The Empire and the Five Kings
America’s Abdication and the Fate of the World
by Bernard-Henri Levy

One of the West's leading intellectuals offers a provocative look at America's withdrawal from world leadership and the rising powers who seek to fill the vacuum left behind.

The United States was once the hope of the world, a beacon of freedom and the defender of liberal democracy. Nations and peoples on all continents looked to America to stand up for the values that created the Western world, and to oppose autocracy and repression. Even when America did not live up to its ideals, it still recognized their importance, at home and abroad.

But as Bernard-Henri Levy lays bare in this powerful and disturbing analysis of the world today, America is retreating from its traditional leadership role, and in its place have come five ambitious nations, former empires eager to assert power and influence. Levy shows how these five nations - Russia, China, Turkey, Iran, and the Sunni Arab world - are taking steps to undermine the liberal values that have been a hallmark of Western civilization.

The Empire and the Five Kings is a cri de coeur that draws upon lessons from history and the eternal touchstones of human culture to reveal the stakes facing the West as America retreats from its leadership role, a process that did not begin with Donald Trump's presidency and is not likely to end with him. The crisis is one whose roots can be found as far back as antiquity and whose resolution will require the West to find a new way forward if it - and its values - are to survive.

Author Bio

Bernard-Henri Levy is a philosopher, activist, filmmaker and author of over thirty books including The Genius of Judaism, American Vertigo, Barbarism with a Human Face, and Who Killed Daniel Pearl? His writing has appeared extensively in publications throughout Europe and the United States. His documentaries include Peshmerga, The Battle of Mosul, The Oath of Tobruk and Bosna! Levy is co-founder of the antiracist group SOS Racisme and has served on diplomatic missions for the French government.
The Cassandra
A Novel
by Sharma Shields

The Cassandra follows a woman who goes to work in a top secret research facility during WWII, only to be tormented by visions of what the mission will mean for humankind.

Mildred Groves is an unusual young woman. Gifted and cursed with the ability to see the future, Mildred runs away from home to take a secretary position at the Hanford Research Center in the early 1940s. Hanford, a massive construction camp on the banks of the Columbia River in remote South Central Washington, exists to test and manufacture a mysterious product that will aid the war effort. Only the top generals and scientists know that this product is processed plutonium, for use in the first atomic bombs.

Mildred is delighted, at first, to be part of something larger than herself after a lifetime spent as an outsider. But her new life takes a dark turn when she starts to have prophetic dreams about what will become of humankind if the project is successful. As the men she works for come closer to achieving their goals, her visions intensify to a nightmarish pitch, and she eventually risks everything to question those in power, putting her own physical and mental health in jeopardy. Inspired by the classic Greek myth, this 20th century reimagining of Cassandra’s story is based on a real WWII compound that the author researched meticulously. A timely novel about patriarchy and militancy, The Cassandra uses both legend and history to look deep into man’s capacity for destruction, and the resolve and compassion it takes to challenge the powerful.

Sharma Shields is one of (...)

Author Bio

Sharma Shields holds an MFA from the University of Montana. She is the author of the short story collection Favorite Monster, winner of the 2011 Autumn House Fiction Prize, and the novel The Sasquatch Hunters’ Almanac, winner of the Washington State Book Award. Her work has appeared in The Kenyon Review, The Iowa Review, Electric Literature, and more. Shields has worked in independent bookstores and public libraries throughout Washington State. She lives in Spokane with her husband and children.
Normal Sucks
How to Live, Learn, and Thrive Outside the Lines
by Jonathan Mooney

A fun, voice-driven, and practical take on education, arguing that we need to stop trying to fix people who reside outside the norm and start empowering them to succeed.

Jonathan Mooney blends anecdote, expertise, and memoir to present a new mode of thinking about how we learn - individually, uniquely, and with advantages and upshots to every type of brain. As a neuro-diverse kid diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD who didn't learn to read until he was twelve, the realization that that he wasn't the problem - the system was - saved Mooney's life and fundamentally changed his outlook. Here he explores the toll that having a neurological or physical disability takes on kids and adults when they're trapped in environments that label them, shame them, and tell them, even in subtle ways, that they are the problem. But, he argues, if we can reorient the ways in which we think about disabilities, we can start a revolution in learning.

