

# Bookbites

## Bookends on Main

### Books and Movies

Three books and the movies based on them fall into the “Truth is stranger than fiction” category. All three, or six if you want both media, are good entertainment.



*Florence Foster Jenkins: The Life of the World's Worst Opera Singer* by Darryl W. Bullock takes the cake. How could

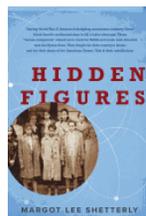
anyone be so tone deaf literally and metaphorically? It's both humorous and touching, a tribute to forging ahead despite real adversity. The movie has Meryl Streep who never fails to make her character come alive; Hugh Grant, still cute in his old age; and “Wolfowitz” of “Big Bang Theory” as Jenkins' talented accompanist.



*The Revenant: A Novel of Revenge* by Michael Punke

Talk of carrying on in spite of adversity, the hero of

*The Revenant*, severely mauled by a bear and left defenseless by his companions, crawls and claws his way about a thousand miles in the dead of winter to serve vengeance on the men who abandoned him. When the movie first came out, young men came to buy the book because they wanted more of it, declaring it the best movie they'd ever seen. Those in middle age or achieving seniority may beg to differ. Just watching it makes you worry about hypothermia. Fur trading was a hard business, thank god for bear skins. *The Revenant* is based on a true story but may be revved up by legend.



*Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race* by Margot Lee Shetterly.

Starting in World War II and moving through to the Cold War, the Civil Rights Movement and the Space Race, *Hidden Figures* tells the story of four African American women who participated in some of NASA's greatest successes. It chronicles their careers, their challenges, forged alliances and their intellect which changed their own lives and their country's future. Hidden no more, it's wonderful to see brilliant women get the credit they deserve.

January 2017

### Inside this issue:

Short reviews of  
*Lost City of the Monkey God*  
*The Terranauts*  
*History of Wolves*

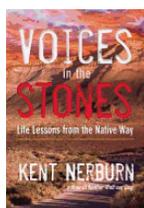
Midwest Bestseller List

“Snow Man” by Wallace Stevens

Bookstore News



### Midwest Connection Picks for January



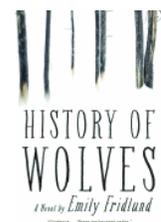
Kent Nerburn draws on his three decades living and working among Native peoples to offer stories and reflections that reveal what the ways of Native Americans have to teach us all about giving, sharing, grieving, and celebrating. Nerburn takes readers inside a Native

feast that highlights respect for elders, to a nearly forgotten Nez Perce battlefield, the traditional burial of a young man and much more, reminding us that as common children of a common land, we have much to learn from each other if only we have the heart to listen.

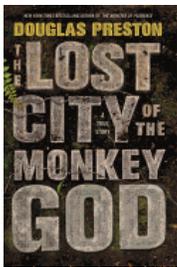


For ages 10 and up, *A Crack in the Sea* is a historical fantasy filled with adventure, magic and a few sea monsters. Stories about three sets of siblings span continents and time, all beautifully illustrated.

*History of Wolves* has the rare honor of being both a Midwest Pick and topping the Indie NEXT list. See review p. 2



## Lost City of the Monkey God by Douglas Preston



Though it is controversial to call a city or civilization recently learned about by outsiders “lost,” in the case of the story told in *Lost City of the Monkey God* by it is appropriate. Douglas

Preston recounts numerous tales, legends, and supposed sightings of The White City in Honduras and eventually becomes part of an archaeological expedition to a “lost” valley that seems to have strong evidence of once having been populated. It’s really a fascinating story of discovery.

A recent development of something

called *lidar* makes aerial visioning of what lies under heavy rain forest canopy possible. Lidar provides the evidence that indeed there could be the “White City” of legend. The expedition is thrilling with Indiana Jones elements, very sketchy outriders, corrupt Honduran politicians, and professional international guides specializing in adventure expeditions, not to mention encounters with fierce poisonous snakes and disease-bearing insects. All this pays off. The expedition makes a spectacular discovery.

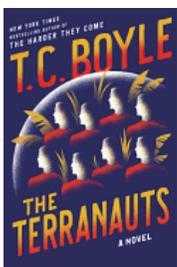
The end of the account has a truly sobering explanation for the likely reason for why the city becomes “lost.” It is part of

the shameful and horrifying legacy of the age of exploration.

