

The Book Sense 76

Why 76?

Independence • 1776 • Independents

76 great books, picked by booksellers with experience, knowledge and passion.

A diverse, eclectic range of choices.

September and October 2000



These are the Top Ten Vote-Getters for this September/October Book Sense 76, as tallied from hundreds of recommendations from independent booksellers. For each book, one of the many enthusiastic nominations was chosen to represent it as follows:

1. **The top vote-getter; an expose published in June that has gathered a LOT of great word-of-mouth: BLACK MASS: The Irish Mob, the FBI, and the Devil's Deal**, by Dick Lehr and Gerard O'Neill (Public Affairs, \$26, 1891620401) "This book is riveting to say the least. It is unbelievable to what lengths the FBI went to protect two top mobsters. This book is more than a true crime offering; it's a glimpse of both the inner workings of the FBI and the Boston underworld."—**Bob Hegarty, Booksmith, Woburn MA** "This true story of a pact between two criminals and the FBI during the last three decades both fascinates and horrifies as one watches the line between law enforcement and criminal activity blur and finally disappear. I couldn't put it down."—**Ellen Tisdell, Davis-Kidd Booksellers, Nashville, TN**
2. **A close second; many booksellers have this on their staff pick tables already: NO GREAT MISCHIEF**, by Alistair MacLeod (Norton, \$23.95, 0393049701) "Michael Ondaatje calls MacLeod 'one of the great undiscovered writers of our time.' This beautiful novel, written in haunting prose, tells the story of a family living in 18th Century Cape Breton. This book is a winner."—**Nancy Olsen, Quail Ridge, Raleigh, NC** "This haunting and lyrical novel explores several generations of Scottish immigrants whose lives are shaped by that bleak landscape of Nova Scotia. The spare, understated writing compels one to re-read passages for the sheer beauty and power of the language."—**Mary Benham, Book Passage, Corte Madera, CA**
3. **And the winner of the prestigious Giller Prize in Canada is a hit here, too: A GOOD HOUSE**, by Bonnie Burnard (Holt, \$25, 0805064958) "I loved this book, and looked forward to getting reinvolved with the characters each night. This is a book where nothing really happens out of the ordinary—but the ordinary is extraordinary because of the skill of the storyteller."—**Lesley Kleiser, Montgomery Book Co., Cincinnati, OH** "I curled up with *The Good House* and came away with a feeling of awe. This beautiful story is told with an all-embracing empathy for its characters."—**Barbara Morrow, Northshire Bookstore, Manchester Center, VT**
4. **A Finalist for both the National Book Award & Book Sense Book of the Year Award—and #1 Book Sense Bestseller last fall—now in paperback: PLAINSONG**, by Kent Haruf (Vintage Books, \$13 paper, 0375705856) "Set in a small eastern Colorado town, these overlapping stories convey a deep sense of community and strong character. This novel is just plain wonderful."—**Tom Wells, Dearleap Books, Bristol, VT**
5. **A controversial book from last fall, now in paper: ALL SOULS: A Family Story from Southie**, by Michael Patrick MacDonald (Ballantine, \$14 paper, 034544177X; due out Oct. 3) "Starting with the white Boston families who didn't want to be bussed, MacDonald unravels the tale of a poor family caught by circumstances. Reading *All Souls* reminds me of what makes a perfect memoir—great writing, an interesting story, and a new perspective."—**Daniel Goldin, Harry W. Schwartz Bookshops, Milwaukee, WI**
6. **A fantastic debut novel: WINTER RANGE**, by Claire Davis (Picador, \$23, 0312261403) "What a powerful, gritty, honest book! I was thoroughly enthralled by Davis's ability to write about the Montana landscape, the animals, and the men and women so truthfully. She understands what happens to people in the harshest of times, dealing with the pull of the past and the heartaches of the future."—**Alaine Borgias, Village Books, Bellingham, WA**
7. **From one of the independents' favorite writers: THE BLIND ASSASSIN**, by Margaret Atwood (Doubleday, \$26, 0385475721; in stores Sept. 5) "The lives of a button dynast's daughters are the threads which Atwood uses to spin together dazzling tales within tales in this convoluted, compelling novel of the Depression and its aftermath. One of Canada's finest authors at her astonishing best."—**Betsy Burton, The King's English, Salt Lake City, UT**
8. **A memoir deserving of a wide readership: THE BLOOD RUNS LIKE A RIVER THROUGH MY DREAMS: A Memoir**, by Nasdijj (Houghton Mifflin \$23, 0618048928) "This is one of the more powerful books I have ever read. The author is of mixed Navajo/white heritage, and although the subject matter is bleak, Nasdijj's humor constantly breaks through. Like the best of writers, his voice is unique. I will remember this memoir for a long time."—**Michael Katzenberg, Bear Pond Books, Montpelier, VT**
9. **An independent favorite from last year, now in paperback: MISS JULIA SPEAKS HER MIND**, by Ann B. Ross (HarperPerennial, \$13 paper, 0688177751) "The story is heartwarming, hilarious, even exciting. One of our most recommended books, and a great books for reading groups."—**Julie C. Harris, Best of Books, Edmond, OK**
10. **A surprise from a Booker Prize winning novelist: THE GIGGLER TREATMENT**, by Roddy Doyle (Scholastic, \$14.95, 0439162998) "This is the first children's book by Doyle, and it's a riot! Great for any kid who's a Roald Dahl fan!"—**Suzanne Coopersmith, R. J. Julia Booksellers, Madison, CT**

A
Big
Deal!

