

# BOOK THOUGHTS

## BATCH 29



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BLUE = MEMOIR OR BIOGRAPHICAL

BLACK = FICTION

DARK RED = EDUCATIONAL

PURPLE = ESSAY OR STORIES

ORANGE = POETRY

Lindsay Wincherauk

## THE MEMORY POLICE

YOKO OGAWA



*A fascinating, troubling, dark, enlightening, draconian read.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

The Memory Police |by Yōko Ogawa|. is a fascinating, troubling, dark, enlightening, draconian read.

Three main characters. A writer, an editor, and an old man.

Things start disappearing, erased from the memory of all, with The Memory Police ensuring things are gone forever; that humanity is compliant, shells of who they used to be.

How can we go where we are supposed to go if we can't examine where we've been?

Monsters need reality to be short-lived.

The editor represents possibilities, the old man experience, the writer is to capture time and create possibility.

Together, the writer, editor, and old man play vital roles in ensuring our voices never fully die.

As more and more things disappear, humans start becoming shells of themselves, accepting whatever happens as if it is the norm.

The editor keeps talking about possibilities.

The writer writes a story about a typist who loses her voice and communicates through typing – until the typewriters all malfunction.

We are held captive by monsters until we are no longer relevant; and or, we age and are replaced.

The old man uses experience to fix everything that is falling apart.

What happens when the writer and typist are reduced to nothing more than their voice?

The editor needs...

The Memory Police |by Yōko Ogawa| taught me most people are just drifting through life with blinders on. Things come. Things disappear. The exhaustive nature of life often leaves us deaf and blind to what transpires around us. The bombardment of noise makes many of us passive. Pain is an unforgiving curse for those who look, feel, and listen.

A fabulous read. Mind Blown!

WRITTEN: 29 April 2023

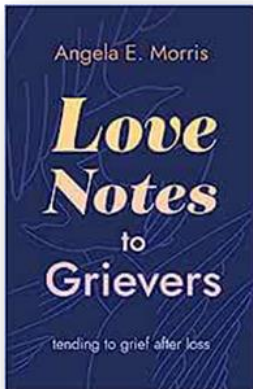
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## LOVE NOTES TO GRIEVERS

ANGELA E. MORRIS

*An excellent resource for those facing loss...*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*



Love Notes to Grievors is a beautiful book that offers comfort and support to anyone going through the painful experience of loss. The author, Morris, challenges the misconception that closure is necessary and encourages individuals to embrace their pain and understand that healing has no time limit.

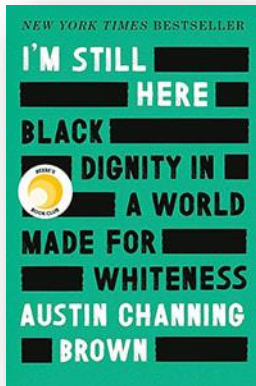
As someone who has experienced various losses throughout my life, including the loss of both parents (twice-long story) and significant life changes, I know firsthand that getting over it is not always an option and can be detrimental to one's overall well-being.

Love Notes to Grievors is an excellent resource for those facing loss or trying to support someone who is. It provides a sense of solace and helps us understand that everyone's journey is different and should not be judged or dismissed. Overall, it is a fantastic book that I highly recommend.

WRITTEN: 10 June 2023

## I'M STILL HERE

AUSTIN CHANNING BROWN



*Her parents gave Austin a white male name to help her get hired and have an easier life...*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

In I'm Still Here, Brown's parents gave her the predominately white male name, Austin, to help her get hired and so she could have an easier life.

Of course, this presented a host of other challenges.

I don't think one Caucasian parent has ever given a child a predominately black name to make their lives easier.

Doesn't that say it all?

It would take a truckload of courage to admit people who look like me, including myself, have been taught racist ideas as the norm since childhood. And until we accept that and try to live our lives every bleeping day as recovering racists (at least in thought), racism will live on. I don't think eradicating racism is a collective process as much as an individual growth journey.

I find most white people are more concerned about being called racist than not being racist.

Read. Learn. Listen. And don't be so racist that you ignorantly and willfully change the definition of 'woke' to suit your own stilted views.

Brown's writing made me realize I must work on my thinking daily, starting with self-honesty. Refuse. Refuse. Refuse your first thought when you see someone who doesn't look like you. Listen. It's okay. Just don't say it aloud. The next time it happens, erase the first thought. And the next time and the next time and the time after that.

I'm Still Here; is a compelling, essential read educating all of us; letting us know we have a long way to go, and the most crucial starting point may be listening to your inner dialogue and refusing the first things coming to your mind.

WRITTEN: 24 June 2023

## THE LAST STORY OF MINA LEE

NANCY YOORYOUN KIM



*I never have to worry about being treated differently than anything I am.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

I never have to worry about being treated differently than anything I am.

What I love about The Last Story of Mina Lee is Kim invites us into another world, another reality, immigration, where the pursuit of a better life is often rife with culture being stripped from those in the quest for more or running from heartache—with assimilation constantly tearing families apart as youth is distracted by trying to escape who their parents are as they desperately try to fit into new surroundings.

