Heavens on Earth

The Scientific Search for the Afterlife, Immortality, and Utopia

Michael Shermer

In his most ambitious work yet, Shermer sets out to discover what drives humans’ belief in life after death, focusing on recent scientific attempts to achieve immortality along with utopian attempts to create heaven on earth. For millennia, religions have concocted numerous manifestations of heaven and the afterlife, and though no one has ever returned from such a place to report what it is really like—or that it even exists—today science and technology are being used to try to make it happen in our lifetime. From radical life extension to cryonic suspension to mind uploading, Shermer considers how realistic these attempts are from a proper skeptical perspective.

Heavens on Earth concludes with an uplifting paean to purpose and progress and how we can live well in the here-and-now, whether or not there is a hereafter.

Michael Shermer is the Publisher of Skeptic magazine, a monthly columnist for Scientific American, and a Presidential Fellow at Chapman University. He is the author of The Moral Arc, The Believing Brain, and many other bestselling titles.
When to Jump

If the Job You Have Isn't the Life You Want

Mike Lewis

How do you start doing what you really, really want? You jump. With inspiration and instruction from more than forty true stories of people who have already jumped and have never looked back.

An inspirational book that lays out the “Jump Curve”—those fundamental four steps to finally, wholeheartedly, pursuing your dreams—using a wide variety of experiences from people who have jumped. With a foreword from Sheryl Sandberg and including the wisdom of Michael Lewis and Brandon Stanton, among many others.

When Mike Lewis was twenty-four and working in a prestigious corporate job, he anxiously wanted to leave and pursue his dream of becoming a professional squash player. But he had questions: When is the right time to make the move from work that is comfortable to a career of doing what we truly want? How have people planned to make this jump? What did they feel around making the jump and how did they deal with those emotions?

He sought out guidance from other people who had “jumped,” and the answers he got—from a banker who became a brewer, a journalist who pursued his dream of becoming a paramedic, a garbage collector who became a furniture designer, et cetera—were so clear-eyed and inspiring that Mike wanted to share what he had heard and learned with anyone else who might be helped by these stories. First, though, he became a professional squash player.

The right book at the right time, When to Jump is a culmination of true, heartening, and instructive stories with a straightforward four-step guide and section takeaways that will reassure: You can make the jump. Just let yourself.
The Seabird's Cry

The Lives and Loves of the Planet's Great Ocean Voyagers

Adam Nicolson

Life itself could never have been sustainable without seabirds. As Adam Nicolson writes: "They are bringers of fertility, the deliverers of life from ocean to land."

A global tragedy is unfolding. Even as we are coming to understand them, the number of seabirds on our planet is in freefall, dropping by nearly 70% in the last sixty years, a billion fewer now than there were in 1950. Of the ten birds in this book, seven are in decline, at least in part of their range. Extinction stalks the ocean and there is a danger that the grand cry of the seabird colony, rolling around the bays and headlands of high latitudes, will this century become little but a memory.

Seabirds have always entranced the human imagination and NYT best-selling author Adam Nicolson has been in love with them all his life: for their mastery of wind and ocean, their aerial beauty and the unmatched wildness of the coasts and islands where every summer they return to breed. The seabird’s cry comes from an elemental layer in the story of the world.

Over the last couple of decades, modern science has begun to understand their epic voyages, their astonishing abilities to navigate for tens of thousands of miles on featureless seas, their ability to smell their way towards fish and home. Only the poets in the past would have thought of seabirds as creatures riding the ripples and currents of the entire planet, but that is what the scientists are seeing now today.

PRAISE

Praise for Adam Nicolson:

“Highly accessible…Nicolson's amateurism (in the best, etymological, sense of the word: from the Latin amare, "to love") and globe-trotting passion for his subject is contagious…bringing the heroic age into our own.” —New York Times Book Review

“Complex, personal and profound…a brash and brave piece of writing…[Nicolson's] book, filled with the swords and spears that inflict the carnage of the ‘Iliad,’ can change the way we see ours.” —Wall Street Journal

“Stirring… Nicolson eloquently sums up what we still look for in Homer: ‘wisdom, his fearless encounter with the dreadful, his love of love and hatred of death, the ...
Girl Unknown

Karen Perry

How quickly could the family we have created for ourselves unravel—and how far will we go to protect it?

