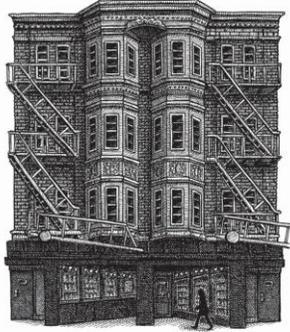


# UNABRIDGED BOOKSTORE



CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

## NEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FEBRUARY 2019

### Our Featured Titles

FEBRUARY'S BOOK CLUB  
SELECTION

LOST CHILDREN ARCHIVE

LEADING MEN

BOWLAWAY

GOLDEN CHILD

IN OUR MAD AND FURIOUS CITY

THE LARGESSE OF THE SEA  
MAIDEN

HARD TO LOVE

BLACK IS THE BODY

IN MY MIND'S EYE

THE RECOVERING



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Holy smokes, book lovers, this winter is not messing around! Happily we have new books aplenty for you to hole up with during these bitterly cold days. Here's what's afoot at the shop:

- February's book club pick is Sigrid Nunez's *The Friend*. We'll meet to discuss Nunez's National Book Award-winning novel on Tuesday, March 5th at 7PM.

[CANE](#)

[THE ICE PALACE](#)

[SOMEDAY WE WILL FLY](#)

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Those who wish to have a chat and unwind before the discussion are welcome to join us at 6:30 for complimentary wine and sweets. Scroll down to read Ed's glowing review.

- Early warning! On Monday, March 4th at 7PM our occasional translation series returns. That evening we'll welcome Edgar Garbelotto, translator of João Gilberto Noll's *Lord* to the shop to discuss his translation with Words Without Borders' Susan Harris. Join us!

Simply looking for a new book? Scroll down to peruse our latest recommendations. See you soon!

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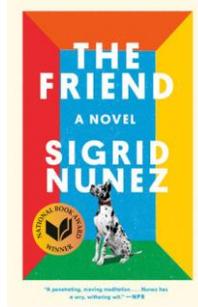
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## IN-STORE EVENTS

**FEBRUARY'S BOOK CLUB SELECTION**



### *The Friend* by Sigrid Nunez

In Sigrid Nunez's charming new novel *The Friend* an unnamed narrator, a woman writer living in a tiny NYC apartment and mourning the suicide of a close friend and fellow writer, inherits his very large Great Dane. Although filled with quotations and anecdotes about dogs, and exploring the notions of grief and friendship, the novel actually has more to say about literature and creative writing. I really liked this small but nuanced, pitch-perfect novel, thoughtful, mournful, more essayistic than fictional, that goes beyond conventional notions of plot to explore what it means to be a writer today. Ed recommends!!

Our book club will meet to discuss *The Friend* on Tuesday, March 5th at 7PM. Join us!

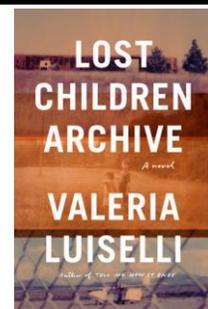
In paperback, fiction, 16.00; Riverhead Books.

## NEW FICTION

### *LOST CHILDREN ARCHIVE* by Valeria Luiselli

Available February 12th!

*Lost Children Archive* begins in New York, where an unnamed couple and their children from previous relationships live together in unraveling bliss. Several years previously the couple met on assignment collecting recordings of every language spoken throughout the boroughs. As the project draws to a close, their professional ambitions diverge: The man becomes obsessed with recording traces of the Comanche Indian tribe, while the woman becomes focused on bearing witness to the plight of undocumented children making the dangerous journey from Mexico and Central America into the United States. As the family embark on summer-long journey from New York to Arizona, each member develops an archive of their experiences on the road. Through recordings, photographs, and



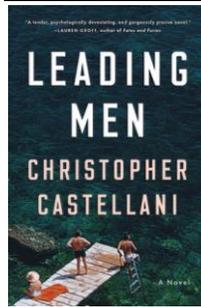
stories, each member uncovers similarities between past and present American atrocities and confronts the tenuousness of familial bonds.

*Lost Children Archive* is an electric meditation on the power of documentation to safeguard memory. I will honestly not be surprised if this is my favorite book of 2019.

Katharine loves and highly recommends.

In hardcover, fiction, 27.95; Knopf Publishing Group.

## **LEADING MEN by Christopher Castellani**



Available February 12th!

