



May
2005 **BOOK** sense Notables

DELIGHTS & SHADOWS, by **Ted Kooser** (Copper Canyon, \$15 paper, 1556592019) “U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser has written a book of sparsely elegant poems that looks at the world through the lens of the minute. The familiar becomes new and the past becomes immediate.”—**Kathy Magruder, Lee Booksellers, Lincoln, NE**



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ACTS OF FAITH, by **Philip Caputo** (Knopf, \$26.95, 0375411666) “An engrossing, timely book set amid the war and famine of contemporary Sudan. The characters—based on the many kinds of people Caputo, an experienced Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, would have met—are all very believable. Their stories weave well together and the ending is satisfying, if sobering. A remote part of the world makes a little more sense to me now.”—**Alicia Greene, Olsson’s Books & Records, Washington, DC**



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THE CIGAR ROLLER, by **Pablo Medina** (Grove, \$21, 0802117929) “Confined by a stroke to his nursing home bed, an elderly Cuban immigrant recalls the triumphs and failings of his youth in the cigar factories of Havana and Tampa. Described with remarkable vitality, the title character’s musings blur the boundaries of present and past in navigating the passionate (if wayward) course of a life.”—**Anthony Finey, Inkwood Books, Tampa, FL**



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I GOT SOMEBODY IN STAUNTON: Stories, by **William Henry Lewis** (Amistad, \$22.95, 0060536659) “In these beautiful, lyrical stories, Lewis evokes time and place like few other contemporary American writers. He does a masterful job of presenting many different perspectives and voices—a fatherless boy, a woman who’s lost her son, a man in a bewildering relationship—and makes each of them true and believable.”—**Carol Schneck, Schuler Books & Music, Okemos, MI**



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JOHNNY TOO BAD: Stories, by **John Dufresne** (Norton, \$23.95, 0393057895) “These are just what stories should be—an arrow, floating in the air, going right to the heart of what it is really like to be alive. Sometimes, for some of the characters, life is funny, sometimes the characters break your heart, sometimes they make you downright uncomfortable, but you always have the deep appreciation of being in the hands of a writer who is gifted at his craft and wise in the ways of the human spirit.”—**Tom Campbell, The Regulator Bookshop, Durham, NC**



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THE KILLING CLUB, by **Marcie Walsh and Michael Malone** (Hyperion, \$19.95, 1401301568) “Detective Jamie Ferrara must look into the death of a friend and former classmate. What seems to be an accident turns out to be the first in a series of murders with an eerie connection to Jamie’s past. The story moves at a rapid pace, and the characters are complex and share a secret that Jamie must discover in order to stop the killing.”—**Linda Walonen, Bay Books, San Ramon, CA**



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KNITTING, by **Anne Bartlett** (Houghton, \$23, 0618499261) “This is the story of the chance meeting of two women who are exact opposites. Sandra and Martha are each widows, and as a friendship develops, we discover that things are not as they appear to be. The drama unfolds slowly—things do happen, but with a gentle suspense. A beautiful novel that is, at its heart, about forgiveness.”—**Andra Tracy, Out Word Bound, Indianapolis, IN**



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THE LAST REFUGE, by **Chris Knopf** (Permanent Press, \$26, 157962118X) “This story of a middle-aged dropout from the corporate world who is living in his dead parents’ ramshackle cottage in Southampton’s North Sea held my interest throughout. You may find yourself reading until the wee hours, as I did, obsessing about the novel’s central figure, Sam Acquillo.”—**Donna Plante, Bookin’ It, Little Falls, MN**



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LIGHTHOUSEKEEPING, by **Jeanette Winterson** (Harcourt, \$23, 0151011176)
“Winterson is back to her old delightful tricks with this wonderfully magical fable of a story. Replete with an orphan, a blind lighthousekeeper, and characters with names like Babel Dark and Miss Pinch, it’s the kind of book you won’t want to put down.”—**Kris Kleindienst, Left Bank Books, St. Louis, MO**



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LUCKY STRIKE, by **Nancy Zafris** (Unbridled, \$23.95, 1932961046) “Zafris once again paints a vivid picture of people on the edges of society. Here, she gives us quirky uranium prospectors in the Utah desert. As they seek to get rich—or maybe just get away—they unite in their quests, with surprising and thought-provoking results.”—**Stephen Turnbull, Joseph-Beth Booksellers, Lexington, KY**