David and Caroline Connolly are swimming successfully through their marriage’s middle years—raising two children; overseeing care for David’s ailing mother; leaning into their careers, both at David’s university teaching job, where he’s up for an important promotion, and at the ad agency where Caroline has recently returned to work after years away while the children were little. The recent stresses of home renovation and of a brief romantic betrayal (Caroline’s) are behind them. The Connollys know and care for each other deeply.

Then one early fall afternoon, a student of sublime, waiflike beauty appears in David’s university office and says, “I think you might be my father.” And the fact of a youthful passion that David had tried to forget comes rushing back. In the person of this intriguing young woman, the Connollys may have a chance to expand who they are and how much they can love, or they may be making themselves vulnerable to menace. They face either an opportunity or a threat—but which is which? What happens when their hard-won family happiness meets a hard-luck beautiful girl?

PRAISE

Praise for Girl Unknown

“Karen Perry writes intense psychological thrillers that explore emotional danger with relentless, surgical accuracy, and this may be their best yet.”—Tana French, bestselling author of The Trespasser

“This story of psychological attrition builds to an incredibly tense finale—before delivering an amazing final twist. Riveting stuff.”—Sunday Mirror

“One of the most richly satisfying psychological thrillers of 2016, a book that hooks the reader from the first page.”—Irish Independent

“A taut, tense psycho-gripper.”—Sunday Sport

Karen Perry is the pen name of Dublin-based authors Paul Perry and Karen Gillece. Paul Perry is the author of a number of critically acclaimed books. A recipient of the Hennessy Award for New Irish Writing, he teaches creative writing at University College, Dublin. Karen Gillece is the author of four critically acclaimed novels. In 2009 she won the European Union Prize for Literature (Ireland).
Operation Chaos

The Vietnam Deserters Who Fought the CIA, the Brainwashers, and Themselves

Matthew Sweet

An untold Cold War story: how the CIA tried to infiltrate a radical group of U.S. military deserters, a tale that leads from a bizarre political cult to the heart of the Washington establishment

Stockholm, 1968. A thousand American deserters and draft-resisters are arriving to escape the war in Vietnam. They’re young, they’re radical, and they want to start a revolution. Some of them even want to take the fight to America. The Swedes treat them like pop stars—but the CIA is determined to stop all that.

It’s a job for the deep-cover men of Operation Chaos and their allies—agents who know how to infiltrate organizations and destroy them from inside. Within months, the GIs have turned their fire on one another. Then the interrogations begin—to discover who among them has been brainwashed, Manchurian Candidate-style, to assassinate their leaders.

When Matthew Sweet began investigating this story, he thought the madness was over. He was wrong. Instead, he became the confidant of an eccentric and traumatized group of survivors—each with his own theory about the traitors in their midst.

All Sweet has to do is find out the truth. And stay sane. Which may be difficult when one of his interviewees accuses him of being a CIA agent and another suspects that he’s part of a secret plot by the British royal family to start World War III. By that time, he’s deep in the labyrinth of truths and half-truths, wondering where reality ends and delusion begins.

Matthew Sweet is author of Inventing the Victorians, Shepperton Babylon, and The West End Front. He is a columnist for Art Quarterly and Newsweek International, and presents the BBC radio programs Free Thinking, Sound of Cinema, and The Philosopher’s Arms. He was series consultant on the Showtime drama Penny Dreadful and played a moth from the planet Vortis in the BBC2 drama An Adventure in Space and Time. He lives in London.
Left Bank

Art, Passion, and the Rebirth of Paris, 1940-50

Agnes Poirier

A lively, authoritative group portrait of some of the 20th century’s most revered creative minds as they lived, loved, fought, and flourished in Paris during and after World War II

In this fascinating tour of a celebrated city during one of its most trying, significant, and ultimately triumphant chapters, Agnes Poirier takes her readers through the lives of the poets, writers, artists, and politicians who converged in Paris between 1940 and 1950. She gives us the human stories behind some of the most celebrated works of the 20th century, from Richard Wright’s Native Son to Albert Camus’s The Stranger, along with the origin stories of now legendary movements, from Surrealism and Existentialism to the Theatre of the Absurd. We follow James Joyce and Saul Bellow as young men, peek inside Picasso’s studio, and trail the many twists in Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir’s epic, ever evolving love story. We watch the births and deaths of newspapers and literary journals, and peer through keyholes to see the first kisses and last nights of many ill-gotten bedfellows. At every turn, Poirier deftly hones in on the colorful information we want most, without undermining the crucial significance of the era.