Pass along the joy of browsing at an independent bookstore to your family & friends living anywhere in America. Just send the new Book Sense Gift Certificate, available and redeemable at over 1,000 independent bookstores nationally!! How great is that?

The person receiving your gift certificate has only to call 1-888-BOOKSENSE to get directions to their nearest independent bookstore with Book Sense. You can also visit BookSense.com for a directory, and bigyellow.com to print out a map to any Book Sense store.

Books make great gifts, and now, so do Book Sense Gift Certificates. And you've turned another person on to a great independent bookstore in the process. Ask at this store for more information. Thank you!

BOOK

s e n s e™ Independent Bookstores for Independent Minds

The Book Sense 70

Books for Harry Potter Fans

11. **THE FIRES OF MERLIN: Book 3**, by T.A. Barron (Ace, \$5.99 paper, 0441007139; in stores Sept. 5) "The first two of the Lost Years of Merlin series are flying out of the store. When I asked Brett (18 years old), who has worked in the store for two years, why he liked this series better than the other Merlin books, he said: "Because these aren't just about an old man. These are about Merlin when he was a kid, with real concerns like the rest of us." —Valerie Lewis and Brett Carlson, **Hicklebee's Book Store, San Jose, CA**
12. **ISLAND OF THE AUNTS**, by Eva Ibbotson (Dutton, \$15.99, 0525464840) "Three elderly British aunts living on an island have decided that their duty to maintain the earth's balance must be passed onto the next generation. Having no children, they decide to "chase", i.e. kidnap, three kids from London. What follows is an exciting page-turner featuring a greedy father, a cell phone-packing boy, a sea monster, 'selkies' that cannot decide whether to live on land or sea, and much more!" —Bill Dittmann, **Marin Teachers' Store/ Education Express, San Rafael, CA** (Ibbotson is the author of the Book Sense bestsellers, **SECRET OF PLATFORM 13** and **WHICH WITCH?**, also great 'Potter deprivation' books!)
13. **REM WORLD**, by Rodman Philbrick (Blue Sky Press, \$16.95, 0439083621) "This is a quick, exciting fantasy for 8-12 year olds. Short chapters with a lot of 'hooks' to keep even the reluctant reader going. A great fill-in between Harry Potter books." — Anne Whalen, **Brookline Booksmith, Brookline, MA**

Reserve your copy now of the most-requested book of the year
—after only Harry IV—the third and final volume of
the **GOLDEN COMPASS/DARK MATERIALS TRILOGY!**
In stores Oct. 10 — Philip Pullman's **THE AMBER SPYGLASS!!**

Books for Teens

14. **STARGIRL**, by Jerry Spinelli (Knopf, \$15.95, 0679886370) "The students at Mica High have no idea what to make of Stargirl, a 10th grader who plays the ukulele, keeps a pet rat in her bag, and dances in the rain. This story of individuality, conformity, peer pressure, and first love touched me deeply with its truth and beauty. I paused for a few days before I finished because I didn't want to say good-bye to Stargirl. I found I didn't have to." —Mari Enoch, **The Bookloft, Great Barrington, MA**
15. **TEEN ANGST? NAAAH: A Quasi-Autobiography**, by Ned Vizzini (Free Spirit, \$12.95 paper, 1575420848) "This is a great read for teens. I loved reading about an ordinary kid doing regular teenage things!" —Jane Stroh, **The Bookstore, Glen Ellyn, IL**

