

# fiction

★ **Berry, Steve. *The Lost Order*. Minotaur: St. Martin's. Apr. 2017. 512p. ISBN 9781250056252. \$28.99; ebk. ISBN 9781466862623. F** Once again, Berry (*The Templar Legacy*; *The Amber Room*) has delivered an excellent political thriller that weaves fact and fiction, history and the present. The Knights of the Golden Circle was one of the largest and most dangerous secret organizations in American history. Established in the 1850s, the group amassed a fortune in stolen treasure, some of it suspected Confederate gold, and buried it in secret caches across the United States. Now factions in the federal government, intent on implementing a plot to upset the balance of power, want to recover the prize. The Smithsonian Institution enlists Cotton Malone to help locate the missing gold. Seemingly unconnected events involving the death of a U.S. senator

spend every spare moment at the sprawling Trentham enclave, a bohemian household headed by Eva's vulgar, self-centered, brilliant artist father, Evan, and his vigilant wife, Helena, a hot-and-cold maternal presence. Several young artists are drawn to the Trenthams' aura and eventually move in, and Lily herself is absorbed into the household. For a few years, the creative endeavors of the adults around her power an astonishing output of work, but as Lily, Eva, and her two equally beautiful sisters grow into adolescence, sexual tensions and artistic jealousies among the residents lead to a shocking scandal that shreds the household's fragile balance of talent and self-absorption and leads to the implosion of Lily's and Eva's friendship. **VERDICT** Published in Australia in 2014, this debut novel is a layered tapestry of family half-truths, deceit, and desire stretching across five decades, with blurred



A race to recover buried treasure; a dying mother's tribute to her son; this debut ticks all the boxes

and murder at the Smithsonian soon links back to the Knights, who continue to guard their secrets. **VERDICT** Cotton Malone is an action hero like no other, and his many fans will eagerly await the latest entry in Berry's series. A page-turning read that is hard to put down. [See Prepub Alert, 10/24/16; library marketing.]—Sandra Knowles, South Carolina State Lib., Columbia

★ **Bitto, Emily. *The Strays*. Twelve: Grand Central. Jan. 2017. 256p. ISBN 9781455537723. \$26; ebk. ISBN 9781455537709. F** In 1930, eight-year-old Lily becomes instant best friends with Eva Trentham when they enter third grade in Melbourne, Australia. An only child, Lily is delighted to

lines tangling the lives of Lily and Eva and thwarting Lily's quest for resolution and redemption. Reminiscent of Ian McEwan's *Atonement* yet uniquely, gorgeously Bitto's own. [See Prepub Alert, 7/1/16.]—Beth Andersen, formerly with Ann Arbor Dist. Lib., MI

**Boylan, Jennifer Finney. *Long Black Veil*. Crown. Apr. 2017. 304p. ISBN 9780451496324. \$25; ebk. ISBN 9780451496348. F** Best-selling memoirist (*She's Not There*) and novelist (*Getting In*) Boylan's latest work begins in 1980. A party of eight adventurous people, six of them friends united by a wedding the evening before, decide to explore Philadelphia's abandoned Eastern State Penitentiary. The visit starts off as a

lark, but by the time the evening ends one person is missing and a mystery has been born—one that will follow the surviving friends through the next 35 years. The story line explores both the fallout from the crime and the impact on one survivor specifically. Judith Carrigan may hold the key to unraveling the puzzle and saving her friend Jon Casey, who has been accused of murder—but the price for her help could be the new life she has created for herself. **VERDICT** Boylan's twisty and entertaining thriller takes a hard look at questions of identity, love, and trust. Recommended for fans of Megan Abbott and Donna Tartt. [See Prepub Alert, 10/31/16.]—Amy Hoseth, Colorado State Univ. Lib., Fort Collins

★ **Canty, Kevin. *The Underworld*. Norton. Mar. 2017. 256p. ISBN 9780393293050. \$24.95; ebk. ISBN 9780393293067. F**

Set in 1972 and based on a true incident, Canty's tale is a poignant look at the hard-working, hard-living folks in a small Idaho town. They stay despite the poisonous dirt because working at the silver mine is the only good paying job around. Just when David Wright thinks he has escaped by going to college in Montana, he is pulled back to fight the demons he thought he had left behind. A fire in the main mine shaft has unmoored the fragile lives of the town's residents, with over 80 men dead, including David's brother Ray. In her grief, Ray's young widow ignores her children, turns to drink, and throws herself at strange men. David's father, Pat, a mine safety officer, is among the survivors, but now he sits in a daze in his garage listening to the radio. David feels trapped by the accident and by his feelings for a woman named Ann, whose husband was among those killed. Nothing good will come of living here for any of them, but, strangely, the mine disaster gives some a chance to break free. **VERDICT** In his sixth novel (after *Everything*), Montana Book Award winner Canty offers a masterly story of heartbreak and struggle against fate and bad luck while heroic themes of love and forgiveness carry this memorable novel. [See Prepub Alert, 10/1/16.]—Donna Bettencourt, Mesa Cty. P.L., Grand Junction, CO