Poirier shows us the flawed and ultimately lovable Parisians who fell in love, bickered, separated, and reunited all while changing the political and intellectual landscape—and history—of one of the world’s greatest cities. A balance of clear-eyed historical perspective and irresistible anecdotal charm, Left Bank delivers a Paris readers will long to inhabit it in all its delicious drama and life.
The Infernal Library

On Dictators, the Books They Wrote, and Other Catastrophes of Literacy

Daniel Kalder

A compelling new history of “dictator literature” in the twentieth century, featuring the prose and poetry of Lenin, Hitler, Mao, and more, by the author of the acclaimed Lost Cosmonaut.

Since the days of the Roman Empire dictators have written books. But in the twentieth century despots enjoyed unprecedented print-runs to (literally) captive audiences. The titans of the genre—Stalin, Mussolini, and Khomeini among them—produced theoretical works, spiritual manifestos, poetry, memoirs, and even the occasional romance novel and established a literary tradition of soul-crushing tedium that continues to this day.

Daniel Kalder, an “excellent writer, with a vivid turn of phrase” (Daily Telegraph), asks: What do these books reveal about the dictatorial soul? How did the production of literature become central to the running of regimes? And how can books and literacy, most often viewed as inherently positive, cause immense and lasting harm?

Marshalled upon the beleaguered shelves of The Infernal Library are the books and commissioned works of the twentieth century’s most notorious figures. Their words led to the deaths of millions. Their conviction in the significance of their own thoughts brokered no argument. And it is perhaps no surprise then, as Kalder argues, that many dictators began their careers as writers.

PRAISE

“Revelatory.”
—The Times Literary Supplement (on Lost Cosmonaut)

“A considerable achievement.”
—The Guardian (on Lost Cosmonaut)

“Kalder is not only an excellent writer, with a vivid turn of phrase, but a sympathetic one: his concern is to understand his subjects rather than exploit them . . . . His insight and skillful writing keeps you reading.
—Daily Telegraph (on Strange Telescopes)
Something Wonderful
Rodgers and Hammerstein's Broadway Revolution

Todd S. Purdum

A revelatory portrait of the creative partnership that transformed musical theater and provided the soundtrack to the American Century

They stand at the apex of the great age of songwriting, the creators of the classic Broadway musicals *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, and *The Sound of Music*, whose songs have never lost their popularity or emotional power. Even before they joined forces, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II had written dozens of Broadway shows, but together they pioneered a new art form: the serious musical play. Their songs and dance numbers served to advance the drama and reveal character, a sharp break from the past and the template on which all future musicals would be built.

Though different in personality and often emotionally distant from each other, Rodgers and Hammerstein presented an unbroken front to the world and forged much more than a songwriting team; their partnership was also one of the most profitable and powerful entertainment businesses of their era. They were cultural powerhouses whose work came to define postwar America on stage, screen, television, and radio. But they also had their failures and flops, and more than once they feared they had lost their touch.

Todd S. Purdum’s portrait of these two men, their creative process, and their groundbreaking innovations will captivate lovers of musical theater, lovers of the classic American songbook, and lovers in general. He shows that what Rodgers and Hammerstein wrought was truly something wonderful.

PRAISE

Praise for *An Idea Whose Time Has Come*:

"Excellent...An astute, well-paced, and highly readable play-by-play of the bill's journey to become a law."—The Atlantic

"Worthy, timely, and intelligent."—The New Yorker

"Authoritative...A first-rate narrative."—The Wall Street Journal
Flash

The Making of Weegee the Famous

Christopher Bonanos

The first definitive biography of Weegee the Famous—photographer, psychic, fiend—from the author of Instant: The Story of Polaroid

Arthur Fellig’s ability to arrive at a crime scene mere moments after law enforcement was so uncanny that he became known as “Weegee,” after the Ouija board. Weegee documented better than any other photographer the crime, grit, and desperation of mid-century New York City. In Flash, we get a portrait not simply of the man (both deeply talented and flawed, whose masterful eye for capturing violence and sex intimated his own predilections) but also of the fascinating time and place that he occupied.

