Riverine

A Memoir from Anywhere but Here

Angela Palm

Winner of the Graywolf Press Nonfiction Prize, spellbinding essays on place, young love, a life-altering crime

Angela Palm grew up in a place not marked on the map, her house set on the banks of a river that had been straightened to make way for farmland. Every year, the Kankakee River in rural Indiana flooded and returned to its old course while the residents sandbagged their homes against the rising water. From her bedroom window, Palm watched the neighbor boy and loved him in secret, imagining a life with him even as she longed for a future that held more than a job at the neighborhood bar. For Palm, caught in this landscape of flood and drought, escape was a continually receding hope.

Though she did escape, as an adult Palm finds herself drawn back, like the river, to her origins. But this means more than just recalling vibrant, complicated memories of the place that shaped her, or trying to understand the family that raised her. It means visiting the prison where the boy that she loved is serving a life sentence for a brutal murder. It means trying to chart, through the mesmerizing, interconnected essays of Riverine, what happens when a single event forces the path of her life off course.

PRAISE

"Riverine is a beautiful book—both expansive and intimate—about homecoming and departure, the American ideal of reinvention and the ways we are bound to and bound by the past."—Brigid Hughes, Graywolf Press Nonfiction Prize Judge

Angela Palm owns Ink + Lead Literary Services and is the editor of an anthology of Vermont writers, Please Do Not Remove. Her work has appeared in Paper Darts, Midwestern Gothic, Tampa Review, and elsewhere. She lives in Burlington, Vermont.
Dorthe Nors follows up her acclaimed story collection *Karate Chop* with a pair of novellas that playfully chart the aftermath of two very twenty-first-century romances. In "Days," a woman in her late thirties records her life in a series of lists, giving shape to the tumult of her days--one moment she is eating an apple, the next she is on the floor, howling like a dog. As the details accumulate, we experience with her the full range of emotions: anger, loneliness, regret, pain, and also joy, as the lists become a way to understand, connect to, and rebuild her life.

In "Minna Needs Rehearsal Space," a novella told in headlines, an avant-garde musician is dumped via text message. Fleeing the indignity of the breakup and friends who flaunt their achievements in life, career, and family, Minna unfriends people on Facebook, listens to Bach, and reads Ingmar Bergman, then decamps to an island near Sweden, "well suited to mental catharsis." A cheeky nod to the listicles and bulletins we scroll through on a daily basis, *So Much for That Winter* explores how we shape and understand experience, and the disconnection and dislocation that define our twenty-first-century lives, with Nors's unique wit and humor.

**PRAISE**

**Praise for Dorthe Nors**

"Nors illuminates an ominous world of disconnected people trying to make sense of their dislocation." --*Los Angeles Times*

"How often can we honestly say that a book is unlike anything else? Yet here it is, unique in form and effect." --*The Guardian*

"Unsettling and poetic ... Brilliantly disturbing." --*The New York Times Book Review*

**Dorthe Nors** received the 2014 Per Olov Enquist Literary Prize for *Karate Chop*, which *Publishers Weekly* named one of the best books of 2014. Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker* and *A Public Space*. 
Grief Is the Thing with Feathers

A Novel

Max Porter

"It stunned me, full of beauty, hilarity, and thick black darkness." --Evie Wyld

Here he is, husband and father, scruffy romantic, a shambolic scholar--a man adrift in the wake of his wife's sudden, accidental death. And there are his two sons who like him struggle in their London apartment to face the unbearable sadness that has engulfed them. The father imagines a future of well-meaning visitors and emptiness, while the boys wander, savage and unsupervised.

In this moment of violent despair they are visited by Crow--antagonist, trickster, goad, protector, therapist, and babysitter. This self-described "sentimental bird," at once wild and tender, who "finds humans dull except in grief," threatens to stay with the wounded family until they no longer need him. As weeks turn to months and the pain of loss lessens with the balm of memories, Crow's efforts are rewarded and the little unit of three begins to recover: Dad resumes his book about the poet Ted Hughes; the boys get on with it, grow up.

Part novella, part polyphonic fable, part essay on grief, Max Porter's extraordinary debut combines compassion and bravura style to dazzling effect. Full of angular wit and profound truths, Grief Is the Thing with Feathers is a startlingly original and haunting debut by a significant new talent.

PRAISE

"I read it through in an hour, and ended it amazed and disturbed and uplifted and shattered. I've never read anything like it. It's dazzlingly good. Anyone who has ever loved someone, or lost someone, or both, will be gripped by it. It's very sad and very funny. Crow is the blackest, blankest bad guy I've met for years."

--Robert Macfarlane

Max Porter works in publishing. He lives in South London with his wife and children. Grief Is the Thing with Feathers is his first book.
Look

Poems

Solmaz Sharif

A powerful, innovative exploration of the language of war by a new poet of passion and conscience

Daily I sit
with the language
they've made

of our language

to NEUTRALIZE
the CAPABILITY of LOW DOLLAR VALUE ITEMS
like you.

