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Month 2021

We Review the
Best of the Latest
Books
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Beyond Fabergé: Imperial Russian Jewelry by Marie Betteley & David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye (Schiffer Publishing)

Who created the jewels that helped make the Russian court the richest in Europe? Until now, almost everything we know about Imperial Russian jewelry is tied to one name, Carl Fabergé. Long proclaimed Jeweler to the Tsars, Fabergé formed only part of an intricate network of the empire's finest jewelers, but today the names of the others are virtually unknown.

Beyond Fabergé is the first systematic survey in any language of all the leading jewelers and silver masters of imperial Russia. The authors unfold the lives, histories, creations, and makers' marks of the artisans whose jewels and silver masterworks bedazzled the tsars. The previously unheralded names include Pauzié, Bolin, Hahn, Koechli, Seftigen, Marshak, Morozov, Nicholls & Plincke, Grachev, and Sazikov.

The market for these exquisite masterworks is also explored in **Beyond Fabergé**, from its beginnings to today's auction world and collector demand. More than 600 stunning photos reacquaint the world with the master artisans and their creations. **Beyond Fabergé: Imperial Russian Jewelry** introduces the world to these masters and their creations, putting Fabergé in perspective by casting the firm as a shining star, rather than the sun in a constellation of master jewelers.

Authors are Marie Betteley and David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye. Betteley is a jewelry dealer, gemologist, lecturer, and leading authority on Russian jewels and decorative arts. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye is professor of Russian history at Brock University, Ontario, and a fellow of the Russian Society of Canada.

Beyond Fabergé is divided into two sections: 'History' and 'Market'. The first two chapters provide an insight into the rich yet little-known history of Russian jewelry arts through the ages, as well as the intimate relationship between jewelers and the Imperial Court. The following chapters are organized by jeweler or silversmith, rather than style or period. The most prominent are featured in separate chapters. And despite **Beyond Fabergé**'s title, there is one on Fabergé, as no work on Russian jewelry is complete without it. The authors also shed light on the lesser-known jewelers, mostly in St. Petersburg, and their place in history.

Throughout the Romanov dynasty, styles from Moscow differed from those of St. Petersburg, as the former reached back to its ancient Slavic roots while the other looked to Europe for inspiration. This is highly visible in silver and enamelware that emerged from the two centers of trade. Many fine examples of Russian silver survived the melting pot of wars and revolution and made it to the western market. Kiev and Odessa produced two great masters of jewelry making: Marshak and Rokhumovskii, both of whom merit separate chapters.

The second section, 'Market,' gives an overview of the Russian art trade in Europe and North America, a source of continuing fascination. It begins with the 19th-century Russian fairs in St. Petersburg and Moscow, followed by the famous world fairs such as the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 in London, which first brought the Russian jeweler's art to the attention of the West. It then goes on to examine public sales of Imperial-era

jewelry and silver in the West after 1917. In addition to the many treasures that those fleeing the Revolution took abroad, from 1927 to 1936, the Soviet government systematically sold a large number of the former dynasty's jewels. This is covered in chapter 26, "The Fate of the Russian Crown Jewels."

[Beyond Fabergé](#) is filled with auction house records. Because all major houses publish hammer prices, they are the best barometers of the market. This is not to say that Christie's and Sotheby's always have the finest selection; but rather that over time, they tend to feature the most representative examples of a jeweler's oeuvre.

[Beyond Fabergé](#) is a jewel of a book and a must for anyone interested in Russian art and culture. – Margaret Kelly Tivneby, former director and curator of the Forbes Magazine Collection

[Beyond Fabergé](#) is an exciting and much-needed exploration of the incredible jewelry and silver industry in late Imperial Russia. – Peter Kaelhren, PhD, curator emeritus (European Decorative Arts), Department of World Cultures, Royal Ontario Museum
This well-illustrated book is essential reading for historians of jewelry, the decorative arts, and Imperial court culture, as well as a delight for collectors and admirers of the work of these talented jewelers. – Karen Kettering, Kettering Associates art advisory and independent scholar

A rare tale, skillfully unfolded, [Beyond Fabergé](#) is the opportunity to look at the exquisite world of Russian treasures that lies beyond Fabergé. <>

Cooking, Food & Wine / Health

[The How Not to Die Cookbook](#): 100+ Recipes to Help Prevent and Reverse Disease by Michael Greger M.D. FACLM, with Gene Stone, with recipes by Robin Robertson (Flatiron Books)

From Michael Greger, M.D., FACLM, the physician behind the trusted and wildly popular website Nutritionfacts.org and author of the **New York Times** bestselling book **How Not to Die**, comes a cookbook complete with more than 120 recipes for delicious, life-saving, plant-based meals, snacks, and beverages – [The How Not to Die Cookbook](#).

How Not to Die presented the scientific evidence behind the only diet that can prevent and reverse many of the causes of premature death and disability. Now, [The How Not to Die Cookbook](#) puts that science into action. From Superfood Breakfast Bites to Spaghetti Squash Puttanesca to Two-Berry Pie with Pecan-Sunflower Crust, every recipe offers an easy-to-prepare, plant-based dish to help anyone eat their way to better health.

A founding member and Fellow of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, Greger is a physician and internationally recognized speaker on nutrition, food safety, and public health issues. Co-author Gene Stone has written many books on animal protection and plant-based nutrition. And recipe writer Robin Robertson has developed recipes for and written more than twenty cookbooks. Before becoming a cookbook expert, she was a restaurant chef and cooking teacher.

Greger in the introduction says that although it technically is one, he doesn't think of [The How Not to Die Cookbook](#) as a vegetarian cookbook. Eating healthfully is not about

vegetarianism, veganism, or any other '-ism.' From a nutrition standpoint, the reason he doesn't like the terms vegetarian and vegan is that they are defined by what one doesn't eat. Too often he says he meets vegans who proudly tell him about their animal-free diet... which seems to be composed primarily of French fries, fake meat, and nondairy ice cream. That menu may be vegan, but it isn't particularly health-promoting.

This is why he prefers the term whole-food, plant-based nutrition. The best available balance of evidence suggests the healthiest diet is one that minimizes the intake of meat, eggs, dairy, and processed junk, and maximizes the intake of fruits, vegetables, legumes (beans, split peas, chickpeas, and lentils), whole grains, nuts and seeds, mushrooms, and herbs and spices – basically real food that grows out of the ground. By plant-based, he says he means centering one's diet on as many whole plant foods as possible. For **How Not to Die**, he created a traffic-light system to classify the Green Light foods people should eat more of, the Yellow Light foods we should eat less of, and the Red Light foods people should ideally avoid on a daily basis. It matters little what healthy folks eat on their birthday, holidays, and special occasions. It's the day-to-day stuff that adds up.

Greger says he has tried to ensure all the recipes in [The How Not to Die Cookbook](#) are composed only of Green Light ingredients. This is not to say that all processed foods are bad for readers. Foods are not so much good or bad as they are better or worse.

