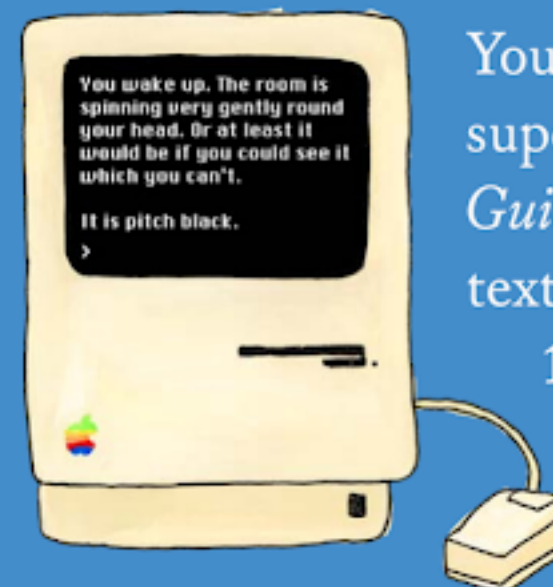
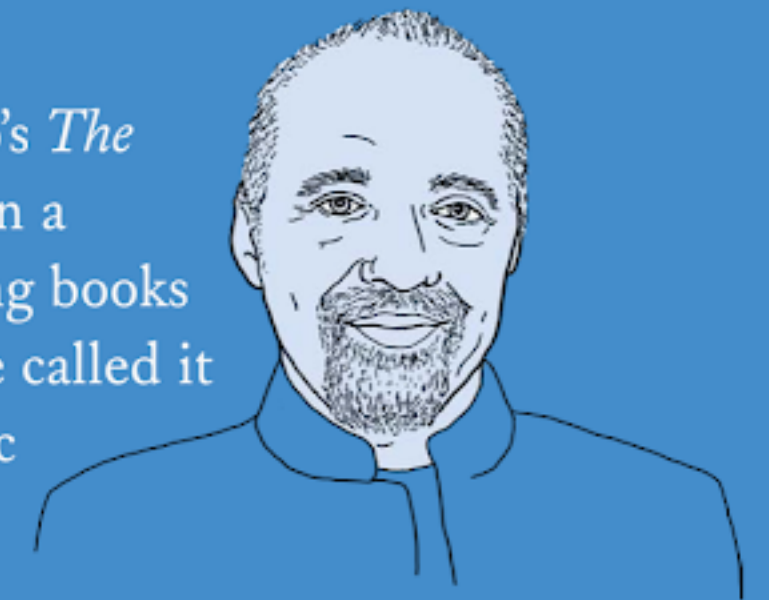


A 1964 Honda CB77 Superhawk

It has since sold more than five million copies worldwide. For years, the book inspired philosophical fans to show up at Robert

M. Pirsig's house in search of a guru. Pirsig used a Swedish concept to explain the book's popularity; it became a *kulturbärare*, a "culture-bearer," exposing a change in the world that was already happening.

Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*, about a shepherd on a quest, is one of the best-selling books of all time. Many people have called it life-changing, including music producer Pharrell Williams.



You can play a version of the super awesome *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* interactive text game, originally created in 1984 (and based on the 1979 novel, which was based on the 1978 radio show), on the BBC website ([bbc.co.uk/h2g2game](http://bbc.co.uk/h2g2game)).

Winning it might help you understand why 42 is the answer to the "Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything."

## MORE

- *Speedboat* by Renata Adler
- *The Clan of the Cave Bear* by Jean Auel
- *Foucault's Pendulum* by Umberto Eco
- *The Virgin Suicides* by Jeffrey Eugenides
- *I Love Dick* by Chris Kraus
- *Água Viva* by Clarice Lispector
- *Norwegian Wood* by Haruki Murakami
- *Survivor* by Chuck Palahniuk
- *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand
- *Building Stories* by Chris Ware

