

Unity Books

Issue 6

December 2000

December — and Unity's storage cupboards are stuffed to bursting with the Christmas holiday stock overflow. 'Too many books and too little space' is our annual pre-Christmas cry. This year the accumulated piles seem particularly impressive — almost every major author appears to have produced an absolute winner. And so our seams bulge and our tables groan under the combined weight of Atwood, Ishiguro, Roth, Barnes, Amis, Le Carre, Carey, Heaney, Kingsolver, Banks, Raban, Ackroyd, Wolfe, Schama, Vidal — the list continues for some time and is truly impressive. To be faced with the task of doing justice to this delectable smorgasbord of talent in one newsletter was daunting. Ruthlessly we have made a selection from the hundreds of new releases that jostle for the limited space. This list is by no means a complete list of the most excellent — instead view it merely as a menu of temptations to entice further investigation.

Without further ado — we begin.

Christmas Biggies

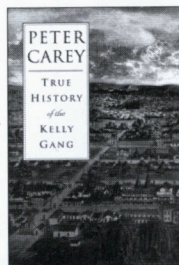


**1: *The Blind Assassin*
Margaret Atwood
(Bloomsbury) Hb \$49.95**

Previously short-listed three times for the Booker, Atwood has finally won the prize for this, her tenth novel. 'Ten days after the war ended, my sister Laura drove a car off a bridge.' Thus this lovely, big, fat novel begins — enjoy!

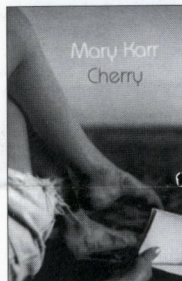
**2: *True History of the Kelly Gang*
Peter Carey
(University of Queensland Press) Pb \$34.95**

This new novel from Carey is gripping from the outset. The author has given the Australian bushranger Ned Kelly a voice, and it is a voice so original, wild, and passionate that it seems impossible that it is not Ned himself. Carey has excelled himself. A must!



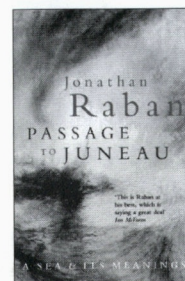
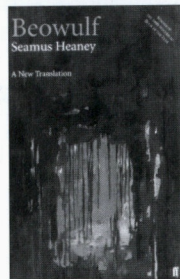
**3: *Cherry* Mary Karr
(Picador) Pb \$24.95**

The long awaited sequel to *The Liars Club* recounts Karr's own tumultuous teen years and sexual coming-of-age. When poets choose to write prose the result can be extraordinary. Karr's gritty down-home Texan eloquence will knock you out.



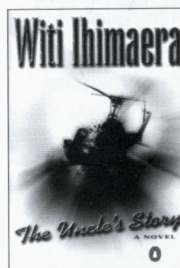
**4: *Beowulf* Seamus Heaney (trans)
(Faber) Pb \$24.95**

Heaney, who was awarded the 1995 Nobel Prize for Literature, has resurrected an almost forgotten classic. Now the heroic tales of Beowulf, the Scandinavian Prince, are again spell-binding and fabulous in this new translation. The tape is also available (with Heaney reading — \$24.95) and it makes for gorgeous listening.



**5: *Passage to Juneau* Jonathan Raban
(Picador) Pb \$24.95**

Our biggest hardback seller last Christmas and now in paperback, Raban recounts his solo sea voyage from Seattle to Juneau. What begins as an intellectual adventure soon becomes something far more personal. Fascinating on many levels.

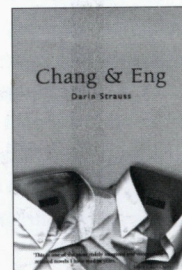


**6: *The Uncle's Story*
Witi Ihimaera
(Penguin) Pb \$34.95**

Essentially a gay love story, there is much within this novel that reflects the writer's own personal experiences including his confrontation with the Maori attitude to sexuality and masculinity. A big holiday read — Ihimaera in top form.