Rooted in the latest nutrition science, these easy-to-follow, stunningly photographed recipes will appeal to anyone looking to live a longer, healthier life. Featuring Greger's Daily Dozen – the best ingredients to add years to one's life – [The How Not to Die Cookbook](#) is destined to become an essential tool in healthy kitchens everywhere. <>

Education / Physical

[Survival of the Fit](#): How Physical Education Ensures

Academic Achievement and a Healthy Life by Daniel

Fulham O'Neill (Teachers College Press)

Young people in America are facing a health crisis of epidemic proportions – yet no one is taking action. Children are born as active, curious, imaginative beings with a built-in physical identity. [Survival of the Fit](#) offers a revelatory plan to nurture this identity and save the health of America's youngsters. One of the keys to this plan is rebranding physical education (PE) and making it available for every child, every day, in every year of school. In addition to establishing historical references and a scientific basis for this rebranding, the author, David O'Neill, provides a downloadable template for PE classes at all school levels.

O'Neill, MD, EdD, is board-certified in orthopedic surgery and sports medicine.

O'Neill lays out a blueprint to help educators and parents bring this 'PE revolution' to their school with no increase in the school budget. Sounding the alarm regarding America's health crisis, [Survival of the Fit](#) explains how readers can use existing tools, knowledge, and infrastructure to make needed changes with immediate results for every student, not just a privileged few.

[Survival of the Fit](#):

- Introduces the concept of physical identity, an inborn trait that animals from octopuses to humans are born with.
- Presents the reasoning for restoring youth competitive sports to community control even for high school students.
- Discusses how readers can win the war against bad food and addiction to two-dimensional entertainment.
- Showcases original research, as well as comments and criticism from active educators.

Dr. Dan O'Neill offers a wonderful 'manifesto' on the sad state of our youth fitness and the problems with school physical education programs, and an urgent call for rebranding school physical education. Unlike many authors who are quick to describe societal problems but offer no solutions, O'Neill provides excellent recommendations for a more healthy next generation. – Leonard Zaichkowsky, performance consultant I cannot imagine what I would have become without spending so much of my youth outdoors. Dr. O'Neill has put a name on this: physical identity. I hope that this book will influence other young people to enjoy the world as I have. – Bode Miller, Olympic Gold Medalist

Want to hear a radical idea for how to solve the lion's share of our nation's health ills? Get Active! Dan O'Neill offers a devastatingly simple, actionable guide to reversing our national obesity and diabetes epidemics; promoting emotional health, confidence, and improved self-esteem; and saving our country billions of dollars by promoting preventative health care. – Gary Hirshberg, cofounder and chief organic optimist, Stonyfield Organic

Everyone interested in seeing improvements in the physical, mental, and emotional health of our children will want to put [Survival of the Fit](#) to use. <>

Film Studies / African

[African Diasporic Cinema](#): Aesthetics of Reconstruction by Daniela Ricci, translated from the French by Melissa Thackway, with a foreword by Alexie Tcheuyap (African Humanities and the Arts Series: Michigan State University Press)

[African Diasporic Cinema](#): Aesthetics of Reconstruction analyzes the aesthetic strategies adopted by contemporary African diasporic filmmakers to express the reconstruction of identity. Having left the continent, these filmmakers see Africa as a site of representation and cultural circulation. The diasporic experience displaces the center and forges new syncretic identities. Through migratory movement, people become foreigners, Others – and in this instance, black.

Author Daniela Ricci teaches film studies at Paris Nanterre University and the University of Paris 8 in France. She is part of the research laboratory Histoire des Arts et des Représentations and is a member of the African Federation of Film Critics, the African Studies Association, and the African Literature Association. Translator Melissa Thackway is an independent researcher and translator who lectures in African cinema at Sciences Po and the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales in Paris.

The African diasporic condition in the Western world is characterized by the intersection of various factors: being African and bearing the historical memory of the continent; belonging to a black minority in majority-white societies; and finally, having historically been the object of negative, stereotyped representation. As a result, quests for the self and self-reconstruction are frequent themes in the films of the African diaspora, and yet the filmmakers refuse to remain trapped in the confines of an assigned, rigid identity. Reflecting these complex circumstances, [African Diasporic Cinema](#) analyzes the contemporary diaspora through the prism of cultural hybridization and the processes of recomposing fragmented identities, out of which new identities emerge.

According to Alexie Tcheuyap in the foreword, [African Diasporic Cinema](#) explores the films and trajectories of filmmakers who, because of their respective lives and careers, have found themselves far away from an African 'origin.' In several respects, that origin is merely umbilical for them. The book sets out to prove the urgent need for a theoretical and pragmatic reconsideration of that body of cinematic work. Ricci's methodical appraisal shows readers that far from being a fixation or a fatality, origin is simply a moment, a movement, one dot on a circle that allows the filmmakers she examines to position themselves in a transnational space fertilized by different social, political, and cultural, individual and collective experiences.

To better situate these filmmakers in terms of attitude and position, [African Diasporic Cinema](#) begins with an intelligently brief picture of the cinematic concerns in various African worlds from the era of colonization. This focus on fundamentals then makes it possible for Ricci to concentrate on the pertinence of a type of work that had never been explored till now, at least not from this perspective: the itinerary of reconstruction, such as it is presented in the films of the directors considered, through the use of a specific cinematic grammar.

What [African Diasporic Cinema](#) offers readers is precisely what has been feebly or insufficiently illustrated by critics until now: the elaboration of new epistemologies in order to better understand films produced in different contexts, but which have in common at least two aspects – the diasporic dimension of becoming in the case of the new postcolonial subjects who are their directors, and the fruitful conjunction of these subjects' past, present, and process of becoming. This multiplicity of elements gives them what Ricci calls 'complex identities' – new subjectivities that make it possible for them to overcome 'misunderstandings' of several sorts: theoretical, political, and cultural.

In a world where the possibilities of circulating and meeting people are endless, the films of Newton I. Aduaka, Balufu Bakupa-Kanyinda, Sarah Bouyain, Alain Gomis, and Haile Gerima allow readers to better measure the extent to which the postcolonial experience is no longer lived out in the ex-colony but beyond it, and often principally in mainland France, England, or the United States. When one is aware that these filmmakers have not lived under the weight of colonial violence and that their personal experience is often enriched by all manner of complexities, one can better understand – and Ricci shows readers this – how their films give life to people who develop other, different subjectivities. This is all the more needed since in reality, the debate on Africa and its cultural production often leaves very little room for interventions venturing beyond the scope of the postcolonial exotic or a simplistic ethnographic digression. These filmmakers' 'diasporic situation' leads them to ask other types of questions and to explore other places where Africa may show itself to be simultaneously present and far away. [African Diasporic Cinema](#) articulates that clearly, for these filmmakers draw as

much from their place of origin as they do from their new places of residence. It is the reciprocal fertilization between yesterday and today, between elsewhere and here, that makes it possible to develop new identities and a cinematic aesthetic freed of any genealogical anxiety or superannuated nationalist fervor. At the heart of Ricci's intellectual project is the exploration of 'new syncretic identities,' which allow a person to resituate without necessarily having to give back 'different territories, spaces, times, cultures, languages, histories, memories.' In view of these challenges, by illustrating some cases of fertile cultural contamination, [African Diasporic Cinema](#) shows readers how the films it covers trace different migratory paths and diasporic experiences that deprioritize facile anthropological or cultural considerations. For Ricci, it thus becomes a question – and this is perhaps the high point as well as the hidden matrix of her project – of highlighting a community of artists that lives with the awareness of its own impossibility, that is, constantly aware/mindful of its own impossibility.