From self-taught immigrant kid to celebrity photographer to his late, hedonistic days—moving between the dark, dangerous streets of New York City, the glitzy and emptied out celebrity culture of Los Angeles, and the East Coast during the morally liberated days of the Sixties—Weegee lived a life just as worthy of documentation as the scenes he captured. Now, with Flash, we have the first definitive biography of the man known now as an innovator and a pioneer, an artist whose photographs still stand as some of the most masterful crime photos ever taken.

Christopher Bonanos is a senior editor at New York Magazine, where he covers arts and culture. He is the author previously of Instant: The Story of Polaroid. He lives in New York City.
William Howard Taft

The American Presidents Series: The 27th President, 1909-1913

Jeffrey Rosen

The only man to serve as president and chief justice, who approached every decision in constitutional terms, defending the Founders’ vision against new populist threats to American democracy

William Howard Taft never wanted to be president and yearned instead to serve as chief justice of the United States. But despite his ambivalence about politics, the former federal judge found success in the executive branch as governor of the Philippines and secretary of war, and he won a resounding victory in the presidential election of 1908 as Theodore Roosevelt’s handpicked successor.

In this provocative assessment, Jeffrey Rosen reveals Taft’s crucial role in shaping how America balances populism against the rule of law. Taft approached each decision as president by asking whether it comported with the Constitution, seeking to put Roosevelt’s activist executive orders on firm legal grounds. But unlike Roosevelt, who thought the president could do anything the Constitution didn’t forbid, Taft insisted he could do only what the Constitution explicitly allowed. This led to a dramatic breach with Roosevelt in the historic election of 1912, which Taft viewed as a crusade to defend the Constitution against the demagogic populism of Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson.

Nine years later, Taft achieved his lifelong dream when President Warren Harding appointed him chief justice, and during his years on the Court he promoted consensus among the justices and transformed the judiciary into a modern, fully equal branch. Though he had chafed in the White House as a judicial president, he thrived as a presidential chief justice.
More Than True
The Wisdom of Fairy Tales

Robert Bly

National Book Award-winning poet and author of the internationally best-selling *Iron John*, Robert Bly revisits a selection of fairy tales and examines how these enduring narratives capture the es...

Few forms of storytelling have greater power to captivate the human mind than fairy tales, but where do these tales originate from, and what do they mean? Celebrated poet and bestselling author Robert Bly has been asking these questions throughout his career. Here Bly looks at six tales that have stood the test of time and have captivated the poet for decades, from “The Six Swans” to “The Frog Prince.” Drawing on his own creative genius, and the work of a range of thinkers from Kierkegaard and Yeats to Freud and Jung, Bly turns these stories over in his mind to bring new meaning and illumination to these timeless tales.

Along with illustrations of each story, the book features some of Bly's unpublished poetry, which peppers his lyric prose and offers a look inside the mind of an American master of letters in the twilight of his singular career.

The Parking Lot Attendant

A Novel

Nafkote Tamirat

A haunting story of fatherhood, national identity, and what it means to be an immigrant in America today, *The Parking Lot Attendant* explores how who we love, the choices we make, and the places we’re from combine to make us who we are.

The story begins on an undisclosed island where the unnamed narrator and her father are the two newest and least liked members of a commune that has taken up residence there. Though the commune was built on utopian principles, it quickly becomes clear that life here is not as harmonious as the founders intended. After immersing us in life on the island, our young heroine takes us back to Boston to recount the events that brought her here. Though she and her father belong to a wide Ethiopian network in the city, they mostly keep to themselves, which is how her father prefers it.

This detached existence only makes Ayale’s arrival on the scene more intoxicating. The unofficial king of Boston’s Ethiopian community, Ayale is a born hustler—when he turns his attention to the narrator, she feels seen for the first time. Ostensibly a parking lot attendant, Ayale soon proves to have other projects in the works, which the narrator becomes more and more entangled in to her father’s growing dismay. By the time the scope of Ayale’s schemes—and their repercussions—become apparent, our narrator has unwittingly become complicit in something much bigger and darker than she ever imagined.