A highly sought after public speaker, Mooney has been inspiring audiences with his story and his message for nearly two decades. Now he's ready to share what he's learned from parents, educators, researchers, and kids in a book that is as much a survival guide as it is a call to action. Whip-smart, insightful, and utterly inspiring, this book will upend what we call normal and empower us all.

Author Bio

Make Me a City
A Novel
by Jonathan Carr

A propulsive debut of visionary scale, *Make Me a City* embroiders fact with fiction to tell the story of Chicago's 19th century, tracing its rise from frontier settlement to industrial colossus.

The tale begins with a game of chess - and on the outcome of that game hinges the destiny of a great city. From appalling injustice springs forth the story of Chicago, and the men and women whose resilience, avarice, and altruism combine to generate a moment of unprecedented civic energy.

A variety of irresistible voices deliver the many strands of this novel: those of Jean Baptiste Pointe de Sable, the long-unheralded founder of Chicago; John Stephen Wright, bombastic speculator and booster; and Antje Hunter, the first woman to report for the *Chicago Tribune*. The stories of loggers, miners, engineers, and educators teem around them and each claim the narrative in turns, sharing their grief as well as their delight.

As the characters, and their ancestors, meet and part, as their possessions pass from hand to hand, the reader realizes that Jonathan Carr commands a grand picture, one that encompasses the heartaches of everyday lives as well as the overarching ideals of what a city and a society can and should be. *Make Me a City* introduces us to a novelist whose talent and ambition are already fully formed.

**Author Bio**

Jonathan Carr is lucky enough to have lived in what have been three of the world's great cultural and trading centers: London, Athens, and Chicago. A prize-winning writer of short fiction, he studied classics and english at Cambridge and completed a PhD in Creative Writing at Bath Spa University. His home is in Bologna, Italy. *Make Me A City* is his first novel.
Trust Exercise
A Novel
by Susan Choi

Pulitzer Finalist Susan Choi's narrative-upending novel about what happens when a first love between high school students is interrupted by the attentions of a charismatic teacher.

In 1982 in a southern city, David and Sarah, two freshmen at a highly competitive performing arts high school, thrive alongside their school peers in a rarified bubble, ambitiously devoting themselves to their studies - to music, to movement, to Shakespeare and, particularly, to classes taught by the magnetic acting teacher Mr. Kingsley. It is here in these halls that David and Sarah fall innocently and powerfully into first love. And also where, as this class of students rises through the ranks of high school, the outside world of family life and economic status, of academic pressure and the future, does not affect them - until it does - in a sudden spiral of events that brings a startling close to the first part of this novel.

In the book’s second part, the reader immediately and surprisingly learns that what we understood to have happened thus far in the story is not completely true, though it's not entirely false either. The plot thickens and speeds up and tightens, until, with a stunning coda, the author reveals a final piece of the puzzle that makes this novel shock and resonate long after the final sentence.

As captivating and tender as it is brilliantly surprising, Trust Exercise will not only incite heated conversations about fiction and truth, about friendships and loyalties, but also leave readers with wise impressions about the capacities of adolescents and the powers and responsibilities of adults.

Author Bio

Susan Choi is the author of the novels My Education, American Woman, A Person of Interest, and The Foreign Student. Her work has been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the PEN/Faulkner Award and winner of the PEN/W.G. Sebald Award and the Asian-American Literary Award for fiction. With David Remnick, she co-edited Wonderful Town: New York Stories from The New Yorker. She’s received NEA and Guggenheim Foundation fellowships. She lives in Brooklyn.
Falterm
Has the Human Game Begun to Play Itself Out?
by Bill McKibben

Thirty years ago Bill McKibben offered one of the earliest warnings about climate change. Now he broadens the warning: the entire human game, he suggests, has begun to play itself out.

Bill McKibben's groundbreaking book *The End of Nature* - issued in dozens of languages and long regarded as a classic - was the first book to alert us to global warming. But the danger is broader than that: even as climate change shrinks the space where our civilization can exist, new technologies like artificial intelligence and robotics threaten to bleach away the variety of human experience.