That is why there is no quest for an uncertain 'African-ness.' This option is reinforced by the choice of method at work: a detailed aesthetic analysis combined with an improved evaluation of production methods. This is an approach that allows for a better understanding of the central issues of [African Diasporic Cinema](#). It also, finally, suggests that the real urgency lies in extracting the African cultural domain from the clutches of a sort of substantialist ontology in order to hand it back, in a burst of near sacrilege, to common usage, which in this case means that just like any other space, Africa may not be dealt with except in terms of what philosophers term a relation. Outside any fixation on identity, the charm of the films Ricci considers, and of her analysis, is to finally show readers how the world, just as the diasporas that constitute it, is in fact a place that houses a community of destiny.

Daniela Ricci brilliantly incorporates sociopolitical, psychological, and philosophical tools in her study of innovative aesthetics created by contemporary filmmakers of African descent. Ricci's well documented book, beautifully translated by Melissa Thackway, highlights personal journeys and diverse representations of global issues. This is a must-read for researchers in film, African studies, and diaspora studies, as well as other areas of the humanities and social sciences. – Françoise Pfaff, Professor Emerita, Department of World Languages and Cultures, Howard University

[African Diasporic Cinema](#) has the merit of showing readers how filmmakers construct contemporary diasporic dynamics through films that teach us about being in the present tense without allowing ourselves to be immobilized (or trapped) by the dangers of a problematic essentialism or the risks of dwelling on the past. <>

Health / Bioethics / Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Orthodox

[Orthodox Christian Bioethics](#): The Role of Hospitality

(philoxenia), Dignity, and Vulnerability in Global Bioethics by Rabee Toumi (Pickwick Publications)

Bioethics is an interdisciplinary academic venture that has developed over the past few decades. Although the study of ethics is an integral component of systematic theology and philosophy, rapid advances in medicine have raised serious moral dilemmas that can only be addressed on a global scale.

Orthodox Christian Bioethics advocates a substantive common ground in global bioethics. It starts from an Orthodox Christian anthropology to highlight the relationship between hospitality, dignity, and vulnerability as the meeting point between strangers, regardless of their value systems. The universal experience of suffering and death is the unifying starting point of that anthropology.

Therefore, in medicine, where physicians and patients meet as utter strangers, not only as moral strangers, hospitality highlights the human dignity and vulnerability of both parties and establishes gratitude, compassion, and solidarity as the constructive building blocks of a healing practice of medicine and a humane medical system, locally and globally.

The author is Rabee Toumi, a physician by training, who served as a deacon in the Antiochian Orthodox Church of North America and has assumed the priestly service of a parish in Washington, DC.

Orthodox Christian Bioethics explores the theological foundations on which an inclusive and sustainable global bioethics is possible. Rather than discovering this common ground using – exclusively – human rationality, this book highlights the commonalities in the human condition and experiences (mainly mortality) and their anthropological repercussions.

The book presents and analyzes several theological themes to assist Orthodox Christian theologians and bioethicists in finding a common ground with other value systems adding a block toward building a substantive global bioethics. The premise of this work is that the human condition and experiences, understood within the advocated Orthodox Christian hermeneutics, motivates a critical engagement with other value-systems, disciplines, and a broad array of literature to establish the advocated common ground.

To identify the advocated middle ground, **Orthodox Christian Bioethics** discusses the core relation between hospitality, dignity, and vulnerability. Based on Orthodox Christian theology and hermeneutics, an anthropocentric approach to bioethics is presented. Hospitable medical practice is presented as a constructive answer to human anguish especially at the end of life since hospitality, as experienced in Orthodoxy, takes seriously the dignity and vulnerability of all human beings.

Orthodox Christian Bioethics explores the hermeneutical apparatus derived from Orthodox Christian theology (chapter 2) to unfold the dimensions of the human condition and experiences within the contemporary pluralistic and global context of bioethics (chapter 3). Building on the suggested hermeneutics, a fresh theological phronema (mindset) justifies the possibility of an anthropocentric ground for an inclusive and substantive moral discourse which evolves around human dignity and vulnerability. The relationship between hospitality, dignity, and vulnerability in Orthodox hermeneutics derives from the threefold christological mission of priesthood, kingship and prophethood, respectively. To reveal this relationship, the meaning of human dignity (chapter 4) and human vulnerability (chapter 5) are explored at the theoretical/theological level and at the applicable global levels. In the final chapter of **Orthodox Christian Bioethics** (chapter 6), the relation of dignity and vulnerability to hospitality (philoxenia) are illustrated with end-of-life care. The discussion unveils the role of gratitude, compassion, and solidarity – as they hinge on the discussed concepts, respectively – in shaping the education and practice of medicine in a globalized world. *The Orthodox perspective on bioethics set forth in this book reclaims the oft-invoked 'phronema of the church' – a term too often spray-painted as golden veneer over*

sectarian distortions of theology and spirituality – and rejects the temptation to indulge in self-congratulatory exceptionalism and isolationism. By mining tradition for insights about the dignity and vulnerability of all humans, and the centrality of hospitality, Fr. Toumi makes a fruitful Orthodox contribution to global bioethics. – Bogdan G. Bucur, Duquesne University

This book by Rabee Toumi on [Orthodox Christian Bioethics](#) is an important contribution to the broad field of bioethics and places Orthodox thinking into the context of questions about human dignity and vulnerability. Toumi's connection of dignity, vulnerability, and hospitality to questions of bioethics is enlightening and can be applied to many Christian ethical situations. This book is excellent for courses in Christian bioethics. – Gayle E. Woloschak, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University

Dr. Toumi engages an elusive topic in a clear and practical manner. He insightfully explains how the Orthodox Christian mindset can nurture common ground with other value systems, religious or secular. The goal is to build a caring consensus in global bioethics discourse. His extensive training in medicine and theology provides an extraordinary interdisciplinary expertise to explore the human condition respectfully and imaginatively. His astute analysis will have a widespread and much-needed impact. – Gerard Magill, Duquesne University

The argument of [Orthodox Christian Bioethics](#) is ambitious in that it attempts to bring together relevant concepts using different disciplinary approaches. The book is not for everyone. Those who are interested in the theological basis of the argument may read only the relevant sections. The theological component is not comprehensive and inclusive of all the primary theological resources, such as biblical texts and patristic resources. Rather, the theological argument builds on the work of other contemporary theologians. Readers who belong to different religious traditions, Christian or non-Christian, may reflect on how the theological argument of this book may resonate with their own respective traditions. <>

Home & Garden / Gardening

[Fearless Gardening](#): Be Bold, Break the Rules, and Grow

What You Love by Loree Bohl (Timber Press)

Loree Bohl shows how 'fearless gardening' is done in [Fearless Gardening](#) with zone-busting ideas and success stories. Bohl's own home garden inspires, with agaves that shrug off ice storms, palms that thrive in the rain, and planting risks that are beautifully rewarded.

Bohl maintains the popular website, *The Danger Garden*. In addition to freelance garden writing, scouting assignments, and speaking engagements, Bohl has served on the board of directors for the Hardy Plant Society of Oregon, the Pacific Horticulture Society, and the Garden Bloggers Fling Advisory Committee.

Bohl says she wants to inspire readers to look at plants differently and see their garden through new eyes – to treat gardening as an adventure, to embrace the freedom to explore a new type of plant, and then to plant it just because they want to. She asks: "Why not surround yourself with plants you love? Who cares if they're not supposed to be planted together, might eventually crowd each other, or aren't everyone's cup of tea?"

