I Refuse

A Novel

Per Petterson; Translated from the Norwegian by Don Bartlett

A masterful new novel from Per Petterson, who “provides one of literature’s greatest gifts . . . a welcome refuge from our cacophonous world” (NPR)

Per Petterson’s hotly anticipated new novel, I Refuse, is the work of an internationally acclaimed novelist at the height of his powers. In Norway the book has been a huge bestseller, and rights have already been sold into sixteen countries. In his signature spare style, Petterson weaves a tale of two men whose accidental meeting one morning recalls their boyhood thirty-five years ago. Back then, Tommy was separated from his sisters after he stood up to their abusive father. Jim was by Tommy’s side through it all. But one winter night, a chance event on a frozen lake forever changed the balance of their friendship. Now Jim fishes alone on a bridge as Tommy drives by in a new Mercedes, and it’s clear their fortunes have reversed. Over the course of the day, the life of each man will be irrevocably altered.

I Refuse is a powerful, unforgettable novel, and its publication is an event to be celebrated.

PRAISE

Praise for Per Petterson

“Reading a Petterson novel is like falling into a northern landscape painting—all shafts of light and clear palpable chill.”—Time

“Subtly incisive . . . Clean sentence after clean sentence, Petterson conveys both the melancholy and the demi-pleasurable sensation of being fundamentally untethered.”—Stacey D’Erasmo, The New York Times Book Review

“Readers will find that they’re in the hands of a master whose quiet, unforgettable voice leaves you yearning to hear more.”—The Boston Globe

“Per Petterson stands unsurpassed among contemporary writers for existential truth-telling.”—Financial Times

Per Petterson won the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award for his novel Out Stealing Horses, which has been translated into forty-nine languages and was named a Best Book of 2007 by The New York Times Book Review.
Ashes in My Mouth, Sand in My Shoes

Stories

Per Petterson; Translated from the Norwegian by Don Bartlett

The heartwarming debut that brought Per Petterson, the author of the highly acclaimed Out Stealing Horses, to prominence

Young Arvid Jansen lives on the outskirts of Oslo. It’s the early sixties; his father works in a shoe factory and his Danish mother works as a cleaner. Arvid has nightmares about crocodiles and still wets his bed at night, but slowly he begins to understand the world around him. Vivid images accompany each new event: A photo of his mother as a young woman makes him cry as he realizes how time passes, and the black car that comes to collect his father on the day Arvid’s grandfather dies reminds him of the passing of his bullfinch. And then, one morning, his teacher tells his class to pray because a nuclear war is looming. Ashes in My Mouth, Sand in My Shoes, Per Petterson’s debut, in which he introduces Arvid Jansen to the world, is a delicate portrait of childhood in all its complexity, wonder, and confusion that will delight fans of Out Stealing Horses and new readers alike.

PRAISE

“Shot through with a tender, nostalgic quality . . . Petterson brings the book to an unexpectedly moving conclusion.” —Financial Times

“This is a small book that packs a punch . . . Petterson’s style . . . is stripped like a bleached Wallander landscape and leaves you no place to hide from Arvid’s all-too-vivid reality. You are gripped by a few simple words.” —The Independent on Sunday

“The talent has been there from the very beginning . . . The delicacy and simplicity of Petterson’s vision of childhood also suggests Carver’s master Chekhov . . . If you haven’t read Per Petterson at all . . . it’s quite possible you’ll want to read everything ...”

Per Petterson won the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award for his novel Out Stealing Horses, which has been translated into forty-nine languages and was named a Best Book of 2007 by The New York Times.
Ongoingness
The End of a Diary
Sarah Manguso

A dazzling philosophical investigation of the challenge of living in the present, by a brilliant practitioner of the new essay

In her third book that continues to define the contours of the contemporary essay, Sarah Manguso confronts a meticulous diary that she has kept for twenty-five years. “I wanted to end each day with a record of everything that had ever happened,” she explains. But this simple statement belies a terror that she might forget something, that she might miss something important. Maintaining that diary, now 800,000 words, had become, until recently, a kind of spiritual practice.

Then Manguso became pregnant and had a child, and these two Copernican events generated an amnesia that put her into a different relationship with the need to document herself amid ongoing time. Ongoingness is a spare, meditative work that stands in stark contrast to the volubility of the diary—it is a haunting account of mortality and impermanence, of how we struggle to find clarity amid the chaos of time that rushes around and over and through us.