*Falterm* tells the story of these converging trends and of the ideological fervor that keeps us from bringing them under control. And then, drawing on McKibben's experience in building 350.org, the first truly global citizens movement to combat climate change, it offers some possible ways out of the trap. We're at a bleak moment in human history - and we'll either confront that bleakness or watch the civilization our forebears built slip away.

*Falterm* is a powerful and sobering call to arms, to save not only our planet but also our humanity itself.

**Author Bio**

Bill McKibben is the founder of the environmental organization 350.org and was among the first to have warned of the dangers of global warming. He is the author of fifteen books, including the bestsellers *The End of Nature*, *Eaarth*, and *Deep Economy*. He is the Schummann Distinguished Scholar in Environmental Studies at Middlebury College and the winner of the Gandhi Prize, the Thomas Merton Prize, and the Right Livelihood Prize. He lives in Vermont.
The Lazarus Files
A Cold Case Investigation
by Matthew McGough

A deeply-reported, riveting account of a cold case murder in Los Angeles, unsolved until DNA evidence implicated a shocking suspect - a female detective within the LAPD's own ranks.

On February 24, 1986, 29-year-old newlywed Sherri Rasmussen was murdered in the home she shared with her husband, John. The crime scene suggested a ferocious struggle, and police initially assumed it was a burglary gone awry. Before her death, Sherri had confided to her parents that an ex-girlfriend of John's, a Los Angeles police officer, had threatened her. The Rasmussens urged the LAPD to investigate the ex-girlfriend, but the original detectives only pursued burglary suspects, and the case went cold.

DNA analysis did not exist when Sherri was murdered. Decades later, a swab from a bite mark on Sherri's arm revealed her killer was in fact female, not male. A DNA match led to the arrest and conviction of veteran LAPD Detective Stephanie Lazarus, John's onetime girlfriend.

The Lazarus Files delivers the visceral experience of being inside a real-life murder mystery. McGough reconstructs the lives of Sherri, John and Stephanie; the love triangle that led to Sherri's murder; and the homicide investigation that followed. Was Stephanie protected by her fellow officers? What did the LAPD know, and when did they know it? Are there other LAPD cold cases with a police connection that remain unsolved?

Praise for Bat Boy:
"A terrific memoir, combining an endearing coming-of-age story with a unique window on the inner world of baseball. It is warm, witty, shrewd, and entertaining from start to finish.

Author Bio

Location: Los Angeles, CA

Matthew McGough has written for The Atlantic, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, and more. His acclaimed memoir Bat Boy: Coming of Age with the New York Yankees was the basis of Clubhouse," a primetime TV series on CBS, and his story about his first day with the Yankees was selected to lead the pilot episode of The Moth Radio Hour. Formerly a legal consultant and writer for NBC's "Law & Order," he lives in LA with his wife and children.
Hotbox
Inside Catering, the Food World's Riskiest Business
by Matt Lee and Ted Lee

The beloved Lee Brothers take on the competitive and wild world of high-end catering, exposing the secrets of the food business that no home cook or restaurant chef has ever experienced.

*Hotbox* reveals the real-life drama that takes place behind cavernous event spaces and soaring white tents, where cooking conditions have more in common with a mobile army hospital than a restaurant (think *M.A.S.H* instead of *Top Chef*) and clients tend to be highly emotional and demanding (think mother-of-the-bride). The Lee Brothers, known for their hip take on Southern cooking, steeped themselves in the culture of catering for four years, getting to know the business from the inside-out. It's a realm where you find eccentric characters, working in extreme conditions, under insane stress, who must produce magical events and instantly adapt when, for instance, the host's toast runs for a full hour or a hail storm suddenly erupts.

Working undercover at a catering firm, the Lee Brothers take you from black-tie galas to celebrity-filled Hamptons cookouts, investigating the outer reaches of the industries that make the galas happen, such as an industrial park in New Jersey, where a party rental company's warehouse flashes to life every day at 3am with the arrival of the silverware crew. They also introduce you to the incredible DeSoto Brothers who pioneered hotbox cooking, and trace the history of catering back to when crepe parties were all the rage. You'll never attend a party - or entertain on your own - in the same way after reading this book.