*Nafkote Tamirat* is a native of Boston. She holds an MFA from Columbia University. Her short stories have appeared in *Birkensnake, The Anemone Sidecar*, and *Best Paris Stories*. This is her first novel.
The Comedown

Rebekah Frumkin

A dazzling epic that follows two very different families in Cleveland across generations, beginning with their patriarchs, who become irrevocably intertwined one fateful night

A blistering dark comedy, The Comedown is a romp across America, from the Kent State shootings to protest marches in Chicago to the Florida Everglades, that explores delineating lines of race, class, religion, and time.

Scrappy, street smart drug dealer Reggie Marshall has never liked the simpering addict Leland Bloom-Mittwoch, which doesn’t stop Leland from looking up to Reggie with puppy-esque devotion. But when a drug deal goes dramatically, tragically wrong and a suitcase (which may or may not contain a quarter of a million dollars) disappears, the two men and their families become hopelessly entangled. It’s a mistake that sets in motion a series of events that are odd, captivating, suspenseful, and ultimately inevitable.

Both incendiary and earnest, The Comedown steadfastly catalogs the tangled messes the characters make of their lives, never losing sight of the beauty and power of each family member’s capacity for love, be it for money, drugs, or each other.

Rebekah Frumkin is twenty-six years old. Her fiction and essays have appeared in Granta, McSweeney’s, and Best American Nonrequired Reading, among other places. She holds an MFA from the Iowa Writers’ Workshop and was the 2014 recipient of the Richard E. Guthrie Memorial Fellowship. She is currently getting her MSJ from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.
The Financial Diet
A Total Beginner's Guide to Getting Good with Money
Chelsea Fagan and Lauren ver Hage

From The Financial Diet, the website inspiring over a million women each month: a beautiful, wry, practical guide to help you save, date, decorate and dream your way to your best financial life.

Chelsea Fagan is a writer, and the founder of The Financial Diet blog. She writes, cooks, panics over minor things, and is always trying to get better with money. Lauren Ver Hage is a designer, and Chelsea’s partner at The Financial Diet. She designs, photographs, bakes, and has a flawlessly cozy Instagram aesthetic.
Hottest Heads of State

Volume One: The American Presidents

J. D. and Kate Dobson

Is there anything hotter than former U.S. presidents? Obviously, there is not. And yet, until now, there was no way to learn about these handsome and mysterious men that is funny, educational, and includes thoughtful analysis of which ones would make good boyfriends. Thankfully, Hottest Heads of State fills this void. Get to know each president intimately with an individual profile outlining his particular charms (or, in some cases, “charms”). Plus, inside you’ll find:

· GAMES including “Match the Mistress to her POTUS”
· QUIZZES like “Which President has a Secret Crush on You?” and “Can You Cover Up Watergate?”
· that POSTER of Rutherford B. Hayes you’ve always secretly wanted!

J. D. and Kate Dobson’s wickedly smart and refreshingly bipartisan debut is a spot-on parody of a teen magazine featuring such unlikely heartthrobs as Richard Nixon and William H. Taft. In the end, you’ll learn centuries’ worth of cocktail party-worthy trivia, and you’ll be slightly more prepared to take the AP U.S. History exam. You’ll also start tingling whenever you hear the name Herbert Hoover.

PRAISE

“[P]olitically incorrect, but u prob won’t mind b/c other parts are so funny.” — Kirkus Reviews

“Fogel’s novel offers plenty of glimpses—both humorous and endearing—into the life of a single woman with a well-meaning, if clueless, family.” — Publishers Weekly

“Sharp, funny and painful. Just like your actual family.” — Simon Rich

Kate Dobson is a former assistant comics editor for the Washington Post and head writer for Brown University’s humor magazine. When she’s not writing, she enjoys serving food to her small children and, later, vacuuming that same food up off the floor.

J.D. Dobson is a former U.S. Senate staffer, federal lobbyist, and crisis communications consultant. Now he makes candles that smell like politicians and hopes for the best.
The Fear Within

A Thriller

J. S. Law

After events on board the submarine HMS *Tenacity*, Lieutenant “Dan” Lewis of the Royal Navy’s Kill Team was warned not to pursue those responsible. She should walk away, stop investigating, but her thirst for justice means she can’t let it go.