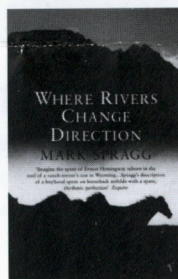
**7: *Chang & Eng* Darin Strauss
(Allison & Busby) Pb \$32.95**

Narrated by Eng, this tale of the historic Siamese twins, one of the nineteenth century's most fabled oddities, is both extraordinary (twenty-one children between them) and heart-wrenching. Beautifully written, this first novel will sweep you into an unthinkable strange world.



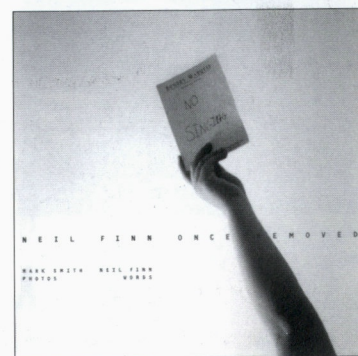
**8: *Where Rivers Change Direction*
Mark Spragg (Vintage) Pb \$24.95**

This is a brilliant evocation of a boyhood spent on the oldest dude ranch in Wyoming. Spragg's style is sparse and beautiful, passionate and funny. This is top-notch writing, reviewers have raved and it's one for all the fans of American writing.



**9: *Neil Finn Once Removed* Mark Smith and Neil Finn
(Sanctuary Publishing) Pb \$49.95**

A gorgeous must-have volume of Neil's unashamedly intimate, often amusing, but always honest thoughts on music, relationships, his fans, family, and the future. Mark's photos are the perfect accompaniment — much, much more than the usual rock 'n' roll pics.



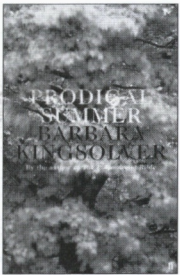
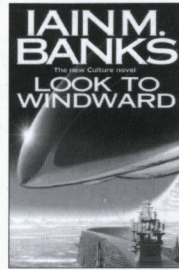


**10: *The Amber Spyglass*
Philip Pullman (Scholastic) Hb \$34.95**

In this final instalment of *His Dark Materials* trilogy Pullman lives up to high expectations. His books, although classified as reading for young adults, have a far broader appeal. For those who enjoy well-written, intelligent fantasy / sci-fi (eg *The Sparrow*) add this man's work to your must-read pile.

**11: *Look to Windward*
Iain M. Banks (Orbit) Pb \$29.95**

Sci-fi fans will be delighted. Another highly original and ferociously intelligent novel in the *Culture* series from Banks, who keeps turning them out and rarely disappoints.

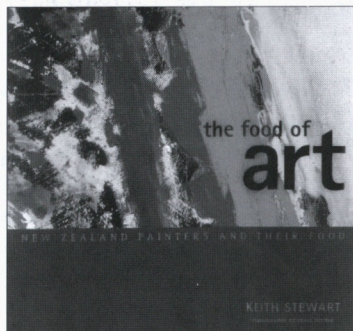


**12: *Prodigal Summer*
Barbara Kingsolver (Faber) Pb \$29.95**

All those who loved *The Poisonwood Bible* can now cheer. Here is Kingsolver's new novel — quite fabulous and quite different from its predecessor. Set in Appalachia, this one is sexy, funny, compassionate, deeply concerned with environmental issues, and has more in common with this author's earlier books.

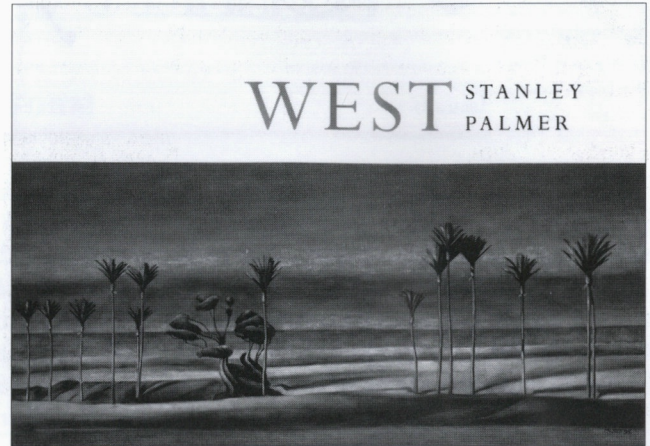
**13: *The Food of Art: New Zealand Painters and Their Food*
Keith Stewart, with photography by Craig Potton (Craig Potton) Pb \$39.95**

What a terrific idea! A gorgeously photographed book showcasing 16 acclaimed NZ painters and their work, and exploring some aspect of the relationship that each artist has with food. Recipes included, this book has enormous appeal and will solve endless Christmas present difficulties.