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I don't think we can, nor do I believe it is for the best, to erase your past.

If you do, how can you ever become whole? I know this from personal experience.

By escaping into Kim's fabulous story, my eyes opened to the fact I can never possibly understand the immigrant experience. I never have to fear being deported. I never have to worry about being treated differently than anything I am.

The Last Story of Mina Lee taught me six 50+ old Caucasians sitting at a bar talking about how immigrants should assimilate, don't know a darn thing, and really need to find a way to hold their willful ignorance at bay.

The Last Story of Mina Lee taught me we must look at each other through a softer, less judgemental lens because we can never fully understand what pains might be lying behind each other's eyes.

WRITTEN: 30 April 2023

Lindsay Wincherauk

## SECOND BEST

NANCY YOOYOUN KIM

*Second Best* reminds us that none of us are second best.



*How did the book make me feel/think?*

A boy named Martin is destined to become Harry Potter. It's not necessarily his dream; it fell into his lap by chance.

Near the end of the selection process, which seemed to be a lock for Martin, Daniel Radcliffe is asked to put his hat in the ring.

He's not necessarily better than Martin, but he is selected.

Martin can't escape the global phenomenon of the Harry Potter craze. Everywhere he looks, he sees and laments what could have been. While Daniel's star soars into the prison and

adulation of fame.

Have you ever found yourself pondering over certain decisions you made in life? Maybe you've thought about how things might have turned out differently if you had made a different choice during a big game. Or perhaps you've applied for a job in the past, got shortlisted, but ultimately didn't get the position.

Poor Martin could never escape who he could have been, longing for it – suffering it.

I built a company during a fifteen-year career. No matter what I did, when it came time for the company to make a change, I never stood a chance because a coworker still had a silver spoon in his mouth. They released me from my job without any wrongdoing on my part. And the silver spoon got to stay. I was deemed second best.

Second Best reminds us that none of us are second best. Sometimes, no matter how hard you try, the cards are being dealt by someone else – and what you longed hard for was nothing more than an elusive and destructive dream. Being true to yourself and embracing your unique qualities is so important. Laughing and loving are also crucial for a happy and fulfilling life. But above all, showing kindness and empathy towards others can make a significant impact on the world. It's incredible how much of a difference a small act of kindness can make.

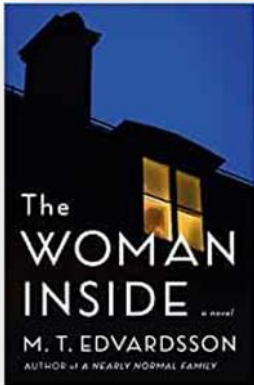
WRITTEN: 4 July 2023

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## THE WOMAN INSIDE

M.T. EDVARDSSON



*When we hurt each other, what is going too far?*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

When we hurt each other, what is going too far? The wheels start spinning out of control. Desire is laced with deception. Death hits close to home. Addiction breaks a family apart, and six lives are on a collision course.

Edvardsson takes readers on a wild ride. I don't want to get off. The pages turn at a blistering pace. The hairs on my arms stand on end. Someone must pay. Everyone is suffering.

I make it to the end. Mouth agape, I'm not sure who won, if there was a winner at all?

The Woman Inside is a thrill ride that will leave you questioning how far is too far?

WRITTEN: 4 May 2023

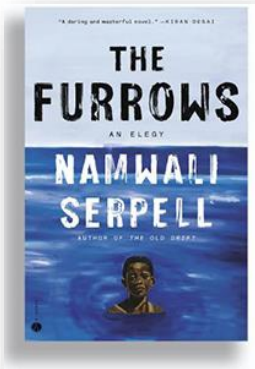
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## THE FURROWS THE FURROWS

NAMALI SERPELL



*The Furrows* was deservedly Shortlisted for the 2023 Carol Shields Prize for Fiction.

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

A twelve-year-old girl goes swimming with her seven-year-old brother. Alone. Permitted by the times.

Tragedy strikes.

The boy disappears into the water's furrows.

The water takes her brother away to never be found.

The girl's recollection of the event is scattered. Uncertainty swirls.

The family breaks apart in three directions.

The father flounders in denial and the desire to move on with life and shamefully leaves the family to start anew with a new family.

The mother is trapped in the unbearable pain of not knowing. Painfully resisting the inevitability her son's death, instead believing her son will return to her life one day. She, too, lives in denial, going through life with eyes closed. She starts a foundation to look for missing children when she is really prolonging her anguish, while at the same time hurting her daughter because her only reason for living is her lost child.

The sister's despair, after losing her brother, hits close to home for those who have lost someone dear, as she sees ghosts in everything and everyone as she ages.

The three of them grieve their own way – closure never to be found.

Toss in a racial element of the father being black and the mother being white. The children are a blend, and what you have in *The Furrows* is a mind-bending, twisting and turning ride through agonizing lows. Tear leak from my eyes.

*The Furrows* was deservedly Shortlisted for the 2023 Carol Shields Prize for Fiction.