**Author Bio**

The Lee Bros. are the authors of several bestselling cookbooks: *Charleston Kitchen, Southern Cookbook,* and *Simple Fresh Southern*. They have written for *The New York Times, Food & Wine, Travel + Leisure, The New York Times Magazine, Gourmet, Saveur,* and other publications, and have appeared on many TV shows, including Anthony Bourdain's *No Reservations* and *The Today Show*. They have won six James Beard and IACP Awards.
Democracy May Not Exist, but We'll Miss It When It's Gone
by Astra Taylor

What is democracy really? What do we mean when we use the term? And can it ever truly exist? Astra Taylor, hailed as a New Civil Rights Leader“ (LA Times), provides surprising answers.

There is no shortage of democracy, at least in name, and yet it is in crisis everywhere we look. From a cabal of thieving plutocrats in the White House to campaign finance and gerrymandering, it is clear that democracy - specifically the principle of government by and for the people - is not living up to its promise.

In Democracy Might Not Exist Astra Taylor shows that real democracy - fully inclusive and completely egalitarian - has in fact never existed. In a tone that is both philosophical and anecdotal, weaving together history, theory, the stories of individuals, and interviews with such leading thinkers as Cornel West, Danielle Allen, and Slavoj Zizek, Taylor invites us to reexamine the term. Is democracy a means or an end, a process or a set of desired outcomes? What if the those outcomes, whatever they may be - peace, prosperity, equality, liberty, an engaged citizenry - can be achieved by non-democratic means? Or if an election leads to a terrible outcome? If democracy means rule by the people, what does it mean to rule and who counts as the people?

The inherent paradoxes are unnamed and unrecognized. By teasing them, Democracy Might not Exist offers a better understanding of what is possible, what we want, and (...)

Author Bio

Location: New York, NY

Astra Taylor is the author of The People's Platform (winner of the American Book Award) and made two documentary films, Zizek! and Examined Life. Taylor's writing has appeared in the New York Times, the Washington Post, n +1, and The Baffler, where she is a contributing editor. She lives in New York City.
Downhill from Here
Retirement Insecurity in the Age of Inequality
by Katherine S. Newman

A sharp examination of the looming financial catastrophe of retirement in America.

As millions of Baby Boomers reach their golden years, the state of retirement in America is little short of a disaster. Nearly half the households with people aged 55 and older have no retirement savings at all. The real estate crash wiped out much of the home equity that millions were counting on to support their retirement. And the typical Social Security check covers less than 40% of pre-retirement wages - a number projected to drop to under 28% within two decades. Old-age poverty, a problem we thought was solved by the New Deal, is poised for a resurgence.

With dramatic statistics and vivid portraits, acclaimed sociologist Katherine S. Newman shows that the American retirement crisis touches us all, cutting across class lines and generational divides. White-collar managers have seen retirement benefits vanish; Teamsters have had their pensions cut in half; bankrupt cities like Detroit have walked away from their commitments to municipal workers. And for Generation X, the prospects are even worse: a fifth of them expect to never be able to retire. Only the vaunted one percent* can face retirement without fear.

Other countries are confronting similar demographic challenges, yet they have not abandoned their social contract with seniors. Downhill From Here makes it clear that America, too, can - and must - do better.

Author Bio

Katherine S. Newman is the author of fifteen books, on topics ranging from urban poverty to middle-class economic insecurity to school violence. No Shame in My Game: the Working Poor in the Inner City received the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Book Prize and the Sidney Hillman Foundation Book Award. Newman, who has held positions at Johns Hopkins, Harvard, and Princeton, is currently senior vice president for academic affairs for the University of Massachusetts system.
Ever since this nation’s inception, the idea of an open and ever-expanding frontier has been central to American identity. Symbolizing a future of endless promise, it was the foundation of the United States’ belief in itself as an exceptional nation - democratic, individualistic, forward-looking. Today, though, America has a new symbol: the border wall.

