

For the Love of Reading

Your Heart is a Muscle the Size of a Fist



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Do you remember what significant event happened on Nov. 30, 1999?

The World Trade Organization protests, which rocked Seattle that day, shocked the world. In many ways, they served as a precursor of what was to come: Wall Street protests, the Occupy Movement, anger against Wall Street, and massive climate change rallies.

This dramatic, fast-paced novel shows you how this WTO protest felt from the perspectives of protesters, the police and mayor, and one delegate from Sri Lanka whose country's future hung in the balance.

The protesters were mostly young, and trained in nonviolence. But alas, the cops were ill-prepared and vastly outnumbered and reacted with fear and brutality. The police included a woman from Guatemala who'd worked for the LA Police during the Rodney King fiasco, another who had been severely scarred by the Oklahoma bombing, and Seattle's Chief of Police himself, a man who preferred no conflict and whose careful planning was torn aside in the torrent of history. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on February 12, 2016

[Your Heart is a Muscle the Size of a Fist](#)

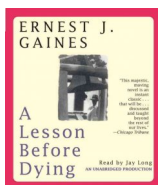
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A Lesson Before Dying



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Since 1976, four hundred and ninety four blacks have been executed in our country. This is more than half the amount of executions of whites, although Caucasians make up a much greater percentage of our population.

This powerful short novel tells the story of Jefferson, a young black man, who was sentenced to execution in the Jim Crow days of the 1940s in Cajun Louisiana. Grant Wiggins, one of the few

college-educated blacks in the area, narrates the story.

It opens with a liquor store robbery where Jefferson unfortunately happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Soon an all-white jury convicts the young man, and he is sentenced to the electric chair. Attending the trial are his godmother, Miss Emma, who raised him, and Tante Louise, who brought up Grant and with whom he still lives. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on February 4, 2016

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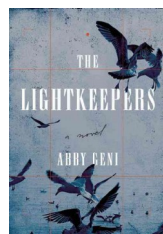
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The Lightkeepers



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This wow of a novel traces the year Miranda nee Melissa nee Mousegirl spent on one of the Farallon Islands, thirty miles from San Francisco, taking photographs of the wildlife and living with a band of equally wild biologists.

Miranda received a grant to take pictures on the Farallons and she hides behind her camera. It allows her to observe the world, but always keep it at a safe distance. If you like photography, you will love reading how Geni describes this art, and what a photographer thinks in the moment of shooting.

Then there are the manic, neurotic, preoccupied, risk-crazy biologists. There's Lucy, bird expert, particularly of murre, and Forest and Galen, white shark experts. Also, Mick, scholar of cetaceans and pinnipeds. Also, sharing the too small cabin is Andrew, Lucy's boyfriend, and Charlene, the red-haired intern who helps everyone in their research. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on February 4, 2016

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In Order to Live: a North Korean Girl's Journey to Freedom



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Born weighing less than three pounds, Yeonmi Park, had to fight to survive infancy. Her can-do spirit and inner resiliency also kept her alive through the Great Famine that struck North Korea in the 1990s.

Park describes the horror that descended upon North Korea after Russia and China stopped supporting their economy. In the far north, Park's mother and father had to scramble for work. Most of the manufacturing jobs in their city disappeared so Yeonmi's father began selling on the black market.

Even doing this dangerous work, the family tottered on the edge of famine often, and at other times did quite well. But well in this context was relative. In the flush periods, the Parks had rice three times daily, and meat only two or three times a month.

Park also describes the rigid class groupings the North Korean government enforced. There were three classes (*songbun*) and movement between them went in only direction, down. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on January 27, 2016

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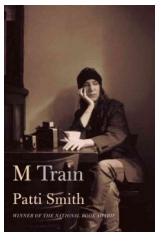
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M Train



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This absorbing new memoir by artist, poet, performer, and rock star Patti Smith provides a personal take on her daily life: her dreams, philosophical musings, friendships and myriad exotic journeys. Favorite black jacket, check. Watch cap, check. Black coffee at Café ?Ino, check.

Unlike *Just Kids*, which focused on her past, her life with artist Mapplethorpe in the famous Chelsea Hotel, in this book the past and present intertwine. Coffee, the connecting themes.

Appropriately enough, it begins with a dream. One of many that thread through the book. Next Patti describes her trip to French Guiana in the 70s. After her husband promised her a trip anyway in the world. Patti--idiosyncratic as always--chose the place where French writer Genet was imprisoned. They were almost jailed themselves on the way back when their driver was caught ferrying a man in the trunk to the airport. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on January 14, 2016

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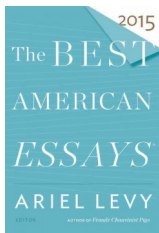
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The Best American Essays 2015



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The year 2015 has rushed out the exit door, but no worries, this wonderful mix of essays is not time-centric.

My favorite in the collection I randomly chose first. Sorry, editor, Ariel Levy, I just dive into these collections and start reading wherever my finger lands. Tim Kreider's 'A Man and his Cat' describes a single fellow's devotion for his cat. How one small nonhuman creature fills his home with love and his life with a sense of purpose.

On the other hand, in the humorous sounding essay 'My Grandma the Poisoner' John Reed makes a strong case that the early deaths of several relatives and the upset stomachs and inertia of certain houseguests were not accidental. Reed found himself comatose for fourteen hours several times after eating a Grandma meal.

The sweet and spot-on '65' describes how aging has affected one boomer's life. Mark Jacobson milks the slowing down and aches and pains of age for all they are worth. The tone is light but the sentiments serious, especially when he ponders the overarching question, how did this happen to me. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on January 8, 2016

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