Gardening is an opportunity to create something completely personal and to see one's dream become a reality. At its most inspiring, she finds gardening to be a series of experiments: exciting, challenging, and sometimes surprising experiments. But many gardeners need permission to try things and make mistakes. [Fearless Gardening](#) begins with an introduction to a pair of women who created exceptional gardens and whose approach to doing so inspires her. Then she shares a few Gardening Commandments readers may have heard – ideas that at first intimidated her, but over the years she has retooled to suit her style and needs. She encourages readers to do the same. The next section looks at how to go about creating a garden readers will love: defining what it means for a garden to be 'in good taste' and acknowledging that plants are going to die – and that sometimes that's a good thing. She introduces readers to 'cramscaping,' one of her favorite terms, and share tips that will help them identify their own style. Gardening is full of opportunities to play and experiment, and there is an entire chapter devoted to doing just that: stumperies, vertical gardening, crevice gardens, and more... Containers expand what one can grow and are a go-to strategy in her garden. She shares numerous examples of how readers can employ them to boost their garden's potential.

Because people who garden 'outside the lines' seem naturally drawn to the unexpected, [Fearless Gardening](#) takes a look at what that means in the landscape; the book also suggests some best practices for doing it successfully. In addition, Bohl shares some plants that she loves and thinks readers might too. The final chapter takes an in-depth look at seven rule-breaking gardens, or collections of gardens, and the people who have created and tend them.

[Fearless Gardening](#) encourages you – exhorts you – to boldly go forth and claim your garden as a space of joy and creativity. – Jennifer Jewell, creator and host of public radio's *Cultivating Place*

At last – a book that empowers and inspires gardeners to follow their own path in the garden. – Georgina Reid, editor and creative director, *The Planthunter*

By heeding Loree's excellent advice, you can plant what you've always wanted and it will thrive, no matter where you live. – Debra Lee Baldwin, author of *Designing with Succulents* and *Succulents Simplified*

Blasts the tired, oft-repeated 'rules' of gardening into smithereens and cheers on experimentation, planting what thrills you, and zone pushing. – Pam Penick, owner, Penick Landscape Design, and author of *The Water-Saving Garden*

Loree has a sharp eye for the bold and the unusual, both in plant choices and in plant combinations, and it is a delight to have a whole book full of her observations. – Brian Kemble, curator, the Ruth Bancroft Garden

They are our gardens. We make the rules. Loree gives us the courage to create the garden we see in our minds and feel in our hearts. – Steve Aitken, editor, *Fine Gardening*

Reveals the ways that cutting-edge gardens are shattering stereotypes. – Panayoti Kelaidis, senior curator and director of outreach, Denver Botanic Gardens

Gardeners aspiring and experienced may feel emboldened and inspired to break the rules. – Booklist

Would-be gardeners intimidated by the thought of taking the plunge will find plenty of encouragement to go forth with confidence and creativity. – Publishers Weekly

All gardeners can learn a lot by reading [Fearless Gardening](#) and thinking through how to work around the limitations of their environment. – *Late to the Garden Party*

New and seasoned gardeners alike will discover things that will interest and inspire them in [Fearless Gardening](#). They learn to embrace their inner rebel and create the garden they want – even if it breaks the rules. <>

Home & Garden / Gardening

[Plant Partners](#): Science-Based Companion Planting

Strategies for the Vegetable Garden by Jessica Walliser,
with a foreword by Jeff Gillman PhD (Storey Publishing)

Intentionally growing certain plants together to benefit the whole garden now has science to explain its success. Jessica Walliser's new vision of an old tradition as told in [Plant Partners](#) is built around a modern understanding of the marvelous web of connections happening in the garden and how to use them to create real and measurable results.

Walliser is a horticulturalist and the author of several gardening books. In addition to cohosting *The Organic Gardeners*, an award-winning radio program in Pennsylvania, she is the co-owner of a popular gardening website.

Companion planting has a long history of use by gardeners, but the explanation of why it works has been filled with folklore and conjecture. [Plant Partners](#) delivers a research-based rationale for this ever-popular growing technique, offering dozens of ways readers can use scientifically tested plant partnerships to benefit the whole garden. Through an enhanced understanding of how plants interact with and influence each other, [Plant Partners](#) suggests specific plant combinations that improve soil health and weed control, decrease pest damage, and increase biodiversity, resulting in real and measurable impacts in the garden.

Readers discover dozens of well-studied partnerships that offer fresh strategies to:

- ❖ Break up heavy soils.
- ❖ Combat weeds and disease.
- ❖ Lure pests away.
- ❖ Attract specific beneficial insects.
- ❖ Improve pollination.

[Plant Partners](#) offers more than just specific plant pairings; it encourages us to think about the relationships between plants, so that we can grow our best garden ever. – Jeff Gillman, PhD, Director of the UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens and bestselling author of *The Truth about Garden Remedies* and *Decoding Gardening Advice*
Finally, a science-based book that addresses the 'companion planting' concept of how and why plants can – and really do – play a tangible role in helping to create healthier, more productive vegetable gardens. [Plant Partners](#) is a fun and fascinating read. It is well-researched and Jessica Walliser's ability to pack so much useful information into this book just adds to the experience. I enthusiastically recommend this book! – Joe Lamp'l, executive producer and host of *Growing a Greener World*

[Plant Partners](#) takes the age-old concept of companion planting and adds a modern, scientific rigor. You'll better understand the true reasons to companion plant and why certain combinations work on a scientific basis. I guarantee you'll learn something you never knew within the first 10 pages of the book. – Kevin Espiritu, author and founder of *Epic Gardening*

Those who know what to expect from Jessica Walliser's previous work will not be disappointed in this important book. Here, in easy-to-understand language, is the science-based knowledge vegetable gardeners need to make informed choices when combining plants. Who knew I should be planting nasturtiums with my summer squash? This book can turn your favorite hobby into a way to make the planet a better place. – James Baggett, senior editor, Garden Gate magazine

For over a decade, Jessica Walliser has been my go-to resource for information on beneficial insects, pollinators, and companion planting. [Plant Partners](#) is a fresh look at a traditional topic. It approaches the subject of companion planting through the eyes of science and is an approachable, fascinating read. As you learn the many, many benefits to pairing plants, you'll look at your garden in a whole new way. [Plant Partners](#) is set to become a new garden classic. – Niki Jabbour, author of *The Year-Round Vegetable Gardener* and *Growing Under Cover*

A well-supported and helpful look at the practice of plant partnering... Walliser's lively guide will aid many a horticulturally minded reader. –*Publisher's Weekly*

With [Plant Partners](#), companion planting gets a science-based reboot! Fascinating, easy to understand and use, readers can put the book to use right away. <>

Literature & Fiction / Crime Fiction / Classic

[The Spoilt Kill](#) by Mary Kelly, with an introduction by Martin Edwards (British Library Crime Classics Series: Poisoned Pen Press)

The grey eyes, so apt for tragedy, looked steadily up at me.

"You can't trust me, can you?" she said.

First published in 1961, [The Spoilt Kill](#) received widespread critical acclaim and praise from contemporary crime writers such as Julian Symons. Widely heralded as a perfect golden age mystery, this piece of British crime fiction marked a shift in the genre towards mysteries characterized by psychological elements.

Shentall's, a long-established institution of the Staffordshire Potteries industry is under attack in [The Spoilt Kill](#). With its designs leaked to international competition and its prices undercut, private investigator Hedley Nicholson has been tasked with finding the culprit of the suspected sabotage.