But even as Dan defies the order, continuing to track a sailor on the run, her investigative skills are needed on a new case. A young naval Wren has gone missing from the warship HMS *Defiance*. Last seen going on board, but never seen leaving, there is no trace of the girl and Dan must work her way through a web of witness accounts to uncover what might motivate her to run, or what might motivate a predator to take her.

Following in the wake of the missing girl, Dan soon closes in on her quarry, but is forced to question whether she is the one who was being hunted all along.

**PRAISE**

Praise for *Tenacity*

“J. S. Law is a powerful new voice, and his heroine . . . is fearless and doesn’t quit in the face of all odds. . . . Addictively readable.” —#1 *New York Times* bestselling author Patricia Cornwell

“Law ups the tension significantly as he brilliantly re-creates the claustrophobic feel of living on a submarine. . . . This fast-paced nail-biter [stars] a flawed but dynamic character. A very promising series.” —*Booklist*

“If you . . . fell in love with Lisbeth Salander, you will adore *Tenacity’s* protagonist, Danielle ‘Dan’ Lewis. . . *Tenacity* consorts with the best of the best crime novels to date.” —*The Review Broads*

J. S. Law served in the Royal Navy Submarine Service, rising through the ranks to become a senior nuclear engineer. *Tenacity* is his first novel. He lives in Portsmouth, England.
The Merry Spinster

Tales of Everyday Horror

Mallory Ortberg

From New York Times bestselling author of Texts from Jane Eyre, Mallory Ortberg, comes a collection of darkly mischievous stories based on classic fairy tales.

Adapted from her beloved "Children's Stories Made Horrific" series, The Merry Spinster takes up the trademark wit that endeared Ortberg to readers of both The Toast and her best-selling debut Texts From Jane Eyre. The feature became among the most popular on the site, with each entry bringing in tens of thousands of views, as the stories proved a perfect vehicle for Ortberg’s eye for deconstruction and destabilization. Sinister and inviting, familiar and alien all at the same time, THE MERRY SPINSTER updates traditional children's stories and fairy tales with elements of psychological horror, emotional clarity, and a keen sense of feminist mischief. Readers of The Toast will instantly recognize Ortberg's boisterous good humor and uber-nerd swagger: those new to Ortberg’s oeuvre will delight in her unique spin on fiction, where something a bit unsettling is always at work just beneath the surface.

Unfalteringly faithful to its beloved source material, THE MERRY SPINSTER also illuminates the unsuspected, and frequently, alarming emotional complexities at play in the stories we tell ourselves, and each other, as we tuck ourselves in for the night.

Bed time will never be the same.

Mallory Ortberg is Slate's "Dear Prudence." She has written for The New Yorker, New York Magazine, O Magazine, and The Atlantic. She is the co-creator of The Toast, a general-interest website geared toward women.
Live Work Work Work Die
A Journey into the Savage Heart of Silicon Valley

Corey Pein

A scathing exploration into the heart of Silicon Valley, laying bare the greed, hubris, and retrograde politics of an industry that aspires to radically transform society for its own benefit.

Corey Pein is a regular contributor to The Baffler, where he writes a column and hosts the podcast "News from Nowhere." A longtime investigative reporter and former staff writer for the Willamette Week, he has also written for Slate, Salon, Foreign Policy, The American Prospect, and the Columbia Journalism Review, among other publications. He lives in Portland, Oregon.
The Poisoned City
Flint's Water and the American Urban Tragedy

Anna Clark

The first full account of the Flint, Michigan, water scandal, an American tragedy, with new details, from an award-winning Michigan journalist who has covered the story from its beginnings

PRAISE

Praise for A Detroit Anthology:

“In the case of Detroit, there is one writer I turn to for understanding again and again—a woman who is so prolific, your heart beats with her words as you read and you miss Detroit as if the city is a long-lost lover.” —Longreads

“There is no cheap nostalgia or breathless boosterism. ... the book is a thrilling success. It gives voice to people who now live or once lived in this fascinating, tortured place, the survivors, good people who know what pain is, people who understand that the city exerts an undying pull on them.” —The Millions
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