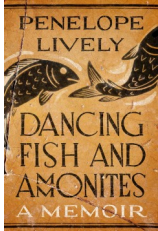


For the Love of Reading

Dancing Fish and Amonites



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Penelope Lively is one of my favorite British novelists. She has a talent for capturing the world in detail and a deep understanding of the social world and the dynamics of families. In this nonfiction collection, she looks back upon her life including her childhood as an expat in Egypt, her staid years at a British boarding school, and her coming of age in the wild London sixties. She also writes about her reading and writing life and the complicated state of old age. Fitzgerald explores how different the world of her youth was from today. When she was a child, everyone dropped everything for formal afternoon tea, and the girl who took the last sandwich or bun earned a wish for either a handsome husband or 10,000 a year. Everyone, Lively said, chose the handsome husband. Money be scorned!

Lively also tells of being part of the post-suffragist, pre-feminist generation. In those days, no one wondered why ten men attended university to every woman. Although Lively enjoyed those odds, she wonders why she never questioned whether men were actually smarter than women or had more of a right to be there. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on June 19, 2014

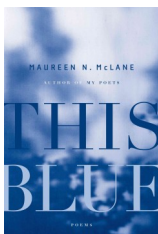
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Another Day in This Here Cosmos



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If you're looking for some interesting new poetry, go no further than Maureen McLane's new book. Even the titles are inviting: "Another Day in this Here Cosmos," "OK Fern," "Tell Us What Happened in the 14th Century," and "Morning with Adirondack Chair." McLane writes often about travel, nature, love, but most importantly it's all filtered through the lens of her mind. Her particular world-view is humorous and serious at the same time, and often feels edgy, new.

There's a sense that she does not take herself too seriously while at the same time, she writes in deep earnest.

One poem begins, "OK fern / I'm your apprentice / I can tell you // apart from your / darker sister." It ends with a sincere request for the wild plant to tell the narrator what to do with her life. (We've all been there speaking to trees or inanimate objects.)

In "Levanto," a beautiful travel poem, she says, "scant pines / stagger the Apennines / semaphoring? I am older / than the sea / in me." [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on June 17, 2014

[This Blue](#)

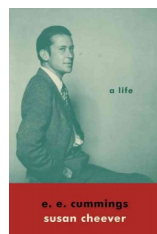
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A Poet's Life



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If you like the lyrical, visual poetry of e e cummings, this biography of his life will appeal to you. Even if you are not a poetry fan, but you enjoy reading about Greenwich Village and Paris during their artistic heydays, you will enjoy Susan Cheever's carefully researched biography.

e e cummings was born into privilege in Cambridge, Mass. His father a professor and minister at Harvard. He loved technology and was always buying the next new thing, whether that was an early automobile or a collapsible canoe with folding seats.

The latter purchase caused one of the most horrifying incidents of e e's teenage years. He and his sister took the canoe out on a lake at their summer place in New Hampshire. Their favorite dog, Rex, accompanied them, but unfortunately, turned suddenly to see something. The boat capsized. And as Elizabeth, e e's sister, clung to it, the canoe sank. Meanwhile Rex had swum almost the whole way back to shore, but then heard the children and hurried back. Exhausted by this time, the dog pushed Elizabeth down. Elizabeth came up sputtering for air and Rex shoved her down again. As the dog circled close for his third attempt to rescue himself, e e swam over and held Rex down until he stopped breathing. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on June 9, 2014

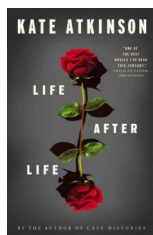
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Booksplus Discussion, Sunday June 1: Life After Life by Kate Atkinson



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In the first hundred pages of this novel, Ursula Todd, its heroine, lives and dies at least six times. Once she dies in childbirth, another time she falls off her own roof, having chased a sibling's favorite toy, and a third time she dies of influenza. This alternative history novel, although innovative in form, is rich in storytelling particularly about life at the beginning of the last century and during World Wars I and II. Ursula's intelligent and perceptive take upon the world makes captivating reading.

New York Times reviewer, Janet Maslin, called *Life after Life* "a big book that defies logic, chronology and even history in ways that underscore its author's fully untethered imagination." *Publishers Weekly* described the book this way, "through Ursula's many lives and the accretion of what T.S. Eliot called visions and revisions, she's found an inventive way to make both the war's toll and the pull of alternate history, of darkness avoided or diminished, fresh.

Atkinson is not afraid to take risks including using Adolph Hitler as a walk-on character in this book—in fact he's responsible for one of Ursula's many deaths.

Please join us for a book talk about this intriguing book this Sunday, June 1st at 2pm. All are welcome. We will meet in Room 2B. For more information about this and future [Booksplus](#) programs, please follow the link.

Posted by Dory L. on May 28, 2014

[Life after Life](#)

[Fiction](#)

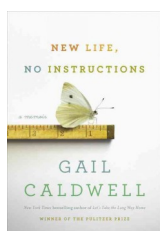
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New Life, No Instructions



[view in catalog](#)

Did you ever hobble around on crutches? Discover that your most basic possession, your body, does not work as it once did? This excellent memoir about rehabilitation, friendship, loss, and the

love of a great dog is a tearjerker at times, but always incredibly well-written. Wow, does Caldwell know how to spin a yarn.

Gail Caldwell suffered from polio as a small child. In this account she describes how her mother sprawled on the floor with her when she was young and did the tough leg exercises needed to strengthen Gail's leg.

All her life, Gail adapted to living with a bum leg. In her late fifties she decided to adopt a strong Samoyed pup. And as Tula grew, Gail soon found herself falling more and more often, and that she could no longer hike the three mile reservoir loop with her strong-willed pet.

Doctor after doctor told Gail that her limp, the weakness in her leg and her frequent falls were caused by her polio, but Gail finally sought another opinion. The new doctor asked to see her CT scans and X-rays but there were no recent ones. Upon doing them, he discovered that Gail's hip was shattered with the ball absolutely flat. She needed hip replacement immediately. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on May 25, 2014

[New Life](#)

[No Instructions: a Memoir](#)

[Animals](#)

[Friendship](#)

[Memoir](#)

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My Life in Middlemarch



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Here's what author Rebecca Mead said about a subject dear to our hearts, "Reading does not feel like an escape from life so much as it feels like an urgent, crucial dimension of life itself."

This book is both a biography and travelogue of what many consider the world's best novel? *Middlemarch*. It also is a personal memoir by Mead.

In the first chapter Mead recalls how many times she has read the novel and how much it has changed for her over time. What drew her as a child to it was how full of adult life the book was. She also loved the intelligence of the characters, particularly the heroine, Miss Dorothea Brooke. Along the way we learn about the novel itself, how it was first published as a serial in eight parts with the subtitle 'A Provincial Life.' It bore a male author's name--George Eliot but even Charles Dickens, a contemporary of Eliot's knew immediately that it was written by a woman. He said, 'I believe that no man ever before had the art of making himself, mentally, so like a woman, since the world began.' Dickens also loved Eliot's writing. He said of her first novel, ' *Adam Bede* has taken its place among the actual experiences and endurances of my life.' [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on May 16, 2014

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