You are what is referred to as
a "CASUALTY."

--from "Personal Effects"

Solmaz Sharif's astonishing first book, Look, asks us to see the ongoing costs of war as the unbearable loss of human lives and also the insidious abuses against our everyday speech. In this virtuosic array of poems, lists, shards, and sequences, Sharif assembles her family's and her own fragmented narratives in the aftermath of warfare. Those repercussions echo into the present day, in the grief for those killed in America's invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and in the discrimination endured at the checkpoints of daily encounter.

At the same time, these poems point to the ways violence is conducted against our language. Throughout this collection are words and phrases lifted from the Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms; in their seamless inclusion, Sharif exposes the devastating euphemisms deployed to sterilize the language, control its effects, and sway our collective resolve. But Sharif refuses to accept this terminology as given, and instead turns it back on its perpetrators. "Let it matter what we call a thing," she writes. "Let me look at you."

Praise

Praise for Solmaz Sharif

"Sharif's writing is sparkling, precise, subtle, artful, and true." --David Baker, The Kenyon Review

Solmaz Sharif has published poetry in The New Republic and Poetry, and has received a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. She is
Swallowed by the Cold

Jensen Beach

Piercing, profound stories about the silences that calcify around the histories we fail to confront

The intricate, interlocking stories of Jensen Beach's extraordinarily poised story collection are set in a Swedish village on the Baltic Sea as well as in Stockholm over the course of two eventful years.

In Swallowed by the Cold, people are besieged and haunted by disasters both personal and national: a fatal cycling accident, a drowned mother, a fire on a ferry, a mysterious arson, the assassination of the Swedish foreign minister, and, decades earlier, the Soviet bombing of Stockholm. In these stories, a drunken, lonely woman is convinced that her new neighbor is the daughter of her dead lover; a one-armed tennis player and a motherless girl reckon with death amid a rainstorm; and happening upon a car crash, a young woman is unaccountably drawn to the victim, even as he slides into a coma and her marriage falls into jeopardy.

Again and again, Beach's protagonists find themselves unable to express their innermost feelings to those they are closest to, but at the same time they are drawn to confide in strangers. In its confidence and subtle precision, Beach’s prose evokes their reticence but is supple enough to reveal deeper passions and intense longing. Shot through with loss and the regret of missed opportunities, Swallowed by the Cold is a searching and crystalline book by a startlingly talented young writer.

"Jensen Beach renders his characters in a way that is both unsettling and deeply complex . . . This is a wonderful book--graceful and assured, spare and compassionate--and Jensen Beach is a fiercely talented writer.” --Molly Antopol

Jensen Beach is the author of the collection For Out of the Heart Proceed. His work has appeared in A Public Space, The New Yorker, Ninth Letter, Tin House, and elsewhere. He teaches in the BFA program at Johnson State College and lives in Vermont with his family.
Compartment No. 6

A Novel

Rosa Liksom; Translated from the Finnish by Lola Rogers

A wickedly mischievous, darkly imaginative, and completely unforgettable ride

In the waning years of the Soviet Union, a sad young Finnish woman boards a train in Moscow. Bound for Mongolia, she's trying to put as much space as possible between her and a broken relationship. Wanting to be alone, she chooses an empty compartment--No. 6--but her solitude is soon shattered by the arrival of a fellow passenger: Vadim Nikolayevich Ivanov, a grizzled, opinionated, foul-mouthed former soldier. Vadim fills the compartment with his long and colorful stories, recounting in lurid detail his sexual conquests and violent fights.

There is a hint of menace in the air, but initially the woman is not so much scared of or shocked by him as she is repulsed. She stands up to him, throwing a boot at his head. But though Vadim may be crude, he isn't cruel, and he shares with her the sausage and black bread and tea he's brought for the journey, coaxing the girl out of her silent gloom. As their train cuts slowly across thousands of miles of a wintry Russia, where "everything is in motion, snow, water, air, trees, clouds, wind, cities, villages, people and thoughts," a grudging kind of companionship grows between the two inhabitants of compartment No. 6. When they finally arrive in Ulan Bator, a series of starlit and sinister encounters bring Rosa Liksom's incantatory Compartment No. 6 to its powerful conclusion.

PRAISE

"With a couple of carefully chosen brushstrokes . . . [Liksom] is able to conjure up an entire human destiny." --from the citation for the Finlandia Prize

"This unlikely couple . . . accompany one another across the plains as if progressing through a film by Andrei Tarkovsky." --Svenska Dagbladet

Rosa Liksom was born in a village of eight houses in Lapland, Finland, where her parents were reindeer breeders and farmers. She spent her youth traveling Europe, living as a squatter and in communes. She paints, makes films, and writes in Helsinki.
Standoff

Poems

David Rivard

Standoff is the exhilarating, witty, and wise new collection by the award-winning poet David Rivard

I often feel as though I’ve entered a standoff between what happens around me & what’s going on inside--& this life that goes on & on inside my head goes on & on & on it seems almost without me, as it has since childhood . . .