But industrial espionage may just be the beginning. Delving further into the churning heart of Shentall's Pottery, Nicholson's prying is soon to unearth rumors of bonds cruelly smashed to pieces, grievances irrevocably baked in stone and a very real body, turning and turning in the liquid clay.

According to Martin Edwards in the introduction, fourteen years after its original publication, [The Spoilt Kill](#) was reissued in a new edition and hailed on the dust jacket as 'one of the most distinguished novels of crime ever published.' The book was only the fourth published by Mary Kelly, but it had earned her a Gold Dagger award from the Crime Writers' Association for the best novel of the year, and it remains one of the finest British stories about a private investigator. Yet by the time it was written, her career as a writer was already at an end; she lived for a further forty years, but never published another book.

[The Spoilt Kill](#) marked a departure for Kelly. She'd previously published three novels about Inspector Brett Nightingale which she later described as 'sins of my youth.' [The Spoilt Kill](#) is written in the first person, the narrator being an inquiry agent called Nicholson. Yet there is a curious link with the early books: While driving towards Sheffield, Nicholson passes the scene of a car crash. The car in question is the same type that Brett Nightingale used to drive; he isn't mentioned by name, and we can't even be sure that he was killed in the accident, although he never reappeared in Kelly's work. This was her way of moving on from one protagonist to another, a characteristically cryptic updating of Sherlock Holmes's apparent demise at the Reichenbach Falls.

[The Spoilt Kill](#) is a private eye novel of a very different kind from the books about such legendary Californian gumshoes as Sam Spade and Lew Archer. The mean streets that Nicholson walks are in the heart of Staffordshire's potteries. Luke Shentall, the young head of the firm, is convinced that Shentall designs are being passed on by someone inside the business, and he wants Nicholson to track down the culprit. There is a nicely assorted bunch of suspects – prime among them is Corinna Wakefield, the chief designer. Corinna has a mysterious past and a tendency to drink too much, and Nicholson's task is complicated by his growing attraction to her.

A gap of three years separates the publication dates of [The Christmas Egg](#) and [The Spoilt Kill](#), and during that time Kelly wrote [Take Her up Tenderly](#), a novel which has yet to be published. It was turned down by Secker, publishers of the Nightingale books, and so, astonishingly, was this book. Rejection prompted Kelly's move to Michael Joseph, who were rewarded at once when [The Spoilt Kill](#) beat out John Le Carre's [Call for the Dead](#) and Allan Prior's [One Away to the Gold Dagger](#); the trophy was presented to her by Sir Compton Mackenzie

At this stage of her career, Kelly was one of the most promising British women crime writers of the post-war era. Agatha Christie, Margery Allingham, and Gladys Mitchell were still highly popular, but the future, it seemed, belonged to the likes of Kelly, Margot Bennett, Shelley Smith, and Celia Fremlin. Yet Bennett and Smith gave up the crime genre all too soon, and so did Kelly.

Readers discover the captivating treasures buried in the British Library's archives starting with [The Spoilt Kill](#). Largely inaccessible to the public until now, these enduring crime classics were written in the golden age of detective fiction. <>

Literature & Fiction / Historical

[The City of Tears](#): A Novel by Kate Mosse (The Burning Chambers Series, Book 2: Minotaur Books)

Following #1 *Sunday Times* bestseller [The Burning Chambers](#), Kate Mosse returns with [The City of Tears](#), a sweeping historical epic about love in a time of war.

Mosse, a multiple *New York Times* and #1 internationally bestselling author, is the founder director of the Women's Prize for Fiction, a visiting professor at the University of Chichester. She was awarded an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for services to literature.

Mosse revisits a tumultuous era of religious warfare in [The City of Tears](#). A family with roots in France and Holland must navigate the hostilities between Catholics and Protestants in the late 1500s – tensions that erupt into horrifying massacres, even when a royal wedding offers a chance at reconciliation.

In [The City of Tears](#) it is August 1572.

The Catholic-born Minou Joubert and her Calvinist husband Piet journey from their inherited lands near Toulouse to Paris, for the wedding of the Catholic king's sister Margot and the Protestant king of Navarre. The wedding is intended to finally bring peace between the Catholics and the Huguenots, but the forces that had sent Toulouse into chaos earlier reemerge in France's capital. What should have been a national celebration becomes a nightmare of angry mobs.

Also in Paris is their oldest enemy, Vidal, in pursuit of an ancient relic that will change the course of history. Not only are they facing a wave of violence sweeping across Europe, but the couple also has an enemy who has been lurking in the shadows for decades, and who will do anything to see Piet ruined, for reasons that are a mystery to Piet and his wife.

Minou and Piet have to bring their family to safety in Amsterdam, but the odds are not in their favor. Within days of the marriage, thousands will lie dead in the street, and Minou's family will be scattered to the four winds....

Vibrant...The fascinating historical detail fuels the drama and keeps the plot zipping along. – Publishers Weekly

Thrills aplenty as readers await the next installment of this well-researched series. – Kirkus Reviews

Mosse presents another absorbing historical yarn that mixes intrigue, action, and family drama with aplomb. – Booklist

[The City of Tears](#) makes a heroic family the focus of a story in which the feuds of the noblemen and clerics wreak havoc upon ordinary people. Mosse's enthralling storytelling uses historical fiction to shed light on contemporary divisions, feelings of displacement and religious intolerance. <>

Military / History / US

[Headhunter](#): 5-73 CAV and Their Fight for Iraq's Diyala River Valley by Peter C Svoboda, with a foreword by Lt. General William B. Caldwell (Ret) (Casemate Publishers)

As told in [Headhunter](#), selected in 2005 by the Army to be the first airborne reconnaissance squadron, 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, better known as 5-73 CAV, was formed from 3rd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment. The members of the squadron were hand-selected by the squadron command team, Lieutenant Colonel Poppas and Command Sergeant Major Edgar. With just more than 400 paratroopers, they were half the size of a full-strength battalion and the smallest unit in the Panther Brigade.

The squadron deployed to eastern Diyala in August, 2006. Despite their size, they were tasked with an enormous mission and were given the largest area of operations within the brigade. Appropriately for a unit known by the call sign of its CO – Headhunter – 5-73 would go on to pursue various terrorist factions including Al Qaeda in Iraq. They got results, and 5-73 DAV was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for launching the Turki Bowl campaign from November 2006 to January 2007 against insurgent groups in Diyala Province. However the toll would be heavy – the squadron lost twenty-two paratroopers during the deployment.

Headhunter is the unique account of the War on Terror. It is a soldier's story, told by those very paratroopers who gallantly fought to tame Diyala. Based on dozens of interviews conducted by the author, Peter Svoboda, the narrative describes the danger of combat, the loss of comrades and the struggles of returning from a deployment. The voice of the families left behind are also included, describing the challenges they faced, including the ultimate challenge – grappling with the death of a loved one. Svoboda divides his time between writing and working as a healthcare emergency management planner. He was previously a firefighter for twenty-five years.

*This is a riveting account of 5-73 CAV's complex battlespace in eastern Iraq and their fight to wrestle Diyala Province from multiple insurgent groups with a relatively small force to confront the enemy.... **Headhunter** is an outstanding narrative based exclusively on interviews conducted with the paratroopers who experienced 15 months of continuous combat. It also shares the heartache of the families who lost a loved one and how that loss affects them. The struggles that the returning paratroopers face as they deal with the hidden enemies of post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury are another side of combat that stays with and haunts them after they return home. A must read for anyone who wants to experience first-hand accounts of the dangers that soldiers faced during this volatile period in Iraq told by the soldiers who lived through these deadly months of combat.* – Bryan Owens, Major General, U.S. Army (Ret.)