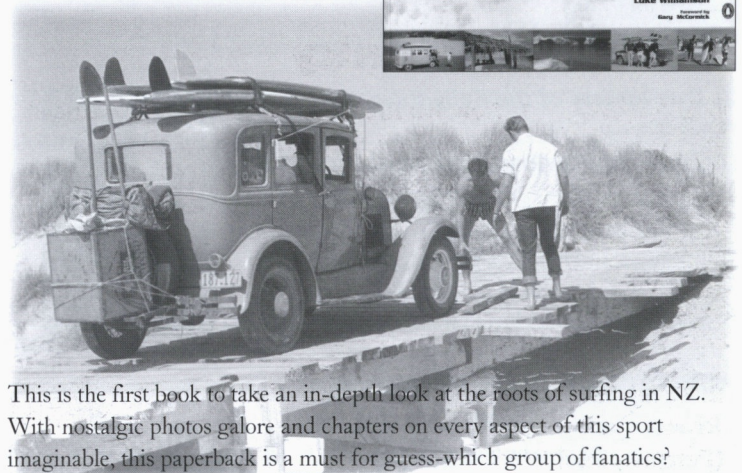
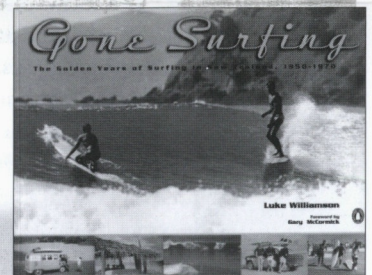
14: *West* Stanley Palmer (Godwit) Hb \$99.95

At last — a luscious production of Palmer's hauntingly beautiful landscape paintings of the West Coasts of the South Island and of Auckland. Palmer's own notes accompany the artwork, providing a glimpse of the people, the history and the place.



15: *Gone Surfing: The Golden Years of Surfing in NZ: 1950-1970*

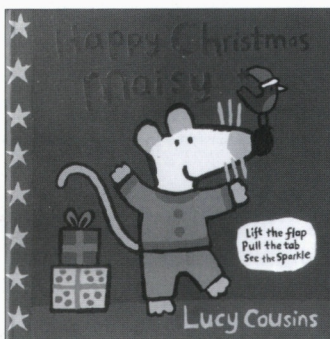
Luke Williamson (Penguin) Pb \$34.95



This is the first book to take an in-depth look at the roots of surfing in NZ. With nostalgic photos galore and chapters on every aspect of this sport imaginable, this paperback is a must for guess-which group of fanatics?

Children's Books

There's a spectacular line-up of children's classics in the store this Christmas. A few in brief: *Harry Potter* Boxed Set (the first three hardbacks) at \$89.95, *Olive the Other Reindeer* at \$28, *The Nutcracker*, a beautiful illustrated hardback also at \$28, *The Wind in the Willows* — 2 hardbacks in a slipcase for \$64.95, *The Complete Chronicles of Narnia* — one volume hardback at \$89.95 and *Babar* hardbacks at \$45 each.

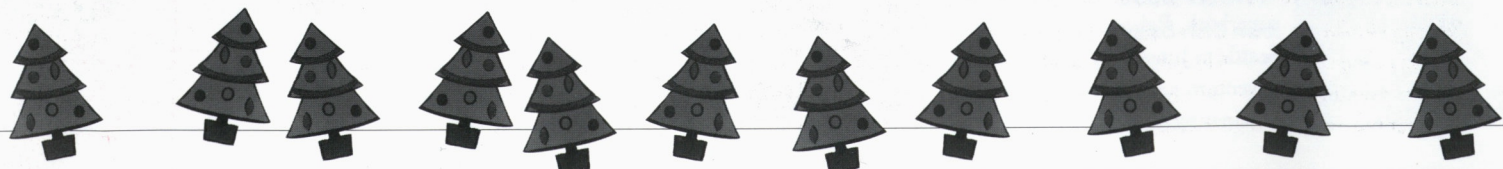
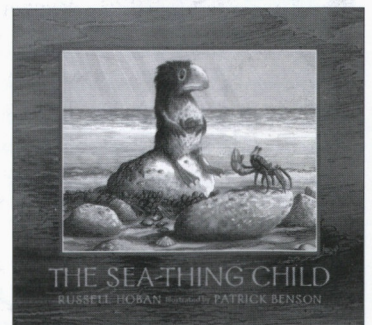