*Leading Men*, told on a grand scale (like an opera, or like the Tennessee Williams' plays it describes!) recounts the 15 years, 1949-1963, when Tennessee Williams and Frank Merlo (the novel's "leading men") were lovers (and when Williams wrote all his great plays!) It's about their special alchemy and love--smart, sexy, romantic, SO Italian, and filled with drama, passion, egos, drinking (lots!), larger-than-life personalities, glamour and glitz, gossip and betrayal, melancholy and tragedy, greatness and faded glory. It is about living life as a legend, living life in a supporting role, but mostly about the ravenous nature of love, and features other real life characters--the director Luchino Visconti (and the making of his film *Senso*), Truman Capote, Anna Magnani, and the novel's other two leading men, John Horne Burns (the author of *The Gallery*, which features prominently) and his lover Sandro Nencini. The novel's only totally fictionalized creation, the character of Anja Bloom, with a lust for living life on her own terms, was my favorite-- fully realized, complicated, fierce, full of wisdom and heart, and essential to the furtherance of the novel's ideas and plot. I truly inhabited this book for the few days I was reading it, totally immersed in the places and times it describes.

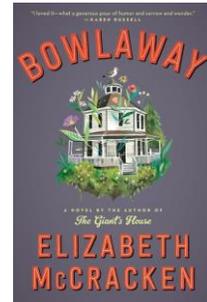
**ED LOVED AND HIGHLY RECOMMENDS!**

Save the date! Christopher Castellani will appear at Unabridged on Thursday, April 23rd at 7PM in discussion with Goldie Goldbloom.

In hardcover, fiction, 27.00; Viking.

## **BOWLAWAY** by Elizabeth McCracken

Available February 5th!

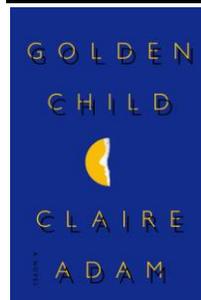


Elizabeth McCracken's first novel since 1996's achingly poignant *The Giant's House* has arrived, and it is a delight! A champion of the idiosyncratic, McCracken is well suited to that uniquely American mode, the tall tale. *Bowlaway* opens on Bertha Truitt, a candlepin bowling enthusiast and suffragette who allegedly falls out of the sky and is discovered in a cemetery in the sleepy town of Salford, Massachusetts, at the turn of the 20th century. Gathering the town misfits to her, Bertha opens Truitt's Lanes, a haven for oddballs and outcasts. The story that unfolds follows Bertha's legacy into the modern era. *Bowlaway* is a stunningly clever rumination on humanity as so much flotsam and jetsam swept along on the tides of time.

A joy to read! Katharine recommends.

In hardcover, fiction, 27.99; Ecco Press.

## **GOLDEN CHILD** by Claire Adam



*Golden Child* is a deeply affecting, stunning debut novel set in Trinidad, written with force and beauty, that is both beautiful and unsettling (the new novel from Sarah Jessica Parker's imprint, SJP at Hogarth, following *A Place for Us* by Fatima Mirza.)

Revolving around twin, thirteen-year-old boys (Paul, always considered a bit "slow," and Peter, the "golden" child,) the novel is all about family, violence and sacrifice (there is a haunting, Sophie's Choice-like predicament which much be resolved.)

The author, born and raised in Trinidad, does a great

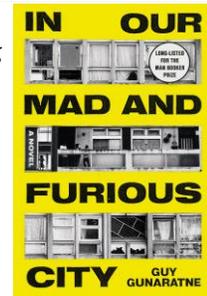
job of evoking the rural, atmospheric island setting and the complicated, worried lives lived under a near-constant sense of impending violence. Remarkable.

ED LOVED AND HIGHLY RECOMMENDS!

In hardcover, fiction, 26.00; SJP for Hogarth.

### ***IN OUR MAD AND FURIOUS CITY* by Guy Gunaratne**

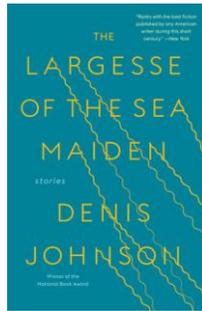
*In Our Mad and Furious City* is a contemporary love letter to the language of London's streets, a blistering look into lives lived on the edge in its projects, where an entire, gritty world of immigrant, polyglot London, filled with fury and violence, comes to life. The polyphonic voices (each with its distinctive slang and working-class dialect) are stunning, and the narrative, with the slowly revealed backstories and nuanced characterizations, hooks the reader from the start all the way through until the book's explosive and devastating conclusion. Guy Gunaratne's characters are drawn with compassion and humanity, and each narrator's first-person voice—Selvon's, Ardan's, Yusuf's, Caroline's, Nelson's—is uniquely impassioned and unforgettable, describing attempts to beat back the hate, the extremism, the bigotry that threatens to engulf each of them. At once gritty and graceful, tragic and alive, *In Our Mad and Furious City* is searing, heartbreaking, unforgettable.