Headhunter is a meticulous retelling of Task Force 300's deployment to Iraq in 2006. Well researched and comprehensive, it is a perfect read for anyone interested in the occupation of Iraq and the toll it took on one unit of the 82nd Airborne Division. – Kevin Maurer, author/co-author of No Easy Day, Gentlemen Bastards, American Radical and others

Svoboda chronicles the little-known saga of Task Force 300, a group of four hundred 82nd Airborne paratroopers who punched far above their weight in the battle for Iraq's Diyala River Valley. Based on copious interviews and in-depth research, the narrative dives into the experiences of the entire unit: from the staff planning the complexities of combined arms support, to squads with their boots on the ground engaged in desperate firefights against a determined and merciless enemy. This is a story of brotherhood, tragedy and valor. – James M. Fenelon, author of Four Hours of Fury: The Untold Story of WWII's Largest Airborne Invasion

Well researched and comprehensive, **Headhunter** explores the human dimensions of loss and struggle and illustrates the sacrifices service members and their loved ones make. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity

Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear: Choosing Trust over Safety in an Anxious Age, revised & updated edition by Scott Bader-Saye (Brazos Press)

Fear has taken on an outsized role in our current cultural and political context. Manufactured threats are advanced with little to no evidence of danger, while real threats are exaggerated for self-interested gain. This steady diet of fear produces unhealthy moral lives, leading many to focus more on the dangers we wish to avoid than the goods we wish to pursue. As a fearful people, we are tempted to make safety

our highest good and to make virtues of suspicion, preemption, and accumulation. But this leaves the church ill-equipped to welcome the stranger, love the enemy, or give to those in need.

[Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear](#) by theologian Scott Bader-Saye brings together cultural analysis and theological insight to explore a Christian response to the culture of fear. Bader-Saye holds the Helen and Everett H. Jones Chair in Christian Ethics and Moral Theology at Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, where he also serves as academic dean.

Laying out a path from fear to faithfulness, Bader-Saye explores practices that embody Jesus's call inviting Christian communities to take the risks of hospitality, peacemaking, and generosity. [Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear](#) offers practices that embody Jesus's call to place our trust in him and to show hospitality to our neighbors. The book has been revised throughout, updated to connect with today's readers and includes new discussion questions.

Perhaps no other biblical verse can claim as much cultural ubiquity as Psalm 23:4. But it misses, perhaps, one aspect of fear – that fear is not only what we feel when passing through the valley of the shadow of death; it is one of the causes of the valley of the shadow of death.

This cold breath of fear, this 'valley of the shadow of death,' makes itself known in various ways in our lives. Bader-Saye says his valley is inhabited by a low underbrush of anxiety about the well-being of his family, especially as he imagines the future for his children; it is populated by vines of trepidation for friends and acquaintances who by virtue of their race, religion, immigration status, sexual orientation, or gender identity face threats that they should not have to face; his valley of the shadow of death is overarched by trees whose limbs twist and turn with the menace of global threats – climate change, warfare, water crises, disease, and poverty; and snaking through his valley is a disorienting and disempowering mist that makes it hard to find his next steps. According to Bader-Saye, twelve years have passed since the *first edition* of [Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear](#) was published, and the culture of fear is as pervasive as ever. The chief objects of fear have shifted, though some perennial fears simply take on new forms over time. A global pandemic has struck much of the world, creating fear of contagion and death as well as worry about the consequences of economic shutdown. The trauma of September 11 has waned over the two decades since the *first edition*, but Muslims and Arab nations remain, for some, sources of anxiety. Much of the political fear in the US and Europe focuses on immigration, national identity, and economic globalization. The fears of some about immigrants are met by the fears of others about nationalism. Climate change anxiety deepens as we watch sea levels rise and experience extreme weather patterns. Some parents continue to worry about vaccinations, while others worry that unvaccinated children will bring a recurrence of diseases we thought were behind us. Every December, conspiracy theorists raise alarms about a 'war on Christmas.'

As president, Donald Trump has proven to be a master manipulator of fear. In fact, he admits that stoking fear is part of his political strategy. "Real power is – I don't even want to use the word – fear," he told Bob Woodward and Robert Costa in an interview. He was, knowingly or not, echoing Machiavelli's advice to rulers that it is better to be feared than loved.

Both the fearful and the feared share the threat of being overwhelmed by the cultural anxiety that constricts our lives, threatens our solidarity, and makes us less than we

could be. "There are always real dangers in the world, sufficient to their day," the novelist Marilynne Robinson reminds us. "Fearfulness obscures the distinction between real threat on one hand and on the other the terrors that beset those who see threat everywhere." [Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear](#) is an attempt to help readers parse this distinction. It is also, and perhaps most importantly, a book about hope. But to get to hope we have to pass through fear. We can't avoid it or deny it. And we have to understand where fear comes from if we are going to resist its control.

In this important book, updated to reflect the difficult realities we now face, Scott Bader-Saye reminds us that the only way to break through a life of fear is by embracing a different way, a way of love. This is not easy work, but it is crucial work, and in these pages we learn how to risk much for God's dream of a better world. – The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church; author of *Love Is the Way: Holding On to Hope in Troubling Times*

What a marvelously lucid, engaging, and convincing book. Bader-Saye singles out fear as the defining and largely self-imposed burden of our world. Not content with diagnosis, he offers a cure – cogent, compassionate, and Christian. Here is a fresh voice to challenge and transform the anxieties of church and world. – Samuel Wells, vicar, St. Martin-in-the-Fields Anglican Church; visiting professor, King's College London

In a culture consumed by anxiety and divided against itself, [Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear](#) couldn't have come at a better time. Bader-Saye tackles the most pressing moral challenges of our day: the dangers of American exceptionalism, of stoking fear for profit, and of manufacturing fear of the stranger in our midst. Bracing in its honesty and inspiring in its call for a risky faith, this book offers readers biblical wisdom and well-founded hope for our turbulent times. – Joy Ann McDougall, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Updated throughout, [Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear](#) is a timely Christian response to a world warped by fear. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity

[We Will Not Be Silenced](#): Responding Courageously to Our Culture's Assault on Christianity by Erwin W. Lutzer, with a foreword by Dr. David Jeremiah (Harvest House Publishers)

Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go. – Joshua 1:9.

According to author Erwin W. Lutzer, each day, readers watch America turn further from Christian values and the core principles of liberty. It's frustrating to feel one can't assert biblical truth without facing condemnation, and fearful to witness outrage and victimhood replace respect and reason. Amidst this dissent, how can readers not only stay rooted in their own faith, but continue testifying for Jesus?

Lutzer is Pastor Emeritus of The Moody Church, where he served as the senior pastor for 36 years.

In [We Will Not Be Silenced](#), Lutzer prepares readers to live out their convictions against a growing tide of hostility. They gain a better understanding of nonbelievers' legitimate hurts and concerns regarding issues like racism, sexism, and poverty – and identify the toxic responses secular culture disguises as solutions. In the process, readers see how

they can show compassion and gentleness to those outside of the faith without affirming their beliefs.