**1: *Happy Christmas Maisy*
Lucy Cousins (Walker Books) Hb \$22.95**

Our smallest Unity customers continue to vouch for Maisy's popularity and here is a new Christmas title for the 1 – 4 years olds, starring that talented, busy mouse. If you haven't checked out Maisy yet — she's worth it.

**2: *The Sea Thing Child*
Russell Hoban (Walker Books) Hb \$19.95**

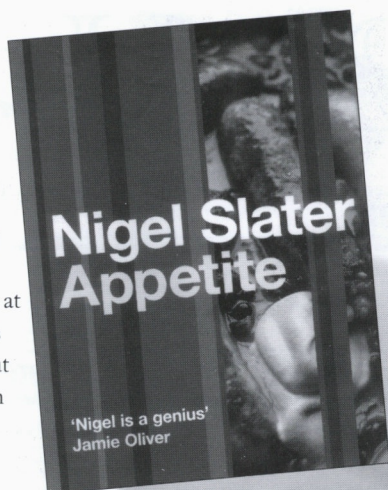
Short-listed for the Kate Greenaway Medal, this beautifully illustrated tale by the talented Russell Hoban has a strong Lewis Carroll flavour. Exquisite and gentle, this is one that the big people won't mind reading for the 300th time.



Cookbooks

**1: *Appetite*
Nigel Slater
(Fourth Estate)
Hb \$89.95**

Common-sense! Simplicity! Follow your instincts! Satisfy your appetite! Slater's latest delectable looking book aims at liberating recipe-bound chefs and foodies. Yes it's pricey but it's definitely the 'usable glam cookbook' this Christmas.



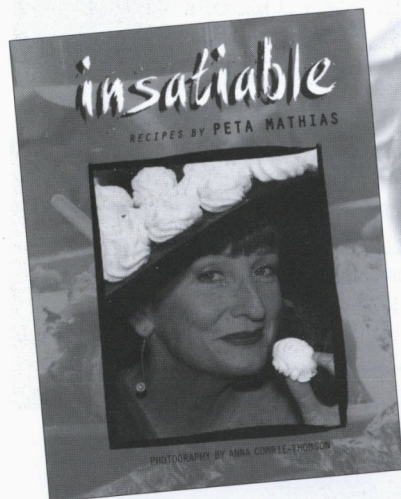
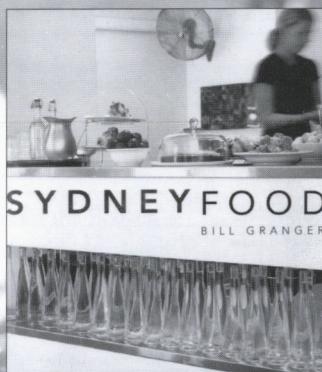
**2: *Marie Claire Flavours*
Donna Hay
(Murdoch Books)
Pb \$34.95**

This is Hay's fourth Marie Claire cookbook and another winner. *Flavour* explores the origins of fourteen aromatic ingredients — vanilla, citrus, chilli, chocolate, garlic, etc — and then provides recipes with accompanying photos depicting culinary heaven.