--from "Standoff"

For three decades, David Rivard has written from deep within the skin of our times. With Standoff, he asks an essential question: In a world of noise, of global anxiety and media distraction, how can we speak to each other with honesty? These poems scan the shifting horizons of our world, all the while swerving elastically through the multitude of selves that live inside our memories and longings--"all those me's that wish to be set free at dawn." The work of these poems is a counterweight to the work of the world. It wants to deepen the mystery we are to ourselves, stretching toward acceptance and tenderness in ways that are hard-won and true, even if fleeting.

PRAISE

Praise for David Rivard

"Rivard's poems move . . . with an exhilarating, smart pace of association and evocation. The speed of mind, compressing details and emotions, covering the maximum distance in the least time, gives this writing its thrill." --Robert Pinsky, The Washington Post

David Rivard is the author of five previous collections, including Otherwise Elsewhere and Wise Poison, winner of the James Laughlin Award. He teaches at the University of New Hampshire and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.
May Day

Poems

Gretchen Marquette

An emotionally resonant debut collection by an extraordinary new poet

You arrive at my altar with no idea what it means to worship--to adore. You haven't even learned it:

ecstasy and suffering make the same face.

--from "The Offering"

May Day is both a distress call and a celebration of the arrival of spring. In this rich and unusually assured first collection, the poet Gretchen Marquette writes of the losses of a brother gone off to war in Afghanistan and Iraq, and a great love--losses that have left the world charged with absence and grief. But there is also the wonder of the natural world: the deer at the edge of the forest, the dog reliably coaxing the poet beyond herself and into the city park where by tradition every May Day is pageantry, a festival of surviving the long winter. "What does it mean to be in love?" one poem asks. "As it turns out, / the second best thing that can happen to you / is a broken heart."

May Day introduces readers to a new poet of depth and power.

I Refuse

A Novel

Per Petterson; Translated from the Norwegian by Don Bartlett

Now in paperback, Per Petterson's new novel, a "masterful . . . breathtaking read" (*San Francisco Chronicle*)

Per Petterson's *I Refuse* is the work of an internationally acclaimed novelist at the height of his powers. In the same spare but evocative style that made readers fall in love with *Out Stealing Horses*, Petterson weaves a tale of two men whose accidental meeting one morning churns up a fateful moment from their boyhood thirty-five years before.

**PRAISE**

"There is a powerfully dense, intimate texture to these emotional landscapes . . . Petterson transforms the unremarkable into magic." -- *The New York Times Book Review* (front cover)

"[Petterson] shows a Jamesian mastery . . . Often the carefully constructed sequences of scenes and perspectives feel inspired." -- *Chicago Tribune*

"Petterson's latest book, *I Refuse*, does not disappoint . . . Petterson's sentences are strange, kinetic creatures that take flight . . . His work remains, like his own reminiscences, exquisite impressions that glimmer as quickly as they fade." -- *The Boston Globe*

"A seamless emotional alchemy lifts off the page that, in..."

Per Petterson is the author of seven novels, including *Out Stealing Horses*, which won the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award and has been translated into fifty languages.
The Art of History
Unlocking the Past in Fiction and Nonfiction

Christopher Bram

A captivating new addition to the "Art Of" series that explores historical narrative in fiction and nonfiction

One has to look no further than the audiences hungry for the narratives served up by Downton Abbey or Wolf Hall to know that the lure of the past is as seductive as ever. But incorporating historical events and figures into a shapely narrative is no simple task. The acclaimed novelist Christopher Bram examines how writers as disparate as Gabriel García Márquez, David McCullough, Toni Morrison, Leo Tolstoy, and many others have employed history in their work.

Unique among the "Art Of" series, The Art of History engages with both fiction and narrative nonfiction to reveal varied strategies of incorporating and dramatizing historical detail. Bram challenges popular notions about historical narratives as he examines both successful and flawed passages to illustrate how authors from different genres treat subjects that loom large in American history, such as slavery and the Civil War. And he delves deep into the reasons why War and Peace endures as a classic of historical fiction. Bram's keen insight and close reading of a wide array of authors make The Art of History an essential volume for any lover of historical narrative.

PRAISE

Praise for Christopher Bram

"If only more novelists approached their craft with the imagination and skill of Christopher Bram." --The New York Times Book Review

"Bram is one of the best novelists writing in the world today . . . His body of work is one of the signal achievements of recent American literature." --Tony Kushner

Christopher Bram is the author of nine novels, including Father of Frankenstein, which was made into the film Gods and Monsters. His book on the craft of writing, The Art of History, is forthcoming from Graywolf Press. He lives in New York and teaches at New York University.
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