Dr. David Jeremiah says in the foreword that if he could, he would put [We Will Not Be Silenced](#) into the hands of every Christian in America. The book examines every cultural issue they are facing. It addresses diversity issues, racial issues, gender issues, immigration issues, social justice issues, media issues, issues of free speech, and issues rooted in Socialism, Darwinism and Marxism. Saddest of all, it covers issues related to the church and how it is responding to all of this.

[We Will Not Be Silenced](#) doesn't just examine all the issues, it explains them. Why are these things happening? Over the past year, readers have watched as criminal mobs have ravaged cities, burned down buildings, and declared war on police. What has been most troubling has been the attempt of these organized rioters to tear down monuments and deface historic buildings. Why are they doing this?

Lutzer explains that behind all of this destructive behavior is the determination of the Marxists to destroy America's history so that it can be replaced by a new Marxist 'history' that is being inculcated into children's minds. They're not just tearing down monuments, they're trying to destroy the foundation upon which the nation was founded. They understand that "he who controls the past, controls the future."

Lutzer traces every secular cultural expression back to its roots. These things have been orchestrated. They are not random individual occurrences; they are all part of a carefully scripted and produced overture to the destruction of America.

Finally, [We Will Not Be Silenced](#) does not just examine what is happening and explain why it is happening, it exhorts readers to respond to what is happening. Lutzer asks, "How do we live courageously in a culture where people who shout the loudest win the argument? How do we live during a time when Christianity is openly being remade to blend more comfortably into a secularized culture?"

Once again Erwin Lutzer has given us a challenging, inspirational, and provocative work that will call all serious Christians to clearly represent our God and His Word in the public square. He has strategically balanced biblical authority, cultural relevance, and spiritual sensitivity in this must-read book. You will be both righteously provoked and personally convicted not to be a silent secret agent Christian after being confronted by the truth in this excellent resource. – Dr. Tony Evans, president, The Urban Alternative, senior pastor, Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship

*What's behind the current 'unraveling of America'? And how should we respond? In his magnificent book [We Will Not Be Silenced](#), my friend Erwin Lutzer has the vital answers, exhorting us to boldly and courageously witness about our faith, come what may! – Eric Metaxas, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Bonhoeffer* and *Martin Luther*, host of the nationally syndicated Eric Metaxas Radio Show*

My dear friend Erwin Lutzer has given us an insightful framework in which to think through and approach the challenges we face during this moment in history. You will find [We Will Not Be Silenced](#) thought-provoking and helpful. At times you may even wrestle with a few of his insights and conclusions. That's a good thing. Thank you, Erwin, for addressing these matters, including racism, Marxism, and capitalism against the backdrop of the cross and the transforming truth of the Word of God. – Dr. Crawford W. Loritts Jr., author, speaker, radio host, senior pastor, Fellowship Bible Church, Roswell, Georgia

[We Will Not Be Silenced](#) explains a number of trends growing at frightening speed that endanger the liberties of people everywhere. This book is a worthy investment of your

time. As always, Lutzer provides keen analysis and presents numerous insightful conclusions. He is one of the few authors of whom I make a point to read everything they release. Why? Because regardless of the topic he's addressing, his analysis will be factual, artfully presented, and beneficial. – Alex McFarland, Christian apologist, *Truth for a New Generation*

Erwin Lutzer has written a timely and important book that calls the church to face the challenges of our society from a Christ-honoring, Scripture-driven, and gospel-saturated perspective. In [We Will Not Be Silenced](#), he offers the simple yet radical solution to the manifold problems that plague the culture we live in: Let the church be the church! Read this book carefully. Share it as widely as possible. Refuse to be silent in your witness for Christ! – H.B. Charles Jr., senior pastor, Shiloh Church, Jacksonville, Florida

[We Will Not Be Silenced](#) will ready readers to move beyond fear and accept the challenge of representing Christ to a watching world that needs Him now more than ever before. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Poetry

[The Wisdom of Wild Grace](#): Poems by Christine Valters

Paintner (Paraclete Poetry Series: Paraclete Press)

At the core of [The Wisdom of Wild Grace](#) are 30 poems inspired by the stories of kinship between saints and animals. They come mostly from the early Christian desert and Celtic traditions, but also feature later medieval saints like St. Francis of Assisi and St. Julian of Norwich. Each poem in [The Wisdom of Wild Grace](#) is a doorway to intimacy with our inner wilderness, a call to sit and be present to what we discover beyond the borders of our neatly controlled worlds.

Paintner is the Abbess of Abbey of the Arts, a virtual monastery integrating contemplative practice and creative expression.

Paintner in [The Wisdom of Wild Grace](#) says when she longs for expansiveness and connection to something far greater than her own daily concerns and struggles, a walk by the sea or in the forest expands her.

She says people today live in a time when Earth is threatened on so many fronts by human development. Slowly people seem to be awakening to the truth that their personal well-being is intimately woven together with the well-being of all creatures and plants. Many might have been taught by their religious traditions that humans have dominion over nature or that animals don't feel pain or have souls. The more people cultivate their own intimacy with the wild, the more they open to a different truth.

Each poem in [The Wisdom of Wild Grace](#) is a doorway into this inner wilderness.

According to her, wildness is vulnerable, risky, spacious, and full of possibility.

Paintner says the heart of the book is a series of poems inspired by the stories of animal and saint connections. She meditated with each story to listen to what it might reveal.

Each story felt like a way into a new or renewed way of being in the world where nature is an intimate guide and companion. These stories remind her of some of the old fairy tales that hold wisdom for how to live well if people pay close enough attention.

Many of the poems in [The Wisdom of Wild Grace](#) are inspired by the tradition of the psalms of creation, those prayers of praise that celebrate how everything conspires to share joy and gratitude for the beautiful world.

*Paintner takes us on a pilgrimage to discover the holiness of the natural world. One long section features stories of Christian saints who had a kinship with animals – herons, ravens, hares, cats, otters. These poems are both charming and whimsical, filled with a sense of divine presence that we have lost in the modern electronic world. In another section, she weaves Irish myths and legends and traditional fairy tales like an intricately laced Celtic knot. Anyone interested in the intersection of poetry, Celtic mythology, and spirituality will surely love this beautiful book as much as I did. – Barbara Crooker, poet, author of *The Book of Kells* and *Some Glad Morning**

*An inspiring, luscious, deep delve into Earth Wisdom and lively tales of Christian saints; a spirited and intimate re-seeing of the desert mystics and beloved St. Francis and Julian of Norwich, offering their transcendent wisdom. Lyrical poems of praise and jubilation, of kinship with animals and our inner wild, surprising poems of the ecstatic ordinary – poems to gladden the heart, make spirits soar, and invite the soul to linger long in gentle quiet. – Judyth Hill, poet, author of *Dazzling Wobble* and *A Presence of Angels**
*Poems come in two types: those that reflect the poet, and poems that transcend the poet. Both can touch you; only the second can transform you. Christine Valters Paintner's [The Wisdom of Wild Grace](#) is the latter. Don't simply read the words, listen to the message. And dare to be transformed. – Rabbi Rami Shapiro, poet, author of *Accidental Grace: Poems**

*The poet intends these poems to be invitations, and they are: invitations to know ourselves better by seeing the world more clearly through the eyes of one who loves it fiercely. It is a wonderful, wonder full collection. – Bonnie Thurston, poet, author of *O Taste and See* and *Practicing Silence**

The stories in [The Wisdom of Wild Grace](#) point to a reverence for a different way of knowing and being in the world. Reading these poems supports readers to see the world in a new way, to make time to sit outside and cherish the breezes, or to fall more in love. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Franciscan

[The Sunrise of the Soul](#): Meditations on Prayerful Stillness, Silence, Solitude, and Service in the Spirit of St. Francis of Assisi by Gerard Thomas Straub (San Damiano Books Series: Paraclete Press)

[The Sunrise of the Soul](#) is the fruit of the last 24 years of an unexpected new life and a journey of transformation that took Gerry Straub from the glamour of Hollywood to the horror of the worst slums on earth.