Illustrated Books for Children

16. **MADLENKA**, by Peter Sis (Frances Foster Books, \$17, 0374399697) "I've just taken the most creative walk around a city block—and it's in a picture book! Madlenka is a gorgeous die-cut book. A peek through each hole introduces us to Madlenka's neighbors—the French baker, the Indian newspaper man, the Italian ice-cream man, the Latin-American green grocer, a German opera singer, an African-American school friend, and the Asian shopkeeper—a beautiful multicultural blend of old country, new city. I absolutely loved the quality of the story and the art; this will be one of our store's fall season features!" —Carolyn Harrington, **Great Horned Owl Children's Bookstore, Louisville, CO**
17. **OLIVIA**, by Ian Falconer (Atheneum, \$16, 0689829531) "This is such an endearingly original picture book. In deceptively simple drawings, with splashes of red as the only color, the author has created a piglet to charm the heart of every reader. Most parents will see their child, and most children will see themselves in Olivia. This is very likely another porcine classic." —Leslie Reiner, **Inkwood Books, Tampa, FL**
18. **A RATTLE OF BONES: A Halloween Book of Collective Nouns**, by Kipling West (Orchard, \$15.95, 0531301966) "This is an *Exaltation of Larks* with a Halloween theme. From 'an unkindness of ravens' to a 'murder of crows', this is a delightful trip through the English language." —Shirley Masengill, **Cover to Cover Booksellers, San Francisco, CA**
19. **SAIL AWAY**, by Florence McNeil, illus. by David McPhail (Orca Books, \$19.95, 1551431475). "A frequently asked question is "Do you have any books on pirates?" Here is the answer. Fun illustrations and friendly characters show young children the meaning of basic sailing terms as a young pirate prepares his boat for the sea." —Teresa Corson, **Stroudwater Books, Dover, NH**
20. **THE YELLOW TRAIN**, by Alistair Hight; illus. by Francois Roca (Creative Editions, \$17.95, 1568461283) "If you haven't come across this unusual picture book, seek it out now! Exquisite shadowy illustrations draw the reader into the adventures of a grandfather, grandson, and the Yellow Train. Reminiscent of *The Polar Express*, this is truly a year 'round book for all ages!" —Sidney Jackson, **Tattered Cover Bookstore, Denver, CO**

Fiction in Paperback

21. **THE CATASTROPHIST**, by Ronan Bennett (Simon & Schuster, \$13 paper, 0684870363) "This novel satisfies every prerequisite of a great story; there's intrigue, romance, and history. The 1959 Belgian Congo is ablaze with independence fever. James Gillespie, an Irish novelist, arrives seeking his former lover, an Italian journalist who is drawn to leftist politics. The author, who in his youth was jailed for IRA activity, shows he possesses the talent for this ardent depiction of both the writer's detachment as watcher and his lover's idealism. An ingenious, intense novel." —Susan Avery, **Ariel Booksellers, New Paltz, NY**