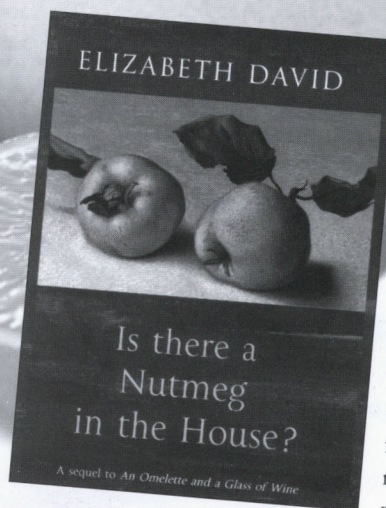
**3: *Sydney Food*
Bill Granger
(Murdoch Books) Pb \$34.95**

Drawing on the talent of Sydney chef Bill Granger, this sumptuous cookbook takes the home chef on a taste tour of Sydney. Full of recipes using the type of fresh produce and multi-cultural influences so familiar to NZ cooks, this cookbook travels well.



**4: *Insatiable*
Recipes by Peta Mathias
(Random House)
Hb \$44.95**

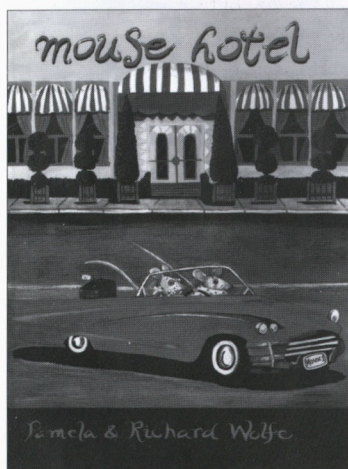
Another winner from our own Peta Mathias who has selected those recipes dearest to her heart and chosen from all around the world. Using only top-quality produce Peta presents her culinary delights in typically flamboyant style. Loads of fun!



**5: *Is there a Nutmeg in the House?*
Elizabeth David
(Michael Joseph) Hb \$49.95***

Just what you didn't expect — a new Elizabeth David! But here it is — the sequel to *An Omelette & a Glass of Wine* and it contains her journalism, friends' letters, and material from her files — none of it appearing in her previous nine books.

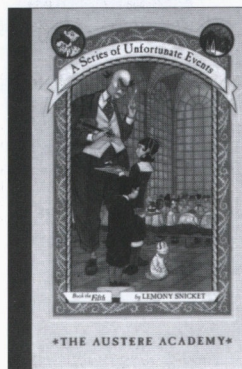
* (May not be in time for Xmas)



**3: *Mouse Hotel*
Pamela and Richard Wolfe
(Random House) Hb \$26.95**

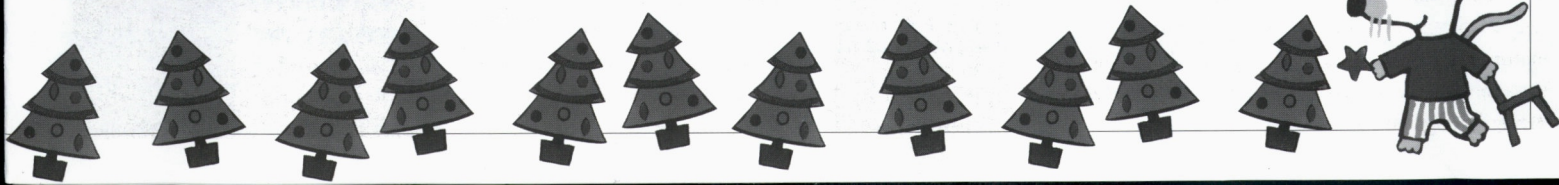
Again the Wolfes have produced a fabulously illustrated book with clever, easy verse.

With loads to look at on every page and fun to read aloud, this is another children's book that won't lose its charm after the umpteenth reading.



**4: *The Austere Academy*
The 5th book in *A Series of Unfortunate Events*
Lemony Snicket
(Harper Collins) Hb \$16.95**

For all those Harry Potter devotees with nothing to read, the Lemony Snicket series might just fill the void. Very dark and funny and well-written, their popularity is fast gaining momentum. What's more, there are five already, with others to follow.

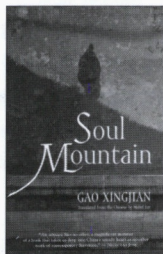


Fiction

1: *Soul Mountain*

Gao Xingjian (Flamingo) Pb \$29.95

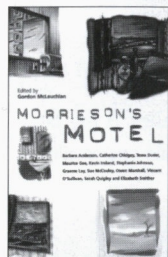
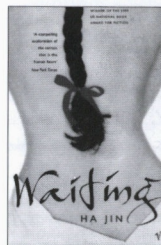
Winner of this year's Nobel Prize for Literature, Xingjian has long fought for artistic self-expression in China. *Soul Mountain* has much autobiographical substance but takes the form of an odyssey in which Chinese philosophy, history, fables, and mythical characters are all interwoven.