ED LOVED AND HIGHLY RECOMMENDS!!

In paperback, fiction, 16.00; MCD x FSG Originals.

### ***THE LARGESSE OF THE SEA MAIDEN* by Denis Johnson**



Now in paperback!

The second and last story collection by the late Denis Johnson is as gritty, funny, and sad as his seminal work, *Jesus' Son*. It's also remarkably different, reflecting, surely, Denis' preoccupation with aging and death at this point in his writing (and life). Some of the stories here are better than others -- some of them feel like Denis is trying to fit too much into these pages. But even his stories that don't quite work hold brilliance -- and serve, to me, as a fascinating culmination of a life's work. The story "Triumph Over the Grave" is worth the price alone!

Tim recommends!

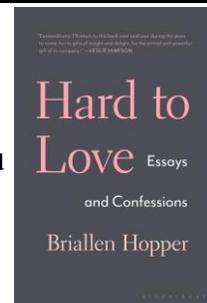
In paperback, fiction, 17.00; Random House Trade.

## NEW NON-FICTION

*HARD TO LOVE* by Briallen Hopper

Available February 5th!

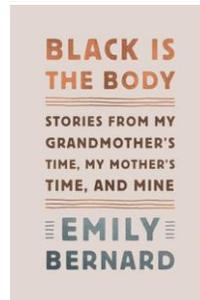
Briallen Hopper's *Hard to Love* is a fresh, well-crafted collection of essays I found notable for their intimacy, warmth and intelligence, thoughtful elegies to friendship, compassion, and grace. Hopper fervently embraces the idea of friendship and the rich intimacies it affords, honoring relationships beyond marriage, the ones that are often treated as invisible or seen as secondary-female friendships, care teams formed in times of illness, or various alternative family formations. She rails against our culture's twin obsessions with romantic love and the cult of self-reliance, and she extols the virtues of dependence on friends and the power of friendships of all kinds. A compelling, smart collection of essays (at times brilliant!), delightful and insightful.



ED LOVED AND HIGHLY RECOMMENDS!

In paperback, non-fiction, 27.00; Bloomsbury Publishing.

### **BLACK IS THE BODY by Emily Bernard**



"Blackness is an art, not a science. It is a paradox: intangible and visceral; a situation and a story. It is the thread that connects these essays, but its significance as an experience emerges randomly, unpredictably . . ." - Emily Bernard

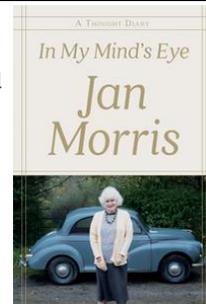
At once relatable and refined, Emily Bernard's *Black is the Body* is a nuanced and penetrating contribution to our present-day dialogue about race in America. In this collection of essays, Bernard writes from her experience as a stabbing victim, a professor of African American studies (married to an Italian-American African American studies professor who works in the same department !!), and as a mother to a pair of adopted Ethiopian twins. She also draws on the experiences of her mother and grandmother, situating her experiences in a broader historical context. Bernard's years of working in academia have honed her voice, and as a result she's able to express vulnerability while maintaining a critical distance from her experiences.

Katharine recommends this intimate and thoughtful collection.

In hardcover, non-fiction, 25.95; Knopf Publishing Group.

### **IN MY MIND'S EYE by Jan Morris**

Jan Morris is now 92, and what a life she has lived (a pioneering transsexual, a reporter covering the first ascent of Mount Everest in 1953, an accomplished and prolific travel writer.) *In My Mind's Eye* consists of 188 delightful, short pieces (none more than 2 pages!), written each day for half a year, personal meditations that are a pure joy to read! They touch on her instinct for kindness, chaos, the idea of walls, nostalgia, irony, zoos (her hatred of zoos!), her fondness for the United States, her vintage Honda, our current age of

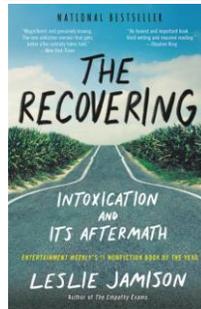


disillusionment, and of course the vagaries of growing old. Her observations and reflections are charming and captivating.