22. **CIGARETTE GIRL**, by Carol Wolper (Riverhead, \$12.95 paper, 1573228184) "Funny, cynical and accurate, this is the story of Elizabeth West, a 28-year-old screenwriter in search of her perfect 'Mr. Maybe'. Wolper offers a glimpse of the not-so-glamorous Hollywood life and an almost perfect tale of the life of the twenty-something L.A. woman." —Maret Orliss, **Vroman's Bookstore, Pasadena, CA**
23. **THE DANGEROUS HUSBAND**, by Jane Shapiro (Back Bay, \$12.95 paper, 0316782653) "If only she had known...perhaps she wouldn't have had to plot the murder of this most clumsy and perilous husband. Humor at its blackest." —Susan Whittaker, **Viewpoint Books, Columbus, IN**
24. **THE GUN SELLER**, by Hugh Laurie (Pocket, \$14 paper, 067102082X) "A fast, smart, funny quasi-sendup of the James Bond genre. The sort of book Wodehouse would have written if he wrote profane, violent, '90s spy novels." —Ain Vale, **Powell's, Portland, OR**
25. **HEADLONG**, by Michael Frayn (Picador, \$14 paper, 0312267460) "A witty, fast-paced novel about a certain Martin Clay, who stumbles upon a painting that could be a lost treasure. Now, how to separate it from its owner? The fun level soars as the scheming becomes more desperate." —Diane Beemer, **The Book Stall at Chestnut Court, Winnetka, IL**
26. **HIGH WIND IN JAMAICA**, by Richard Hughes (New York Review Books, \$12.95 paper, 0940322153) "When a group of children headed for England are taken onto a pirate ship, events unfold that question the nature and limits of innocence. My book group had quite a thought-provoking discussion about this rediscovered classic." —Matt Miller, **Tattered Cover, Denver, CO**
27. **THE HONEY THIEF**, by Elizabeth Graver (Harvest, out early Sept., \$13 paper, 0156013908) "A coming-of-age story, moving from the noise of the city to the inner turmoil of rural New York. We grow close to the troubled teenage girl and want her to gain some insights and equilibrium, although the two adults in her life—her mother and the beekeeper—have their own struggles. The ending is subtle and only partly resolved, but hopeful. This story stays with you." —Alicia Greene, **Olsson's Books & Records-Georgetown, Washington, DC**
28. **THE LADIES' AUXILIARY**, by Tova Mirvis (Ballantine, \$14 paper, 0345441265; due out Sept. 5) "This pleasurable, thought-provoking debut novel gives the reader an intimate view of the relations and rituals inside a small Orthodox Jewish community in Memphis. This is a finely crafted novel about communities, religion (real and observed) and loss." —Lyn Roberts, **Square Books, Oxford, MS**
29. **LAMB IN LOVE**, by Carrie Brown (Bantam, \$11.95 paper, 0553380850) "You say the words "love story" and people groan, but read it and you'll quickly change your mind about what modern love stories are like. Eloquent, romantic, and completely unschmaltzy in every way, *Lamb in Love* is a complete and wonderful surprise. I loved it!" —Leigh Winterbottom, **Verbatim Booksellers, Vail, CO**
30. **THE LAST LIFE**, by Claire Messud (Harvest, in stores early Sept., \$14 paper, 0156011654) "Set during the revolt of French Algiers, this is one of the most beautiful novels I've read in years." —Doni Kay, **Books & Books, Miami Beach, FL**
31. **THE OBITUARY WRITER**, by Porter Shreve (Mariner, \$12 paper, 0395981328) "Gordie Hatch, at age 22, is breaking into journalism as an obituary writer at the St. Louis Independent. He dreams of following in the footsteps of his long-dead father, a newspaperman. Enter Alicia Whiting, the young widow of a very ordinary banker. When she insists that Gordie produce a feature story on her husband, his life and career begin to unravel. An excellent first novel by a promising young writer." —Dick Sandvik, **Paulina Springs Book Company, Sisters, OR**
32. **PURE**, by Rebecca Ray (Grove, \$13 paper, 0802137008) "By the time I was halfway through this phenomenal book, I couldn't put it down, finishing at 2 a.m. This book is so well-written, especially if it was indeed written by a 16-year-old! When I finished the book, I had many questions about her family and what had really happened; the unspoken feelings were so intense. I'll recommend this book to my friends and to book clubs." —Andra Tracy, **OutWord Bound, Indianapolis, IN**
33. **THE STORY OF A MILLION YEARS**, by David Huddle (Mariner, \$13 paper, 0618082336) "This is a fascinating novel about the affair of a 15-year-old girl with the 42-year-old husband of her mother's best friend, told from the perspectives of the different characters. This is no 'Lolita', but instead a rather unemotional look at how the needs of different people get played out in a few months of passion, then reverberate for years in all of their lives. I am constantly intrigued and moved by a good writer's ability to see how the seemingly small, innocent acts in our lives can have such powerful impact." —Bruce Jacobs, **Watermark Books, Wichita, KS**
34. **A STAR CALLED HENRY**, by Roddy Doyle (Penguin, in stores Sept. 5, \$14 paper, 0140296131) "The first of Doyle's new trilogy, this is a stunning portrayal of Ireland from the turn of the century through the civil wars. It is easily the best novel I have read all year." —Angela Biaz, **Nicola's Books, Ann Arbor, MI**
35. **SUMMIT AVENUE**, by Mary Sharratt (Coffee House Press, \$14.95 paper, 1566890977) "I highly recommend this wonderful new novel. I read it in a weekend, absorbed in the story and the characters, and was moved to tears by the ending. It is a tale of many things—immigrant life, working in Midwest flour mills, family ties, fairy tales as feminine archetypes—but more than anything, it is the story of two women and how they found their way to each other against all odds." —Barb Wieser, **Amazon Bookstore Cooperative, Minneapolis, MN**
36. **THOSE JORDAN GIRLS**, by Joan M. Drury (Spinsters Ink, \$12 paper, 1883523362) "A simply delightful matriarchal tale of melded generations. Historical in all the right places. Emotional, evoking...from laughter to tears. THIS should be a mini-series." —Cheryl Townsend, **Cat's Impetuous Books & Stuff, Kent, OH**

The Book Sense 70

37. WELDING WITH CHILDREN, by Tim Gautreaux (Picador, \$12 paper, 0312267924) "Gautreaux's writing is evocative of the deep South (particularly Louisiana) while being extremely straightforward. His characters are warm people, full of flaws, that are treated with great sympathy. His plots are deceptively complex; everything seems quite simple until you reach the end and have to rethink it all. A magnificent book."
—Arsen Kashkashian, Boulder Book Store, Boulder, CO

Coming in paperback in October are two of the Book Sense Book of the Year Finalists—much loved books by independent booksellers and readers last year: Susan Vreeland's *GIRL IN HYACINTH BLUE* and Sena Jeter Naslund's *AHAB'S WIFE*.

Hardcover Fiction

See also the Top Ten

38. BLACKBERRY WINE, by Joanne Harris (Avon, \$24, 0380978725) "Return to Joanne Harris's France and the setting for her book *Chocolat*, where she will have you thirsting for the opportunity to partake of the wine and the local characters in her newest story of magical reality, *Blackberry Wine*. Pure pleasure!"
—Glenna Martin, Auntie's Bookstore, Spokane, WA (*Chocolat* has held a spot on the Book Sense Bestseller List for a very long time.)