Straub is a documentary filmmaker and the Founder and President of Pax et Bonum Communications, which produces films focused on the plight of the poor. The goal of his ministry is to put the power of film at the service of the poor. A Secular Franciscan, he is also an award-winning author. He's been awarded three honorary doctorates in recognition of his work on behalf of the poor.

Straub in [The Sunrise of the Soul](#) says that journey began in an empty church in Rome during a moment of grace in which the hard shell of his ardent atheism was penetrated by a spark of light, allowing him to see that God was real and loved him just as he was.

Eventually, Straub felt God telling him to stop filming the poor and to go live among the poor. He now lives in a crowded slum in Haiti where he operates a home of hope and healing for 69 abandoned kids, 24 of whom are still in diapers.

Living in a home with 69 kids in Haiti means that the stillness and silence needed for contemplation are virtually nonexistent. After more than four years of intense work in Haiti, Gerry began to commit himself to the rejuvenating power of authentic solitude in order to turn his attention to his own inner spiritual poverty. In the silent predawn darkness of each Haitian morning he waits, reflects, and prays. [The Sunrise of the Soul](#) emerged slowly from those many lonely hours of silence.

Gerry renounces the facile role of guilty bystander to wrestle with the dark angels of his own and the world's sins. He is on his knees, waiting for a mercy he knows he can't manufacture for himself, much less for those whose impoverishment cannot quickly be relieved. He has discovered a mirror for his spiritual dereliction in the thousands of faces his camera has recorded. – Jonathan Montaldo, editor, *Dialogues with Silence* by Thomas Merton

This is why this book is worth reading. It tells the truth. It challenges and at the same time forgives our cowardice and lives of convenience and comfort. We read this book knowing how far we are from God's poor and therefore from God, and at the same time we see page-by-page that we ourselves are one of God's poor. We live broken, imperfect and messed-up lives, but, as Straub says in many different ways in [The Sunrise of the Soul](#), God is in the messiness of our lives. And if we but reach out and lift up others in love, God will lift us up from our own self-confining rubble. – Murray Bodo, OFM, author of *Francis: The Journey and the Dream*, *Francis and Jesus*, *The Way of St. Francis*. [The Sunrise of the Soul](#) has the ring of truth; the true and ongoing story of a man working on and wrestling with his inner self. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Occult

[Psychic Self-Defense](#): The Definitive Manual for Protecting Yourself against Paranormal Attack by Dion Fortune, with a foreword by Mary K. Greer (Weiser Classics Series: Weiser Books)

[Psychic Self-Defense](#) is a new edition of an occult classic, which includes a new foreword by Mary K. Greer, author of *Women of the Golden Dawn*, with excerpts from rarely seen documents by Dion Fortune herself describing how the book came about. After finding herself the subject of a powerful psychic attack in the 1930s, famed British occultist Dion Fortune wrote this detailed instruction manual on protecting oneself from paranormal attack. This classic psychic self-defense guide explains how to understand the signs of a psychic attack, vampirism, hauntings, and methods of defense.

[Psychic Self-Defense](#) is not intended merely to make the flesh creep, but is designed as a serious contribution to a little-understood aspect of abnormal psychology, perverted, in some instances, to the purposes of crime. It is a book intended for serious students and for those who find themselves confronted by the problems it describes, and who are trying to understand them and find a way out. Fortune's chief aim in speaking so

frankly is to open the eyes of men and women to the nature of the forces that are at work below the surface of everyday life. It may happen to anyone to break through the thin crust of normality and find oneself face to face with these forces. Reading of the cases cited in [Psychic Self-Defense](#), readers may well say that there, but for the grace of God, goes anyone.

Dion Fortune (1891–1946), founder of The Society of the Inner Light, is recognized as one of the most luminous figures of twentieth-century esoteric thought. A prolific writer, pioneer psychologist, powerful psychic, and spiritualist, she dedicated her life to the revival of the Western Mystery Tradition. She was a member of the Order of the Golden Dawn, whose members included at various times such people as A. E. Waite, Aleister Crowley, and W. B. Yeats.

"This book goes far beyond mere techniques," writes Greer in her foreword. "In the nearly hundred years since [Psychic Self-Defense](#) was published, it has provided a significant framework for evaluating and diagnosing a wide range of psychic phenomena by integrating the findings of science, psychology, ancient and modern occult and mystery traditions, and the ever-practical 'art of living.'"

Greer says in the foreword that she first became acquainted with the works of Dion Fortune in 1971 while living in London, where she expanded on her budding astrological and Tarot studies. It was with great relief that she came upon [Psychic Self-Defense](#), probably Fortune's most popular nonfiction book, as something understandable and applicable to her life. However, it is only on rereading it that she has come to realize how many of her own early magical concepts and practices stemmed from this work. People who read [Psychic Self-Defense](#) probably have had some kind of experience with the efficacy of spells, affirmations, and/or visualization to create a change in their circumstances or interactions with others. Or it could be that they or someone they know is experiencing troubles that seem to stem from a deliberately destructive intent meant to harm. This book can help them to more deeply understand the multidimensional interactions of conscious and unconscious intents, emotions, and their material plane effects.

[Psychic Self-Defense](#) goes far beyond mere techniques. In the nearly one hundred years since the book was published it has provided a significant framework for evaluating and diagnosing a wide range of psychic phenomena by integrating the findings of science, psychology, ancient and modern occult and mystery traditions, and the ever practical 'art of living.' Regarding self-defense, Fortune insists that one differentiate first among actual psychic attack, mental illness, and situations that are merely unethical, illegal, or unhealthy. Rather than jumping to conclusions about what they are facing, she provides a methodology and steps to first determine the forces with which readers are dealing and, only then, the best response. Fortune warns against a simplistic understanding of psychic attack, with explanations that lead to a broader comprehension of the mundane effects of psychic stimuli. According to Fortune, the real basis of psychic attack is telepathic suggestion, however it requires that the recipient's aura be pierced due to their own fear or desire. Strengthening one's own defenses through self-knowledge and a connection to Spirit becomes paramount. While [Psychic Self-Defense](#) will hone the skills of professionals, it is also a great place for a neophyte to start, even if it seems to lead down trails and byways that are frustrating to a reader seeking quick tips and instant results. Despite its flaws, the book will widen their understanding of muggle/magical coexistence and provide practical guidelines

for identifying and respecting the effects and needs of the multiple planes of an expanded reality.

[Psychic Self-Defense](#) provides essential bedrock to the journey. It is one of the best guides to detection and defense against psychic attack from one of the leading occult writers of the twentieth century. Everything readers need to know about the methods, motives, and physical aspects of a psychic attack and how to overcome it is in [Psychic Self-Defense](#), along with a look at the role psychic elements play in mental illness and how to recognize them. Readers must overlook 1930s prejudices including derogatory comments regarding hypnotism and techniques that seem manipulative or come from a different race. However, the strengths of the book outweigh its weaknesses. This is the definitive manual for protecting oneself against paranormal attack. <>

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