PRAISE

“After I had my son I looked everywhere for a book that might serve as some kind of mirror. I bought so many silly books. Now I see what the problem was: I wanted a book about time—about mortality. I can’t think of a writer who is at once so experimentally daring and so rigorously uncompromising. Ongoingness is an incredibly elegant, wise book, and I loved it.”—Miranda July

“The memoir form is shaken up and reinvented in this brilliant meditation on time and record-keeping. Ongoingness is a short book but there’s nothing small about it. Sarah Manguso covers vast territory with immense subtlety and enviable wit.”—Jenny Offill

“It seemed scarce...

Sarah Manguso is the author of two memoirs, The Guardians and The Two Kinds of Decay; two poetry collections; and a short-story collection. Born and raised near Boston, she was educated at Harvard and the Iowa Writers’ Workshop. She lives in Los Angeles.
The Infernal
A Novel
Mark Doten

A fierce, searing response to the chaos of the war on terror—an utterly original and blackly comic debut

In the early years of the Iraq War, a severely burned boy appears on a remote rock formation in the Akkad Valley. A shadowy, powerful group within the U.S. government speculates: Who is he? Where did he come from? And, crucially, what does he know? In pursuit of that information, an interrogator is summoned from his prison cell, and a hideous and forgotten apparatus of torture, which extracts “perfect confessions,” is retrieved from the vaults. Over the course of four days, a cavalcade of voices rises up from the Akkad boy, each one striving to tell his or her own story. Some of these voices are familiar: Osama bin Laden, L. Paul Bremer, Condoleezza Rice, Mark Zuckerberg. Others are less so. But each one has a role in the world shaped by the war on terror. Each wants to tell us: This is the world as it exists in our innermost selves. This is what has been and what might be. This is The Infernal.

PRAISE

“Serious, future-altering genius.” —Dennis Cooper, author of The Marbled Swarm and The Sluts

“Mark Doten is a tremendous and protean talent. The Infernal—monstrous and resplendent—is an essential novel of the war on terror, which Doten renders plainly as the cacophonous self-made Hell that it plainly is. His demonic vision reveals crucial and damning truths.” —Justin Taylor, author of The Gospel of Anarchy

“From the first page to the last, [The Infernal] explodes like a roll of Black Cats in a dazzling, deafening, brilliant display of linguistic and intellectual energy. It will thrill you, confound you, and ultimately force you to submit to it...

Mark Doten’s writing has appeared in Conjunctions, Guernica, The Believer, and New York magazine. He has an MFA from Columbia University and is the recipient of fellowships from Columbia and the MacDowell Colony. He is currently a senior editor at Soho Press and lives in Brooklyn.
“Outstanding . . . [These] stories triumph . . . They are funny, sad, troubling, illuminating, often in equal measure.” — Financial Times

Kevin Barry’s deliciously wicked collection Dark Lies the Island delivers on the many reckless promises made by his virtuosic and prizewinning debut novel, City of Bohane. It firmly establishes him as both a world-class word slinger and a masterful storyteller.

“[Kevin Barry] isn’t sparing with his powers. Even his throwaway lines are keepers.”—The New York Times

“He does humor. He does high drama. He even dabbles in horror (of a kind). And he can handle just about any other narrative form you might think of.”—Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

“Barry’s best short stories are like a spade to the face . . . . [He] earns comparison with the great and shamefully neglected V. S. Pritchett, whose short stories also employed pronounced comic means for serious, compassionate ends.”—The Guardian

PRAISE

“By the end of a story, Barry has me in full sympathy with someone I might edge away from on the train. His regard for characters big and small and capacity to be funny without playing them for cheap laughs recalls George Saunders.”—The New York Times Book Review

“Stealthy and shimmering . . . Darkness abounds in these thirteen stories, though it takes its different forms: vileness, foreboding, ignorance, isolation, self-delusion, despair.”—The Boston Globe

“Barry is a prose wizard whose stories pulse on the page with all the humor and viciousness of life itself.”—Sam Lipsyte, The Millions

“[Kevin Barry’s] prose is almost literally indescrib...
Letter to a Future Lover
Marginalia, Errata, Secrets, Inscriptions, and Other Ephemera Found in Libraries
Ander Monson

An exuberant, expansive cataloging of the intimate physical relationship between a reader and a book

Readers of physical books leave traces: marginalia, slips of paper, fingerprints, highlighting, inscriptions. All books have histories, and libraries are not just collections of books and databases, but a medium of long-distance communication with other writers and readers.

Letter to a Future Lover collects several dozen brief pieces written in response to library ephemera—with “library” defined broadly, ranging from university institutions to friends’ shelves, from a seed library to a KGB prison library—and addressed to readers past, present, and future.

Through these witty, idiosyncratic essays, Ander Monson reflects on the human need to catalog, preserve, and annotate; the private and public pleasures of reading; the nature of libraries; and how the self can be formed through reading and writing.