39. CHANG AND ENG, by Darin Strauss (Dutton, \$23.95, 0525945121) "Chang and Eng Bunker spent their entire 63 years together as curiosities of the world. One of history's most famous oddities, they found celebrity status touring the world's stages in a cage. Straus rescues the twins from the sideshow of history, drawing from their extraordinary conjoined lives a novel of exceptional beauty."
—Ingrid Nyström, Stacey's Bookstore, San Francisco, CA

40. CONDITIONS OF FAITH, by Alex Miller (Scribner, \$25, 0684869357) "In 1923, a French/Scottish engineer travels to Australia to enter a competition to build a bridge across Sydney Harbor. He and Emily Stanton fall in love and, against her father's wishes for an academic life, she marries and moves with George to Paris. She finds marriage stifling, searching for ways to express her own personality and intelligence. We ask, is Emily a dissatisfied young woman or a proto-feminist? This novel is an exciting brew of passion, intelligence, and travel. Miller has a gift for description, from life in Paris to an archeological dig in Tunisia."
—Carla Cohen, Politics & Prose, Washington, DC

41. DROWNING RUTH, by Christina Schwarz (Doubleday, \$23.95, 038549971X) "This is a riveting story of sisters, of sorrow, and of loss. When Amanda Starkey returns to her birthplace, it is to take refuge with her beloved sister and niece. Months later, the sister's mysterious and untimely death sets in motion a chain of events, all balanced tenuously on the lies of one tragic night that will take years to unravel. Absolutely haunting and suspenseful."
—Megan Scott, Scott's Bookstore, Mt. Vernon, WA

42. GRANGE HOUSE, by Sarah Blake (Picador, \$24, 0312245440) "Maisie Thomas spends every summer with her family at Grange House, an island hotel off the coast of Maine, but her life changes when two lovers are found dead in each other's arms. This novel is beautifully written; a real gem."
—Lori Haggblom, Kepler's Books & Magazines, Menlo Park, CA

43. THE HATBOX BABY, by Carrie Brown (Algonquin, \$22.95, 1565122992; due out mid-Sept.) "When the author gave birth to premature twins, she came across a photograph of a traveling exhibit of the tiny babies in their incubators from the 1930s. This photo inspired this wonderful new novel, named for the baby delivered to the incubator in a hatbox. Brown's story follows the fate of the baby, who becomes part of an exhibit in the 1900 Chicago World's Fair. A blend of historical fact and intriguing fiction, this is yet another great book by Carrie Brown."
—Amanda Tobier, Third Place Books, Lake Forest Park, WA

44. AN INVISIBLE SIGN OF MY OWN, by Aimee Bender (Doubleday, \$22.95, 0385492235) "In *The Girl in the Flammable Skirt*, the reader was introduced to Bender's mind-boggling ability to craft startling tales of contemporary magical realism. In this new book, this unique talent is greatly expanded upon, with main characters fleshy and whole, emotions puzzling and poignant, actions shocking and surreal. There is superstition, disbelief, aching, discovery, and redemption. If there is another young author out there who writes with the blessed skill and precision of Aimee Bender, then I would certainly like to know about it."
—Jules Davis, Pendragon Books, Oakland, CA

45. JAYBER CROW, by Wendell Berry (Counterpoint, \$25, 1582430292) "Berry takes us back again to Port William, Kentucky, and to a world that, if not already lost, we are losing more each day. Berry offers a marvelous tale of faith and community with all his usual intelligence and compassion. Several of us here have read it and we all highly recommend it."
—Brian McCarthy, Wordsworth, Cambridge, MA

46. THE MAN WHO ATE THE 747, by Ben Sherwood (Delacorte, \$19.95, 0553801821) "Keeper of the Records J.J. Smith goes to Nebraska to verify that Wally is eating a 747 to prove his love for Willa. Full of references to records of biggest or best, this novel really celebrates the beauty of the ordinary and how the truly important things in life often get hidden by the outrageous."
—Lise Friedman, Dutton's Brentwood Books, Los Angeles, CA (Also on audiotope.)

47. THE NAME OF THE WORLD, by Denis Johnson (HarperCollins, \$22, 0060192488) "Johnson's latest work combines his poetic insight and narrative ability into a telling account of loss and how we survive"
—Kevin Bauer, Book Revue, Huntington, NY (Johnson is the author of *Jesus' Son*, a new film.)