Beyond the story of the expedition, Preston provides a short history of the Honduras and description of its landscape. This relatively small country has vast uninhabited areas in *Mosquitia* and incredibly dense rain forest, but also serious deforestation and drug cartels that make it a dangerous country. No wonder unaccompanied children attempt to migrate to the relative safety of the U.S.

Douglas Preston writes for *The New Yorker*, *National Geographic* and other high-profile magazines.

## The Terranauts by T.C. Boyle



T.C. Boyle’s novel, *The Terranauts* starts with the disclaimer that it has no connection to real people and events, but anyone with memory of the biosphere project a generation ago

will recognize Boyle’s inspiration for this book.

It is 1994, and in the desert near Tillman, Arizona, forty miles from Tucson, a grand experiment involving the future of humanity is under way. As

climate change threatens the earth, eight scientists, four men and four women dubbed the Terranauts, have been selected to live under glass in E2,

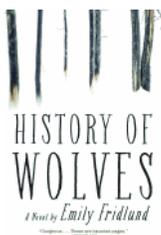
**Boyle’s inimitable style, humor, psychological portraiture makes this a very entertaining read.**

a prototype of a possible off-earth colony with five biomes: rainforest, savanna, desert, ocean, and marsh.

Closely monitored by an all-seeing Mission Control, this New Eden is both a scientific project and momentous publicity stunt. In addition to their roles as medics, farmers, biologists, and survivalists, the Terranauts must impress watchful visitors and a skeptical media curious to see if E2’s environment will somehow be compromised. As the Terranauts face increased scrutiny and a host of disasters, this story of survivalism shows the fallibility of human nature.

Boyle’s inimitable style, humor, and psychological portraiture makes this a very entertaining read.

## The History of Wolves by Emily Fridlund



The *History of Wolves* is the featured book in January’s Indie NEXT list. It topped my personal list of recommendations for the list and it is recommended for reading groups. The novel has a lot of threads in it that make it a good group selection.

The main story takes place in the sum-

mer of fourteen-year old Linda’s lonely life in northern Minnesota. The events of that summer, her relationship with her ex-commune parents, a few teachers and classmates, and most of all the mysterious family that hires her as a babysitter, are told as flashbacks by the thirty-year-old narrator. So it’s a puzzle of a story, but all the pieces are fit together in the end.

The *History of Wolves* I can imagine

using as a class book in my former life as an English teacher. For the complex characters that you don’t want to like but think maybe you should sympathize with, nature as symbol, foreshadowings and backflashes, a narration that zig-zags, and oh yes, a hard scrabble life in the north woods of Minnesota. Maybe start the discussion with the appropriateness of the book title.

# Midwest Bestseller List

## HARDCOVER FICTION

1. **The Underground Railroad** Colson Whitehead
2. **Commonwealth** Ann Patchett
3. **The Whistler** John Grisham
4. **Moonglow** Michael Chabon
5. **All the Light We Cannot See** Anthony Doerr
6. **A Gentleman in Moscow** Amor Towles
7. **Swing Time** Sadie Smith
8. **Homegoing** Yaa Gyasi
9. **Small Great Things** Jodi Picoult
10. **News of the World** Paulette Jiles
11. **The Nix** Nathan Hill
12. **The Trespasser** Tana French
13. **Two by Two** Nicholas Sparks
14. **The North Water** Ian McGuire
15. **Victoria** Daisy Goodwin

## HARDCOVER NONFICTION

1. **Hillbilly Elegy** J.D. Vance
2. **The Undoing Project** Michael Lewis
3. **Thank You for Being Late** Thomas L. Friedman
4. **Killing the Rising Sun** Bill O'Reilly, Martin Dugard
5. **Born a Crime** Trevor Noah
6. **The Hidden Life of Trees** Peter Wohlleben
7. **Atlas Obscura** Joshua Foer
8. **Cooking for Jeffrey** Ina Garten
9. **Between the World and Me** Ta-Nehisi Coates
10. **All the Gallant Men** Donald Stratton, Ken Gire
11. **Upstream** Mary Oliver
12. **Hero of the Empire** Candice Millard
13. **A Life Well Played** Arnold Palmer
14. **Born to Run** Bruce Springsteen
15. **The Book of Joy** The Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu

## TRADE PAPERBACK FICTION

1. **A Man Called Ove** Fredrik Backman
2. **My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry** Fredrik Backman