**Caputo, Philip. *Some Rise by Sin*. Holt. May 2017. 368p. ISBN 9781627794749.**

\$28; ebk. ISBN 9781627794756. F Caputo, whose long and distinguished career as a journalist and author includes nine novels, three memoirs, and a number of general nonfiction titles, is probably still best known for his 1977 Vietnam memoir, *A Rumor of War*, which asked troubling questions about the conflict that continue to resonate with readers today. This title portrays an American missionary priest, Father Riordan, who is serving a poor parish in San Patricio, Mexico. As in *A Rumor of War*, this novel features a morally compromised political environment, where competing drug lords, vigilante groups, and corrupt federal troops create a horrific no-man's-land ruled by violence, intimidation, and daily atrocities. Human life has very little worth in this part of Mexico, and this book centers on Riordan's attempts to stay true to his faith and his vows while living in a world poisoned to its core by corruption and greed. Caputo skillfully brings to life the complex existential drama of this predicament. **VERDICT** Powerful and timely, this novel is especially recommended for fans of politically focused literary fiction. [See Prepub Alert, 11/17/16.]—Patrick Sullivan, Manchester Community Coll., CT

**Cardoso, Lúcio. *Chronicle of the Murdered House*. Open Letter. Dec. 2016. 500p. tr. from Portuguese by Margaret Jull Costa & Robin Patterson. ISBN 9781940953502. pap. \$17.95; ebk. ISBN 9781940953519. F** As a child, Brazilian literary giant Cardoso (1912–68) was obsessed with movie stars, played with dolls, and refused to go to school. As a writer he was prolific in several genres, including experimental theater. And in fiction, he abandoned the dominant regionalism for subjective introspection. This novel, published in 1959 and only now available in English, is the Faulknerian saga of a decaying patriarchal family in the southeastern state of Minas Gerais. One of the chief characters, Timóteo, is the family's obese, cross-dressing black sheep who confounds the traditional order of the sad backwater estate. With unconventional sexuality and insanity, the story of a family's disintegration is conveyed by various confessions and diary entries and is triggered by the marriage of Timóteo's younger brother. Valdo marries outsider Nina, a lively and unpredictable young woman from Rio who turns the dimly lit ancestral mansion upside down with her complaints about the servants, the weather, and the house itself. In Benjamin Moser's introduction,

much is made of Timóteo's gayness, as if the gothic melodrama itself is not the primary draw for a modern American reading public. **VERDICT** Recommended for lovers of gothic, gay gothic, and Brazilian fiction generally.—Jack Shreve, Chicago

★ **Chaon, Dan. *Ill Will*. Ballantine. Mar. 2017. 480p. ISBN 9780345476043. \$28; ebk. ISBN 9781101885345. F** In this intensely readable and shadowy novel by Chaon (*Await Your Reply*), Dustin Tillman is a 40-year-old psychologist who has recently lost his wife to cancer. Dustin is no stranger to tragedy, having lived through the mysterious murder of his parents and relatives many years ago. Now he learns that his adopted brother, Rusty, found guilty of committing those murders, has been released from prison. A former police officer whom Dustin is counseling has involved him in an amateur investigation of the mysterious deaths of local youths in the area. Meanwhile, Rusty has been contacting Dustin's son Aaron, who is struggling with a dangerous drug habit and is just now learning of his father's tragic past. When Dustin loses contact with his son and finds out that he had been in touch with Rusty, he is drawn toward a confrontation that is

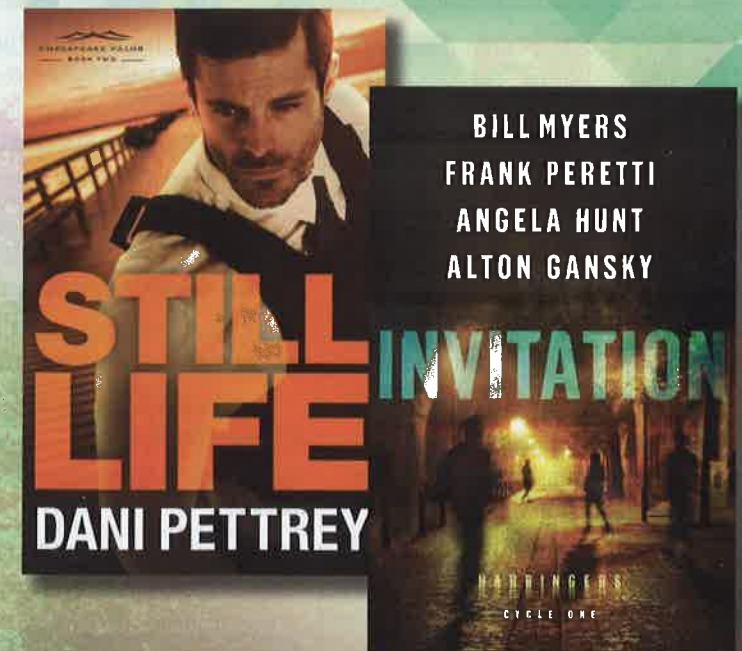
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