48. NEARER THAN THE SKY, by T. Greenwood (St. Martins, \$23.95, 0312265034) "Greenwood's previous novel, *Breathing Water*, is one of our real favorites, and this new one is even better. Indie Brown has fled from her dysfunctional Arizona home to Maine and a strong, loving relationship. When she is called back to help her sister care for her mother, the past she has tried to bury confronts her again. The subject matter is dark, but Greenwood's writing skill makes it a compelling story told in masterful language."
—Donna Urey, White Birch Books, N. Conway, NH

49. NOWHERE ELSE ON EARTH, by Josephine Humphreys (Viking, \$24.95, 0670891762; due out Aug. 31) "Told during and after the Civil War in remote Carolina pine lands, this novel is eerie in its evocation of partisan feuds, family, and personal loves. Through a perceptive young woman's eyes, we see her enter adulthood during a time of intense cultural and gender turmoil. We seldom reflect on women's views of war and its calamitous effects, but here is a point of view worth pondering."
—Ruthanne Kah, Malaprop's Bookstore Café, Asheville, NC

50. PERFECT SILENCE, by Jeff Hutton (Breakaway Books, \$23, 1891369202) "This is a winner. It's a story of a young Virginia man's love of baseball amidst the horror of the Civil War. Joseph Tyler, a Confederate soldier, rescues a wounded Yankee soldier from a fire following the horrible Battle of the Wilderness. When the soldier dies from his wounds, Joe finds an unmailed letter to a woman in New York—a letter that in the ensuing years changes Joe's life. *Perfect Silence* is so well-written; we are quite excited to have the chance to put this book in our customer's hands."
—Barry Johnson, Books at Stonehenge, Raleigh, NC

51. ROPE BURNS: Stories from the Corner, by F.X. Toole (Ecco Press, \$23, 0060198206) "In real life, Toole was a seasoned corner man. He brings the grit of his profession to this accomplished collection of fight stories. Toole obviously knows boxing, but just as important, he knows how to craft great fiction that challenges the reader to see and feel the disturbing but often beautiful world of the 'sweet science.' A must for fans of Thom Jones and Pete Dexter."
—Steve Henry, Hawley-Cooke Booksellers, Louisville, KY

52. TAKING LOTTIE HOME, by Terry Kay (Morrow, \$25, 0688176461; due out in Oct.) "A beautifully crafted story of dreams, dreamers, and values—trust, integrity, family, and love. Set in the early 1900s, Terry Kay's imaginative gathering of unforgettable characters is a great read for both men and women."
—Lee Duffus, Bookworks, Aptos, CA

53. WHEN WE WERE ORPHANS, by Kazuo Ishiguro (Knopf, \$25, 0375410546) "Ishiguro's amazingly compelling new novel gives us the story of Christopher Banks, a 1930s British detective whose parents disappeared in Shanghai when he was young. Upon his return to China as an adult, expecting to find his parents alive and well, he finds the Chinese and Japanese at war in a surreal landscape where his parents remain tantalizingly out of reach. Try this one for your book club; you won't be able to stop talking about it."
—Joe Murphy, Olsson's Books and Records, Washington, DC

Like Having a Friend in the Business

With thousands of new books being published each month, how can you know what's really good and worth the price? Reviews help, and there's word-of-mouth from friends. A great objective source is the pros who work in independent bookstores—professional booksellers who have years of experience in discovering the truly great books and who put their reputations on the line every time they recommend a book to you.

It's about passion, objectivity...and trust.

History, Memoir and Current Events

See also the Top Ten

54. BLACKBIRD: A Childhood Lost and Found, by Jennifer Lauck (Pocket, \$26, 0671042556) "There are no words to describe all of my feelings about this very special book. It is poignant, beautifully crafted—a tribute to a gifted writer and the author's incredible spirit. I was struck by the fact that there was so little laughter in her life, yet she clung to the words of her mother and father who continued to give her strength."
—Patsy Madden, Bennett Books, Wyckoff, NJ (Also on audiotope.)

55. BOWLING ALONE: The Collapse and Revival of American Community, by Robert Putnam (Simon & Schuster, \$26, 0684832836) "This is a blueprint for social action in the next century; very provocative and engaging. Please read it!"
—Margie Skinner, Book House of Stuyvesant Plaza, Albany, NY

56. CHANGE ME INTO ZEUS'S DAUGHTER: A Memoir, by Barbara Robinette Moss (Scribner, \$24, 074320218X) "This is an insightful account of a childhood in poverty and a powerfully inspiring story for women. Barbara's character and inner strength pulled her through a nightmarish adolescence, one marred by a facial disfigurement. This is a transforming story, and one you will want to share."
—Jan Weissmiller, Prairie Lights Books, Iowa City, IA

57. COLTER: The True Story of the Best Dog I Ever Had, by Rick Bass (Houghton Mifflin, \$22, 0395926181) "No matter how much we try to maintain some order of dominance over a dog we are reminded that sometimes there is more allegiance to a tossed ball than to us. Rick Bass has experienced such times and has written a wonderful story of friendship, trust, and devotion. The words move with all of the grace, humor, and honesty that Bass has brought to us before."
—David Henkes, University Bookstore, Bellevue, WA

58. COMMAND PERFORMANCE: An Actress in the Theater of Politics, by Jane Alexander (Public Affairs, \$25, 1891620061) "As Alexander takes us through the machinations of Congress, we see that her prior experience in the theater gives her an insider's take on Washington. The battle for government funding of the arts in the era of Gingrich is certainly worthy of a dramatic reading. There is enough celebrity gossip to make this excellent memoir fun, but in the end it is a passionate argument for the preservation of the NEA from someone who should know."
—Heather Stewart, A Different Light Bookstore, New York, NY