3. **The Sympathizer** Viet Thanh Nguyen
4. **The Sellout**, Paul Beatty
5. **My Brilliant Friend**, Elena Ferrante
6. **The Little Paris Bookshop** Nina George
7. **The Vegetarian** Han Kang
8. **Milk and Honey** Rupi Kaur
9. **The Girl on the Train** Paula Hawkins
10. **My Name Is Lucy Barton** Elizabeth Strout
11. **The Association of Small Bombs** Karan Mahajan
12. **Americanah** Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
13. **In a Dark, Dark Wood** Ruth Ware
14. **A Brief History of Seven Killings** Marlon James
15. **Circling the Sun** Paula McLain

## TRADE PAPERBACK NONFICTION

1. **Alexander Hamilton** Ron Chernow
2. **The Boys in the Boat** Daniel James Brown
3. **The Road to Little Dribbling** Bill Bryson
4. **We Should All Be Feminists** Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
5. **The Old Farmer's Almanac 2017: Special Anniversary Edition**
6. **Just Mercy** Bryan Stevenson
7. **Hidden Figures** Margot Lee Shetterly
8. **The Invention of Nature** Andrea Wulf
9. **Holidays on Ice** David Sedaris
10. **A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota** Sun Yung Shin (Ed)
11. **Roughneck Grace** Michael Perry
12. **The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2017** Sarah Janssen (Ed.),
13. **Johanna's Christmas** J. Basford
14. **The Wright Brothers** David McCullough

15. **S.P.Q.R.: A History of Ancient Rome** Mary Beard

## CHILDREN'S ILLUSTRATED

1. **Goodnight Moon**
2. **Little Blue Truck**
3. **The Day the Crayons Quit**
4. **Mother Bruce**
5. **The Snowy Day**
6. **Jingle Baby**
7. **The Polar Express**
8. **Otis and the Kittens**
9. **Give Please a Chance**
10. **Ada Twist, Scientist**

## CHILDREN'S INTEREST

1. **Ghosts** Raina Telgemeier
2. **Rad Women Worldwide** Kate Schatz
3. **The Secret Keepers** Trenton Stewart
4. **The Girl Who Drank the Moon** Kelly Barnhill
5. **Pax** Sara Pennypacker
6. **Wonder** R.J. Palacio
7. **Drama** Raina Telgemeier
8. **Dog Man** Dav Pilkey
9. **A Wrinkle in Time** Madeleine L'Engle,
10. **Raymie Nightingale** Kate DiCamillo

## CHILDREN'S FICTION SERIES TITLES

1. **Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them: 2. Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Double Down**
3. **Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children**
4. **Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets: The Illustrated Edition**
5. **Harry Potter and the Cursed Child: Parts One & Two**
6. **The Princess in Black**
7. **The Sword of Summer (Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard, Book 1)**
8. **The Hammer of Thor (Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard, Book 2)**
9. **The Princess in Black and the Hungry Bunny Horde**
10. **Mercy Watson to the Rescue** Kate DiCamillo

## Bookends on Main

214 East Main St.  
Menomonie, WI 54751

Phone: 715-233-6252  
Fax: 715-233-6252  
Email: [info@bookendsonmain.com](mailto:info@bookendsonmain.com)  
[www.bookendsonmain.com](http://www.bookendsonmain.com)



An Indie Bookstore

New & Used Books, Toys, Gifts,  
Greeting Cards, Guitars & Guitar  
Strings, Journals, etc.

## Snow Man by Wallace Stevens

One must have a mind of winter  
To regard the frost and the boughs  
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time  
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,  
The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think  
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,  
In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land  
Full of the same wind  
That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow,  
And, nothing himself, beholds  
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.



## Bookstore Drawing Winners, Bookstore Business



Winner of Jan' Brett's book and autographed poster of *Gingerbread Christmas* is Becky McCurdy who, happily, has a child of the age to enjoy this book. Thanks to all who registered for the drawing.

The Gift Certificate winner hasn't yet claimed it, so we are getting ready to re-allocate it.

December 2016 was a banner month for us which puts us in line with a national trend, the upswing of independent bookstores. While many big chain bookstores have faltered or closed down, independents, neighborhood bookstores are re-emerging. To paraphrase a famous Mark Twain quote, report of the death of books in paper is premature.

What is happening to bookstores may be part of the national trend against huge covered shopping malls. No new

ones have been constructed in about twenty years. Instead, there is a sort of return of the strip mall and maybe the fact that people want to park as near as possible to the front door of the store they want to enter—part of our laziness and mania for efficiency.

So WELCOME 2017 and may the bookstore trend continue!

P.S. the winter catalog coupon is good until January 31.