PRAISE
Like you, I’ve read so many ‘books about the book’ by now: the thick tome of bibiloscholarship, the collections of (think Horatio Alger’s Ragged Dick) weird titles, the books that saved somebody’s childhood, plus the bucket list books, and the histories of papermaking and font design . . . And now, as if these books have met to form a private club we can join, here’s Ander Monson's tribute to written marginalia, published lists of errata, book defacings, bindings, maps, tickertape and sacred texts, a braille Playboy, those dear old library check-out slips, all of it in that wonderful allusive, poetic, factoidal Monsonian vision and voice that...

Ander Monson is the author of Vanishing Point, a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, and Neck Deep and Other Predicaments. He edits DIAGRAM and the New Michigan Press. He lives in Tucson and teaches at the University of Arizona.
All Who Go Do Not Return

A Memoir

Shulem Deen

A moving and revealing exploration of ultra-Orthodox Judaism and one man's loss of faith

Shulem Deen was raised to believe that questions are dangerous. As a member of the Skverers, one of the most insular Hasidic sects in the US, he knows little about the outside world—only that it is to be shunned. His marriage at eighteen is arranged and several children soon follow. Deen’s first transgression—turning on the radio—is small, but his curiosity leads him to the library, and later the Internet. Soon he begins a feverish inquiry into the tenets of his religious beliefs, until, several years later, his faith unravels entirely. Now a heretic, he fears being discovered and ostracized from the only world he knows. His relationship with his family at stake, he is forced into a life of deception, and begins a long struggle to hold on to those he loves most: his five children. In All Who Go Do Not Return, Deen bravely traces his harrowing loss of faith, while offering an illuminating look at a highly secretive world.

Shulem Deen is a former Skverer Hasid, and the founding editor of Unpious. His work has appeared in the The Jewish Daily Forward, Tablet, and Salon. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.
Tesla: A Portrait with Masks

A Novel

Vladimir Pistalo; Translated from the Serbian by Bogdan Rakic and John Jeffries

An electric novel of the extraordinary life of one of the twentieth century's most prodigious and colorful inventors

Nikola Tesla was a man forever misunderstood. From his boyhood in what is present-day Croatia, where his father, a Serbian Orthodox priest, dismissed his talents, to his tumultuous years in New York City, where his heated rivalry with Thomas Edison yielded triumphs and failures, Tesla was both demonized and lionized. Tesla captures the whirlwind years of the dawn of the electrical age, when his flair for showmanship kept him in the public eye. For every successful invention—the alternating current electrical system and wireless communication among them—there were hundreds of others. But what of the man behind the image? Vladimir Pistalo reveals the inner life of a man haunted by the loss of his older brother, a man who struggled with flashes of madness and brilliance whose mistrust of institutional support led him to financial ruin. Tesla: A Portrait with Masks is an impassioned account of a visionary whose influence is still felt today.

PRAISE

“Beautifully written, immensely entertaining, and astonishingly original in the way it tells the story of a man who they used to say ‘invented the twentieth century,’ but whose life is still an enigma, Tesla: A Portrait with Masks has the richness, the high jinks and the originality of such modern classics as Günter Grass’s The Tin Drum and Gabriel García Márquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude.” —Charles Simic

Vladimir Pistalo has published eleven books of fiction. Tesla, his first book to be translated into English, won the 2008 NIN Literary Award, the most prestigious award in Serbia, and has appeared in ten languages. He teaches at Becker College in Massachusetts.
The winner of the 2014 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry, now in paperback

First I had three apocalyptic visions, each more terrible than the last. The graves open, and the sea rises to kill us all.

Then the doorbell rang, and I went downstairs and signed for two packages—

—from "This Morning"

In an array of poetic forms from the rhyming lyric to the philosophical meditation to the prose essay, 3 Sections confronts perplexing divisions of contemporary life—a wayward history, an indeterminate future, and a perpetual longing to out-think time. This is a vital book by one of America's best poets.

PRAISE

"Vijay Seshadri is a skeptic and a seeker, and the speaker, the philosophical hero, of these beautifully understated, intellectually ambitious poems is also onewry, self-scrutinizing, keenly observant, abashed, bemused, conflicted, prone to melancholy questions, troubled by his own thoughts, susceptible to daydreaming, determined to figure things out, to sum them up, to find words for them. 3 Sections is a rare adventure in consciousness." —Edward Hirsch

Vijay Seshadri is the author of three poetry collections, Wild Kingdom, The Long Meadow, winner of the James Laughlin Award, and 3 Sections, winner of the Pulitzer Prize. He teaches at Sarah Lawrence College and lives in Brooklyn, New York.
The eagerly awaited new poetry collection by Mary Jo Bang, winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award

We were told that the cloud cover was a blanket about to settle into the shape of the present which, if we wanted to imagine it as a person, would undoubtedly look startled—as after a verbal berating or in advance of a light pistol whipping. The camera came and went, came and went, like a masked man trying to light a too-damp fuse. The crew was acting like a litter of mimics trying to make a killing. Anything to fill the vacuum of time.