59. ECOLOGY OF A CRACKER CHILDHOOD, by Janisse Ray (Milkweed, \$14.95 paper, 1571312471) "To write about your people and a place requires wisdom and knowledge. Ray's life story and story of the Georgia long-leaf pine ecosystem are beautifully interwoven in this biography of place."
—Barbara Theroux, Fact and Fiction, Missoula, MT

The Book Sense 76

60. **HIDING PLACES: A Father and His Sons Retrace Their Family's Escape from the Holocaust**, by Daniel Asa Rose (Simon & Schuster, \$25, 0684854783) "This memoir is as captivating and suspenseful as a well-written mystery. Rose and his sons retrace the path of their relatives' escape from the Holocaust, becoming sleuths digging for truth. The tenderness and insight put forth both to Rose's sons and the reader make this book stand out as a wonderful memoir about connecting with past, present and future generations."—**Natalia Cooper, Newtonville Books, Newton, MA** (This book was just selected as the current New England Booksellers' Discovery Book of the Month.)
61. **THE INEXTINGUISHABLE SYMPHONY: A True Story of Music and Love in Nazi Germany**, by Martin Goldsmith (John Wiley & Sons, \$24.95, 0471350974) "This previously unknown chapter in the story of Nazi persecution is also a love story and moral conundrum. I looked forward to every moment that I could pick it up. The moral questions of who was best served by the formation of the Kulturbund (Orchestra)—the Jews or the Nazis—is one that I continue to ponder. This fascinating book stays with you."—**Betsy Detwiler, Buttonwood Books, Cohasset, MA**
62. **KIND OF BLUE: The Making of the Miles Davis Masterpiece**, by Ashley Kahn (Da Capo Press, \$23, 0306809869) "There's plenty of detail here to please any jazz purist yet it is accessible and entertaining for the average fan. Peppered with quotes from those involved and other musical luminaries, Kahn takes us through every step of *Kind of Blue's* recording and its impact on the jazz world. Utilizing unedited transcriptions of the master-session tapes and many unpublished photographs, Kahn lets us witness the genius of creation. With album sales still going strong, we all know someone who deserves this book."—**Ken Pawlina, Talking Leaves Books, Buffalo, NY**
63. **POSTVILLE: A Clash of Cultures in Heartland America**, by Stephen Bloom (Harcourt, \$25, 0151006520) "This is a keenly observed story of friction between local residents of a small Iowa town and the Hasidic Jews who buy the slaughterhouse. Bloom manages to get both sides to tell him their story and confess their attitudes, warts and all. A fascinating book about cultural change in the American heartland."—**Brian Weese, Bibelot Books, Baltimore, MD**
64. **WAITING: True Confessions of a Waitress**, by Debra Ginsberg (HarperCollins, \$22, 0060194790) "This is a great look inside a profession that we all know little about but is part of our everyday lives. Ginsberg's funny, insightful, behind-the-scenes look at restaurants—the staff, the customers, the good and the ugly—is a compelling read. I loved it."—**Carole Carden, Esmeralda Books, Del Mar, CA**
65. **WHERE RIVERS CHANGE DIRECTION**, by Mark Spragg (Riverhead, \$12.95 paper, 1573228257) "These essays are a MUST read for all who care about animals, nature, and the West."—**Susan Wasson, Bookworks, Albuquerque, NM** (This book was the Mountains and Plains Booksellers' Regional Book Award Winner for 2000.)
66. **YOU CAN'T WIN**, by Jack Black; intro. by Wm. Burroughs (AK Press, \$16 paper, 1902593022) "At last! My bookselling days are now complete! With AK reissuing my favorite book of all time, I can ride into the sunset, as my customers buy a new copy of this, instead of waiting for a rare OP copy. Much more than crime, much more than an autobiography of San Francisco's greatest hobo thief, *You Can't Win* is an entertaining, engrossing testament to an era very long gone. Masterful!"—**Kevin Hunsanger, Green Apple Books, San Francisco, CA**

Chorus of Enthusiasm

The books in this group of 76 books were nominated by hundreds of independent booksellers. By email, fax, postcard and handwritten letter, their enthusiasm poured in. We chose the letter that best captured the essence of the nominations for each book to be printed here. So, while just one 'voice' for each book appears here, there is a chorus behind it. (And many of our choices in the past months have been validated with prestigious award nominations and appearances on regional and national bestseller lists....including our own Book Sense Bestseller List.)