In *The End of the Myth*, acclaimed historian Greg Grandin explores the meaning of the frontier throughout the full sweep of U.S. history - from the American Revolution to the War of 1898, the New Deal to the election of 2016. For centuries, he shows, America’s constant expansion - fighting wars and opening markets - served as a gate of escape," helping to deflect domestic political and economic conflicts outward. But this deflection meant that the country’s problems, from racism to inequality, were never confronted directly. And now, the combined catastrophe of the 2008 financial meltdown and our unwinnable wars in the Middle East have slammed this gate shut, bringing political passions that had long been directed elsewhere back home.

It is this new reality, Grandin says, that explains the rise of reactionary populism and racist nationalism, the extreme anger and polarization that catapulted Trump to the presidency. The border wall may or may not be built, but it will survive as a rallying point (...)

**Author Bio**

Location: Brooklyn, New York

Greg Grandin is the author of *Fordlandia*, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, and the National Book Critics Circle Award. A professor of history at New York University, Grandin has published a number of other widely acclaimed books, including *Empire's Workshop*, *Kissinger's Shadow*, and *The Empire of Necessity*, which won the Bancroft Prize.
Thin Blue Lie
The Failure of High-Tech Policing
by Matt Stroud

A sweeping and wide-ranging investigation of how supposedly transformative technologies peddled to cops have actually made policing worse - lazier, more reckless, and more discriminatory.

American law enforcement is a system in crisis. After explosive protests responding to police brutality and discrimination in Baltimore, Ferguson, and across the country, the vexing question of how to reform the police and curb misconduct stokes tempers and fears on both the right and left. In the midst of this fierce debate, however, most of us take for granted that innovative new technologies can only help.

During the early 90s, in the wake of the infamous Rodney King beating, police leaders began looking to corporations and new technologies for help. In the decades since, these technologies have - in theory - given police powerful, previously unthinkable faculties: the ability to incapacitate a suspect without firing a bullet (Tasers); the capacity to more efficiently assign officers to high-crime areas using computers (Compstat); and, with body cameras (Axon), a means of defending against accusations of misconduct.

But in this vivid, deeply-reported book, Matt Stroud shows that these tools are overhyped and ineffective. Instead of wrestling with tough fundamental questions about their work, police leaders have looked to technology as a silver bullet, and stood by as corporate interests have insinuated themselves ever deeper into the public institution of law enforcement. With a sweeping history of these changes, Thin Blue Lie is a must-read for anyone seeking to understand how policing became what it is today.

Author Bio

Matt Stroud is an investigative reporter with a focus on companies that do business with police departments and prisons. Formerly on staff at the Associated Press, Bloomberg News, and The Verge, he has also written for publications such as The Atlantic, Politico, Buzzfeed, and The Intercept. He lives in Pittsburgh.
Republic of Lies
American Conspiracy Theorists and Their Surprising Rise to Power
by Anna Merlan

A riveting tour through the landscape and meaning of modern conspiracy theories, exploring the causes and tenacity of this American malady, from Birthers to Pizzagate and beyond.

American society has always been fertile ground for conspiracy theories, but with the election of Donald Trump, previously outlandish ideas suddenly attained legitimacy. Trump himself is a conspiracy enthusiast: from his claim that global warming is a Chinese hoax to the accusations of fake news," he has fanned the flames of suspicion.

But it was not by the power of one man alone that these ideas gained new power. Republic of Lies looks beyond the caricatures of conspiracy theorists to explain their tenacity. Without lending the theories validity, Anna Merlan gives a nuanced, sympathetic account of the people behind them, across the political spectrum, and the circumstances that helped them take hold. The lack of a social safety net, inadequate education, bitter culture wars, and years of economic insecurity have created large groups of people who feel forgotten by their government and even besieged by it. Our contemporary conditions are a perfect petri dish for conspiracy movements: a durable, permanent, elastic climate of alienation and resentment. All the while, an army of politicians and conspiracy-peddlers has fanned the flames of suspicion to serve their own ends.

Bringing together penetrating historical analysis and gripping on-the-ground reporting, Republic of Lies transforms our understanding of American paranoia.

Author Bio

Anna Merlan is a journalist specializing in politics, crime, religion, subcultures, and women's lives. She is a reporter at the Special Projects Desk, the investigative division of Gizmodo Media Group. She was previously a senior reporter at Jezebel and staff writer at the Village Voice and the Dallas Observer. She lives in New York.