—from “The Doomsday Clock”

The Last Two Seconds is an astonishing confrontation with time—our experience of it as measured out by our perceptions, our lives, and our machines. In these poems, full of vivid imagery and imaginative logic, Mary Jo Bang captures the difficulties inherent in being human in the twenty-first century, when we set our watches by nuclear disasters, species collapse, pollution, mounting inequalities, warring nations, and our own mortality. This is brilliant and profound work by an essential poet of our time.

PRAISE

Praise for Mary Jo Bang

“Bang can be an ingenious phrase maker, startling English out of its idiomatic slumber with subtle, deliberate awkwardness.” —The New York Times Book Review

“[Bang’s work] bridges a gap between an experimental tradition in American poetry and an older high lyric tradition.” —Publishers Weekly (starred review)

Mary Jo Bang is the author of six previous books of poetry, including Elegy, winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award. She has also published a celebrated translation of Dante’s Inferno. She teaches at Washington University in St. Louis.
Station Zed

Poems

Tom Sleigh

“What delights me most is seeing a poet of [Sleigh’s] accomplishments and his large and well-earned reputation . . . pushing into greatness.” —Philip Levine, Ploughshares

The AK wants to tell a different truth—a truth ungarbled that is so obvious no one could possibly mistake its meaning.

If you look down the cyclops-eye of the barrel what you’ll see is a boy with trousers rolled above his ankles.

You’ll see a mouth of bone moving in syllables that have the rapid-fire clarity of a weapon that can fire 600 rounds a minute.

—from “Oracle”

Station Zed is the terminal outpost beyond which is the unknown. It is also the poet Tom Sleigh’s finest work. In this latest collection, Sleigh brings to these poems his experiences as a journalist on tours of Lebanon, Somalia, Iraq, and Libya. But these are also dispatches from places of grief, history, and poetic traditions as varied as Scottish ballads and the journeys of Bashō.

PRAISE

Praise for Tom Sleigh

“Tom Sleigh’s poetry is hard-earned and well founded. I greatly admire the way it refuses to cut emotional corners and yet achieves a sense of lyric absolution.” —Seamus Heaney

“Sleigh has been publishing formidable poetry for almost thirty years, and among American poets of his generation there is no one better.” —David Wojahn, Tikkun

“An indispensable contemporary American poet.” —The Boston Globe

Tom Sleigh’s books of poetry include Army Cats, winner of the American Academy of Arts and Letters’ Updike Award, and Space Walk, winner of the Kingsley Tufts Award. He is also the author of Interview with a Ghost. He teaches at Hunter College in New York.
The Overhaul

Poems

Kathleen Jamie

Winner of the 2012 Costa Poetry Award, the latest collection by Kathleen Jamie, “the leading Scottish poet of her generation” (The Sunday Times)

See when it all unravels—the entire project reduced to threads of moss fleeing a nor'wester; d'you ever imagine chasing just one strand, letting it lead you to an unsung cleft in a rock, a place you could take to, dig yourself in—but what are the chances of that? Of the birds, few remain all winter; half a dozen waders mediate between sea and shore, that space confirmed —don’t laugh—by your own work. —from “Materials”

The Overhaul continues Kathleen Jamie’s lyric inquiry into the aspects of the world our rushing lives elide, and even threaten. Whether she is addressing birds or rivers, or the need to accept loss, or, sometimes, the desire to escape our own lives, her poetry is earthy and rigorous, her language at once elemental and tender. The Overhaul is a midlife book of repair, restitution, and ultimately hope—of the wisest and most worldly kind.

PRAISE

Praise for Waterlight: Selected Poems

“Read Waterlight: Selected Poems . . . Kathleen Jamie describes ordinary things—a puddle, a brooch, some frogs—with the rhythm of plain speech made starkly dramatic.” —Entertainment Weekly

“American readers can now meet a sensibility who attends to the living world, and the world as made in language with wily intelligence.” —Boston Review

Kathleen Jamie’s poetry collections have received the Costa Poetry Award, the Forward Prize for Poetry, and the Scottish Book of the Year Award. She is also the author of two books of nonfiction, Findings and Sightlines. She lives in Fife, Scotland.
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