4: *Waiting*

Ha Jin (Vintage) Pb \$24.95

Winner of the US National Book Award for Fiction, *Waiting* is primarily a love story. The very first line sets the picture: 'Every summer Lin Kong returned to Goose Village to divorce his wife Shuyu.' Simply told and beautifully written.



2: *Morrieson's Motel*

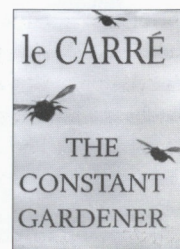
(ed) Gordon McLauchlan (Tandem Press) Pb \$24.95

Twelve of NZ's top fiction writers combine to tell the story of what happens one weekend when the humble Taranaki Morrieson's Motel is fully occupied. The wild assemblage of guests in the 12 rooms create three days of drama, romance, sex, and mystery.

5: *The Constant Gardener*

John Le Carre (Hodder & Stoughton) Hb \$44.95

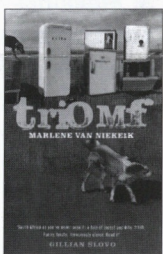
Le Carre fans can rejoice. Whoever predicted that his books would disappear along with the Cold War was greatly mistaken. The master has returned just in time for Christmas with his eighteenth novel — a murder mystery set in Africa.



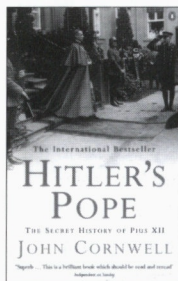
3: *Triomf*

Marlene Van Niekerk (Abacus) Pb \$24.95

Triomf is a darkly comic, irreverent South African novel that is receiving rave reviews. Set at the time of the first democratic election, the story is told from the point of view of the know-nothing, violent white-trash Benade family. South Africa as you've never seen it!



Non Fiction



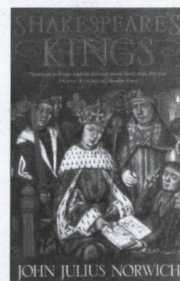
1: *Hitler's Pope: the Secret History of Pius XII* John Cornwell (Penguin) Pb \$24.95

Eugenio Pacelli (Pope Pius XII) signed an agreement with Hitler in 1933 to protect the power of the Catholic Church. In return Pacelli refused to condemn Nazism. This highly controversial bestseller (now in paperback) is thoroughly researched and reads like a thriller.

5: *Shakespeare's Kings*

John Julius Norwich (Penguin) Pb \$24.95

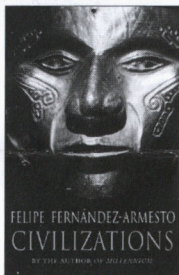
Apparently Shakespeare was prone to depart from historical fact. Norwich identifies the historical raw material that our bard used as inspiration, and also analyses the artistic, political, and practical considerations that determined Shakespeare's approach to this material.



2: *Civilizations*

Felipe Fernández-Armesto (MacMillan) Hb \$69.95

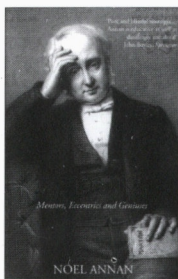
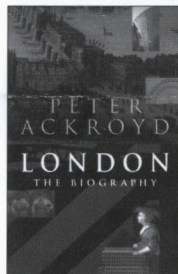
In this latest work, the author of *Millennium* and *Truth: A History* adopts a unique approach to history, based on the premise that civilizations are the product of their environment. Well priced — this is one for the scholar on holiday.



6: *London: A Biography*

Peter Ackroyd (Chatto & Windus) Hb \$85.00

This is a wonderfully entertaining book on London unlike any other. Ackroyd stresses that it is not a chronological history of the city, but a biography — a look at London as a living organism with its own laws of growth and change. Huge and luscious.