Mystery and Science Fiction

67. **BURIED EVIDENCE**, by Nancy Taylor Rosenberg (Hyperion, \$24.95, 0786866195; due out Sept. 6) "I loved it! The husband was horrible, the wife wonderful, and the daughter whiney. LOVED IT! Rosenberg's as good as Lisa Scottoline or Richard North Patterson."—**Melissa Wade, Vero Beach Book Center, Vero Beach, FL**
68. **DARK MATTER: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora**, edited by Sheree R. Thomas (Warner/Aspect, \$24.95, 0446525839) "From the vision and wonder of Samuel Delaney to the 'rhythm travel' of Amiri Baraka to an experience in an extraterrestrial jook joint, this volume is fantastic!"—**Melissa Mytinger, Cody's, Berkeley, CA**
69. **A DEADLY DOZEN**, edited by Susan Casmier et al. (Ugly Town Productions, \$13 paper, 0966347323) "A dozen mystery stories by writers pushing the edges out of their way. Scary, funny, and full of twists to please the well-read mystery reader as well as the novice."—**Marian Fleischman, Sedalia Book & Toy, Sedalia, MO**

70. **HOT SPRINGS**, by Stephen Hunter (Simon & Schuster, \$25, 068486360X) "1946. Decorated veteran Earl Swagger is asked to train a group of young law officers for another tough invasion: the wide-open and totally corrupt town of Hot Springs, Arkansas. In action as hot as their tommygun's barrels and writing as sharp as Earl's aim, Hunter has given us a thunderous book peopled with vivid and engaging souls. An audacious addition to the Swagger saga."—**JB Dickey, Seattle Mystery Bookshop, Seattle, WA** (Also on audiotape.)

71. **SEARCH THE DARK**, by Charles Todd (St. Martin's, \$5.99 paper, 0312971281) "This is the 3rd book in a fabulous series featuring Scotland Yard's Inspector Ian Rutledge. Non-mystery readers and mystery buffs alike will love these."—**Helen Sinoradzki, Annie Bloom's Books, Portland, OR**

72. **TEN THOUSAND ISLANDS**, by Randy Wayne White (Putnam, \$23.95, 0399146202) "This may be the best yet in the excellent Doc Ford series. For those who have yet to meet the former CIA operative turned marine biologist, it's a first-rate introduction to White's Southwest Florida and its quirky characters and ruthless developers. Fans of John D. MacDonald need look nowhere else; Travis McGee's heir apparent is Doc Ford."—**Ted O'Brien, Garden District Book Shop, New Orleans, LA**

Poetry

73. **KIN**, by Crystal Williams (Michigan State U. Press, \$15.95 paper, 0870135481) "To say that Williams is a powerhouse of a poet is an incredible understatement. She is passionate, powerful, funny. In this first collection, she unearths her roots (she was adopted at four-days-old by a black jazz musician and a white school psychologist), and her command of words and rhythm causes her poems to leap from the page and consume the reader in a delightful feast of images and feeling."—**Tracey Calhoun, The Bookery, Ithaca, NY**

74. **RIOT IN THE CHARM FACTORY**, by Todd Colby (Soft Skull, \$13 paper, 1887128387) "You will be reading these poems out loud to everyone that you know! This book is funny, insightful and outrageous."—**Jen Reynolds, Joseph-Beth Booksellers, Cincinnati, OH**

Spirituality

75. **ALWAYS WE BEGIN AGAIN: The Benedictine Way of Living**, by John McQuiston II (Morehouse, \$7.95 paper, 0819216488) "This little book is our perennial bestseller. The author is a lawyer who was searching for a balanced life. Just short of 100 pages, it's a 'contemporary interpretation' of the Benedictine Rule. It reads like poetry and offers a path towards mindfulness and thanksgiving in everyday life for folks who do not live in a monastery. It's lovely."—**Laura Messler, Burke's Book Store, Memphis, TN**

76. **A WOMAN'S PATH: Women's Best Spiritual Travel Writing**, edited by Lucy McCauley et al. (Traveler's Tales, \$16.95 paper, 1885211481) "Thirty-two women writers lend their distinctive voices to this moving chorus of essays in which their physical journal sometimes reflects, often impacts their spiritual unfolding."—**Cathy Zehms, Little Professor, Green Bay, WI**

a bestseller list with a difference

Ask us about the Book Sense Bestseller List, the only national bestseller list gathered from over 350 independent bookstores, based on real sales not wholesale demand. Also see it each Thursday on-line at BookSense.com.

special orders

If you can't find one of the '76 books' of interest to you on our shelves, we will gladly special order it for you...and you'll have it in no time. You will have supported an independent business in the process, and we thank you.

full disclosure

These 76 books have been chosen by the independent booksellers of America and the staff at Book Sense, after which publishers were approached for promotional funds to help underwrite the ongoing Book Sense marketing campaign. Books appear here whether or not the publishers have agreed to participate, but many have...and we appreciate it. The bookseller/publisher partnership is vital to our search for a diversity of voices and opinions.

subject to change

We are not responsible for publisher price increases at the last moment. And despite all best efforts to ensure that all of these 76 are in stores by Sept. 1, some will be not be available until later in the month...and some are due out in October.