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RESPONSIBLE MEN, by **Edward Schwarzschild** (Algonquin, \$23.95, 156512409X)
“Max Wolinsky is a middle-aged less-than-successful salesman, and the characters in his life range from his irascible father to his ex-wife, who has dumped him for the gardener, as well as a kosher Boy Scout leader and others. This wonderful first novel exposes the hearts of these people in an entertaining and wise way.”—**Marggie Skinner, Book House of Stuyvesant Plaza, Albany, NY**



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UNFORMED LANDSCAPE, by **Peter Stamm** (Other Press, \$18, 1590511409) “This is the moving story of one woman’s awakening set in the cold, dark north of Norway, above the Arctic Circle. The language the author uses is as stark as the landscape, and his character, Kathrine, is a woman whom we can all recognize in ourselves.”—**Lois Powers, The Toadstool Bookshop, Milford, NH**



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THE COLOR OF LOVE: A Mother's Choice in the Jim Crow South, by Gene Cheek (Lyons Press, \$22.95, 1592286267) "This is the most insightful, tragic, and thought-provoking book I have read in a long time. Cheek tells this story of family love in the face of racism from his point of view as a child, and you feel his love and pain throughout."—**Karen Brookhart, My Corner Bookstore, Winterset, IA**



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CONFESSIONS OF A SLACKER WIFE, by Muffy Mead-Ferro (Da Capo, \$12.95 paper, 0738210161) "Mead-Ferro skewers modern domesticity with hilarity. Don't want to be addressed as 'Mrs. John Doe,' but not too concerned if someone refers to you as the 'chairman of the board'? Is your house clean... enough? How about your laundry? Is it 'fresh'? How can you tell?! I laughed out loud from the first paragraph to the last."—**Megan O'Bryan, Scott's Bookstore, Mount Vernon, WA**



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COTTAGE FOR SALE, MUST BE MOVED: A Woman Moves a House to Make a Home, by Kate Whouley (Ballantine, \$13.95 paper, 034548018X) "This story of a woman who moves a cottage to make a new home for herself is really about friendship, commitment, and making your dreams come true. This compelling, funny, and honest memoir is a pure pleasure to read—loaded with wit, wisdom, and an army of lovable characters—including Egypt the cat."—**Robert Hugo, The Spirit of '76 Bookstore, Marblehead, MA**



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FIELD NOTES ON THE COMPASSIONATE LIFE: A Search for the Soul of Kindness, by Marc Ian Barasch (Rodale, \$24.95, 1579547117) "Barasch draws on a wide range of examples—from bonobo apes to Holocaust rescuers to anonymous organ donors—to make the case that we are an innately compassionate species, that we function more from the survival of the kindest rather than survival of the fittest. At a time when we most need it, here is a book of hope." —**Barb Wieser, Amazon Bookstore Cooperative, Minneapolis, MN**



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GARLIC AND SAPPHIRES: *The Secret Life of a Critic in Disguise*, by Ruth Reichl (Penguin Press, \$24.95, 1594200319) “Ruth Reichl’s account of her time as a restaurant critic for the *New York Times* won’t disappoint fans of *Tender at the Bone*, or new readers. At the forefront of this fascinating book are Reichl’s experiences taking on disguises to remain anonymous, and what she learns about herself along the way.”—**Nancy Quinn, Harry W. Schwartz Bookshop, Milwaukee, WI**



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THE GOLDEN SPRUCE: *A True Story of Myth, Madness, and Greed*, by John Vaillant (Norton, \$24.95, 0393058875) “A one of a kind Sitka spruce, standing 165 feet tall and revered by the indigenous tribe on a remote island of British Columbia is toppled by an anti-logging activist. In telling the tale of this seemingly backward political statement, Vaillant examines why industry, technology, and mankind are a deadly combination whose progress is rapidly finishing off the last of the natural world.”—**Colin Rea, University of Oregon Bookstore, Eugene, OR**



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THE PERFECTIONIST: *Life and Death in Haute Cuisine*, by Rudolph Chelminski (Gotham, \$27.50, 1592401074) “Why would a culinary legend with a successful restaurant and a loving family commit suicide at the possibility of losing a star in his rating? Rudolph Chelminski gives an enthralling account of the pressure and stress of the French gastronomic culture and its origins.”—**Guy Bocchino, Books On The Common, Ridgefield, CT**



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PINHOOK: *Finding Wholeness in a Fragmented Land*, by Janisse Ray (Chelsea Green, \$12 paper, 1931498741) “This is both a powerful plea for a greater individual awareness of the natural world and an uplifting celebration of a rare environmental success story. Dog-eared and underlined copies should one day become as ubiquitous on college campuses and in backpackers’ hostels as the works of Edward Abbey are today.”—**Rich Rennicks, Malaprop’s Bookstore/Cafe, Asheville, NC**