3: *The Dons: Mentors, Eccentrics & Geniuses* Noel Annan (Harper Collins) Pb \$36.95

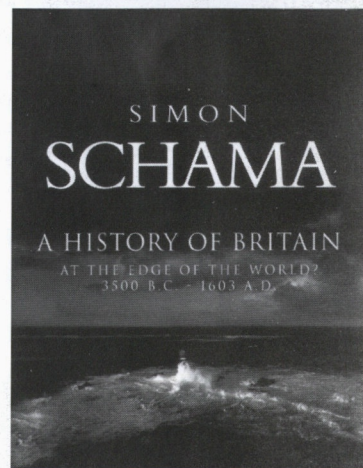
A series of fascinating biographical essays on some of the most richly anecdotal figures of the past 150 years. *The Dons* is also highly entertaining and very readable. (Imagine having Isaiah Berlin as your don!)

7: *A History of Britain*

Simon Schama (Hyperion) Hb \$122.95

Wow — this looks fab! The first in a two-volume history, Schama brings Britain's past to dramatic life with a wealth of compelling stories and vivid detail.

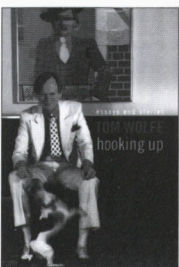
Gripping, unapologetically personal and starring a top-notch cast of the great and the wicked — this makes for superb reading.

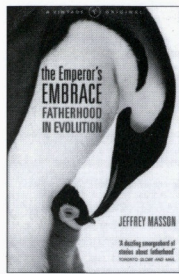


4: *Hooking Up: Essays and Stories*

Tom Wolfe (Jonathan Cape) Hb \$49.95

The funny, savage, and hard-hitting Wolfe is back with a collection of new pieces chronicling an enormously diverse range of subjects. Also included is the previously unpublished novella *Ambush at Fort Bragg*. Vintage Wolfe!





8: *The Emperor's Embrace: Reflections of Animal Families and Fatherhood*

Jeffrey Masson (Vintage) Pb \$29.95

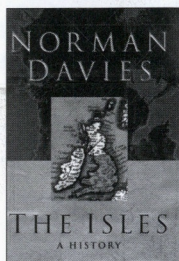
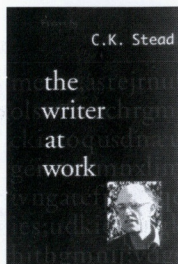
With intriguing insight and impeccable research, Masson (author of the bestseller *When Elephants Weep*) showcases the extraordinary behaviour of outstanding fathers in the animal kingdom. Nature's worst dads also get a mention — guess which group homo-sapiens fall into?

9: *The Writer at Work*

C.K. Stead

(Otago University Press) Pb \$39.95

Stead has gathered a selection of his essays from the past decade mixing literary criticism with autobiography. Whatever the subject (Barry Humphries' birthday, Shelley's Constantia, or Janet Frame) Stead's literary journalism is always intelligent, witty, and interesting.



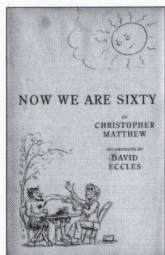
10: *The Isles: A History*

Norman Davies

(Papermac) Pb \$44.95

Davies has written a radical history of the British Isles (including Ireland) and challenges the traditional nationalist picture of 'eternal England' by examining its history from the standpoint of an insider rather than from that of an outsider looking in.

Funky



1: *Now We Are Sixty* Christopher Matthew (John Murray) Hb \$39.95

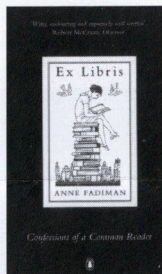
Remember *Now We Are Six* by A.A. Milne? Matthew has taken some of Milne's best loved poems and re-written them for sixty-year-olds, with hilarious and often thought-provoking results.

'They're changing sex at Buckingham Palace!' Murgatroyd mutters with undisguised malice' ...