WRITTEN: 30 May 2023

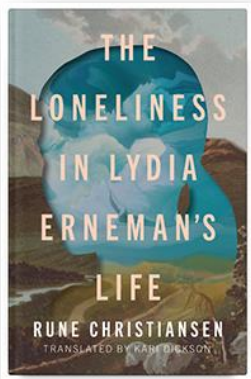
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## THE LONELINESS IN LYDIA ERNEMAN'S LIFE

RUNE CHRISTIANSEN

*A testament to Rune Christiansen's deft ability to remove the noise from the confusing times we are all living in today ....*



*How did the book make me feel/think?*

Lydia's an introvert. She works as a veterinarian in Norway. She grew up isolated being an only child in northern Sweden. Lydia loves the animals. She tried to give them the best chance for a whole life through treatment. Surrounded by pain and suffering and the occasional joy of recovery – Lydia was often left alone in the comfort of the scarcity of interaction with the outside world.

Lydia finds love, eventually bringing a new life into the world herself.

The Loneliness in Lydia Erneman's life is a testament to Rune Christiansen's deft ability to remove the noise from the confusing times we are all living in today – soothing readers' souls by allowing us to see the unwavering beauty of solitude and navigating the world alone, mainly without a compass, or the shackles of the times, which seem to be creating a world where we are all connected but rarely do, we ever listen to one another.

WRITTEN: 30 May 2023

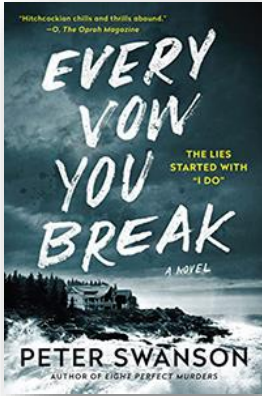
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## EVERY VOW YOU BREAK

PETER SWANSON

*Margaret Atwood.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*



I didn't love the book. I didn't hate it. But love, no. At times, it bugged me.

The protagonist is a female named Abigail, and the author is a guy.

Pete Davidson. He's not in the book.

The book bugged me because a guy author wrote a scene where Abigail pleasures herself to fall asleep. This scene made me queasy. I'm not sure men should write about female self-pleasure.

In another passage, a psychopath she met at her bachelorette party stalks Abigail. The man has followed her across the country, showing up at her wedding and then at her honeymoon on a secluded island. When Abigail...

Abe Vigoda. He's not in the book.

When Abigail is talking with a friend, she tells her friend her psychopathic stalker, who may have murdered his wife; or perhaps she 'just' drowned on their honeymoon, is not a psychopath. Abigail adds maybe he's just smitten with her and is suffering from a broken heart, enough to have him fly across the country to stalk her.

I don't believe any woman would call a stalker misunderstood.

Every Vow You Break reads like tangled Christmas lights, each page revealing another absurdity.

Abigail is in trouble; she is in a perilous situation; luckily, she remembered how to use a bow & arrow, and even luckier, unless you prefer, more fortunately, she remembered how to portage.

And then the book ends.

But no. Wait, three-hundred-eight pages down, one to go; The Acknowledgements.

The Acknowledgements untangled the last bit of lighting, with the first two words of the Acknowledgements being Margaret Atwood.

Margaret Atwood is not in the book or quoted in the book. I don't understand.

WRITTEN: 10 June 2023

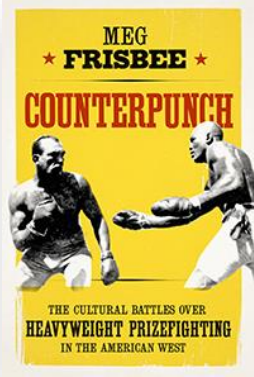
Lindsay Wincherauk

## COUNTERPUNCH

MEG FRISBEE

*I've now read a book about prize fighting in America.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*



I've now read a book about prize fighting in America. America is a moralistically debunked mess.

This reader thinks the fans of any pugilistic sport could be more organized in thought. I'm unsure if that spin of phrase works, so I will simplify it: if you get off on people bashing each other in the head for sport, I probably won't enjoy your company.

But.

But there's a twist.

Counterpunch taught me that an absurd amount of energy expounded to block prizefighting from existing. It is almost laughable as governments often send in the military or The Texas Rangers to intimidate event organizers into ensuring they never occurred.

Think about that.

As I read on, I learned about Mohammad Ali, "The Greatest of All Time," was an anti-war, pacifist, what?

And I learned, the white man feared fighting the black man because heaven forbid, if they lost, superiority would also be lost.

Counterpunch taught me whether you are a fan of violence or not, America needs to drop the moral compass and stop wasting energy trying to tell people how to live their lives.

If they could find a way to do that, maybe they wouldn't be wasting time fighting Drag Queens and Disney and could focus on what matters in this world, lessening the gap between having and have not.

America spent decades trying to stop people from being exposed to the violence of two men beating each other senselessly. Whereas today, the country I live in has issued a travel advisory for the entire US, telling us we should all be aware of 'active shooter' situations.

Think about that for a moment.

Did you?

Or are you spending your energy trying to stop Drag Queens from reading to children?

WRITTEN: 30 May 2023