**ED LOVED AND HIGHLY RECOMMENDS!**

**In hardcover, non-fiction, 24.95; Liveright Publishing Corporation.**

### ***THE RECOVERING* by Leslie Jamison**



**Now in paperback!**

Ed loved *The Recovering*, an autobiographical account of alcoholism and recovery by acclaimed essayist Leslie Jamison. I am passionate about this book-it's capacious, redemptive, generous, and as one reviewer said, "reads like a fine poem", soaring above the book's flat subtitle, "intoxication and its aftermath", and rather, as Andrew Solomon says, is "a Tolstoyan study of the human condition." Intertwined with her own unflinching narrative are deeply observed profiles of famous alcoholic writers -- John Berryman, Raymond Carver, Jean Rhys, Denis Johnson, Billie Holiday, Charles Jackson - that crackle and come to life with Jamison's piercing observations and sharp prose. She is not afraid to take on a culture that idolizes the drunken genius (especially when it's a male!), as well as one that criminalizes addiction, and she persuasively counters the myth of alcoholism as a creative force.

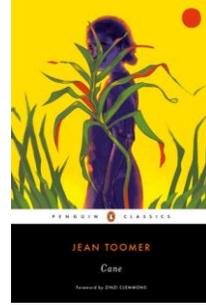
**Triumphant and revelatory, ED LOVED AND HIGHLY RECOMMENDS!!**

**In paperback, non-fiction, 18.99; Back Bay Books.**

**!!! BACKLIST FEVER !!!**

***CANE* by Jean Toomer**

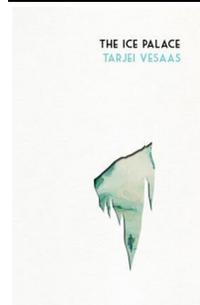
People always ask me, "What's your favorite book?" And, without a doubt, I answer, "Jean Toomer's *Cane*." Why? Because it's such an amazing collection of stories -- depicting, with such power and stunning descriptions, the lives of African Americans living in the rural south. Written in the 1920s, Toomer had some interesting ideas on race (his mother was white, his father black), that really haven't aged well. Thankfully, Zinzi Clemmons and George Hutchinson provide thoughtful, insightful historical context that makes it clear of Jean's contradictions, while also placing *Cane* where it belongs, as an essential book of the Harlem Renaissance.



Tim recommends!

In paperback, fiction, 15.00; Penguin Classics.

## **THE ICE PALACE by Tarjei Vesaas**



There is a haunting, Gothic feel to *The Ice Palace*, considered to be legendary Norwegian writer Tarjei Vesaas's masterpiece. Poetic and tremendously atmospheric, it is a tale of friendship and childhood, of loss and lost innocence, of a pre-adolescent fumbling toward relationships, centering on 2 11-year-old girls, Siss and Unn -- one goes missing, the other's world is shattered. Read *The Ice Palace* in one sitting, immerse yourself in its icy chill and unspoken foreboding; Vesaas's descriptions of the ice palace at the waterfall make the reader feel and breathe the

cold, and he maintains a masterful sense of menace and dread throughout the novel.

Ed loved and highly recommends!

In hardcover, fiction, 18.95; Peter Owen Cased Classics.

## **CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT**

**SOMEDAY WE WILL FLY by Rachel DeWoskin**

*Someday We Will Fly* is marketed by its publisher to young adults, but I found it richly rewarding as an adult novel, too (especially in talking about the much less-well-known aspects of World War II as played out in China). I liked the setting, the narrative, and the whole historical basis of the book, which I found fascinating. Lillia is an incredible, richly drawn character who, at 15, flees the Nazis in Warsaw and takes refuge in frighteningly unfamiliar Shanghai (one of only a few places that accepted Jews without visas), still struggling to survive there. Her story is compelling, and the author's love and knowledge of Shanghai comes through the pages of the novel (DeWoskin herself spent years living and visiting there). It is a story of war and occupation, resilience and hope, complex and nuanced, that also affirms the human need for art and beauty in hard times.



**ED LOVED AND HIGHLY RECOMMENDS!**

**In hardcover, fiction, 17.99; Viking Books for Young Readers.**