2: *Ex Libris: Confessions of a Common Reader* Anne Fadiman

(Penguin) Pb \$17.95

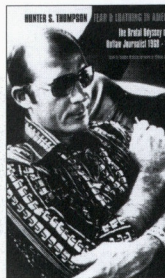
A perfect little volume for anyone who is passionate about books, this collection of essays covers the most extraordinary range of literary subjects imaginable. Thoroughly readable, witty and imaginative, this will delight every book obsessive (an ideal size for posting).



3: *Fear & Loathing in America: The Brutal Odyssey of an Outlaw Journalist 1968 - 1976* Hunter S. Thompson

(Bloomsbury) Hb \$75.00

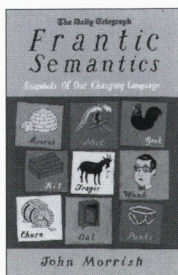
Like to get into the head of the man behind gonzo journalism? This second volume of Thompson's letters might do it for you. Following the publication of his first book *Hell's Angels*, these letters cover his most debauched and infamous years. Not for everyone!



4: *The Daily Telegraph Frantic Semantics: Snapshots of Our Changing Language*

John Morrish (Pan) Pb \$22.95

This humorous collection of columns from the *Saturday Telegraph* looks at the use and abuse of words in current English usage — the perfect gift for those who correct punctuation mistakes on billboards and put pen to paper at the merest whiff of a split infinitive.

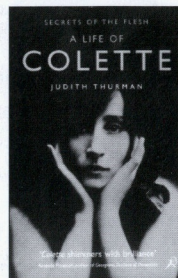


Biography / Memoir

1: *Hitler 1936 -1945: Nemesis*

Ian Kershaw (Allen Lane) Hb \$79.95

Hitler 1889 -1936: Hubris was a huge seller for us and here is Kershaw's sequel — the definitive account of the twentieth century's central figure. A very large read to take on holiday.



2: *Secrets of the Flesh: A Life of Colette*

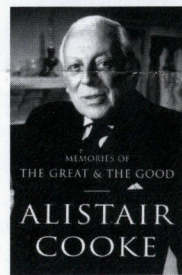
Judith Thurman (Bloomsbury) Pb \$29.95

If you like your serious literary biographies loaded with scandal, then this one is right up your alley. A big fat read that has had wonderful reviews; this one won't disappoint.

3: *Memories of the Great and the Good*

Alistair Cooke (Pavilion) Pb \$24.95

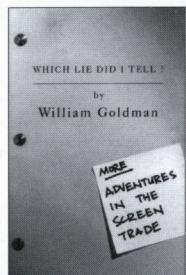
During his career Cooke has interviewed hundreds of the century's most influential people. Here he has collected his memories of those whom he believes have left the world a better and more interesting place. Intriguing choices with surprising revelations — just fascinating.



4: *Which Lie Did I Tell*

William Goldman (Bloomsbury) Pb \$39.95

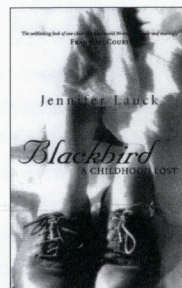
Goldman's long awaited sequel to the cult *Adventures in the Screen Trade* is no disappointment. Here's the updated lowdown on Hollywood film-making from an insider. Well-written, hilarious, and very well reviewed even by those you'd expect to take offence.



5: *Blackbird: A Childhood Lost*

Jennifer Lauck (Little Brown) Pb \$34.95

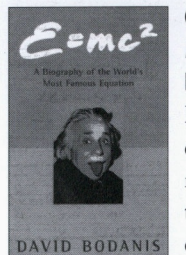
In this memoir Jennifer describes growing up in the 1970s in Carson City, Nevada. Her life should be perfect, but her mother's illness alters the world of her childhood forever. A beautifully told, gentle read.



6: *E=mc²: A Biography of the World's Most Famous Equation*

David Bodanis (Macmillan) Hb \$49.95

Here's the biography of one of the greatest scientific discoveries in history — that the realms of energy and matter are inescapably linked. Don't yawn! Bodanis turns what could be just an impenetrable theory into a damn good story. Honestly — it's terrific!



And Unity's Christmas Wish

May each of you find under the tree on Christmas morning the perfect holiday read! ... And if it doesn't quite fit, well you know where the remedy lies.

Christmas wishes, safe driving, and happy holidays to all.

