

MARCH 05, 2014 / ENTERTAINMENT

# Book Recommendations from Chicago's Writers and Editors

Literary insiders reveal what they're reading now

By Jourdan Fairchild

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## SPREAD THE WORD

We tend to be skeptical when it comes to book recommendations (unless they're from [Michael Pollan](#) or qualify as [guilty pleasures](#)). Then again, we happily accept guidance from the most well-read ladies in town. Trust us — you want to be on their page.

Credits: Courtesy Images

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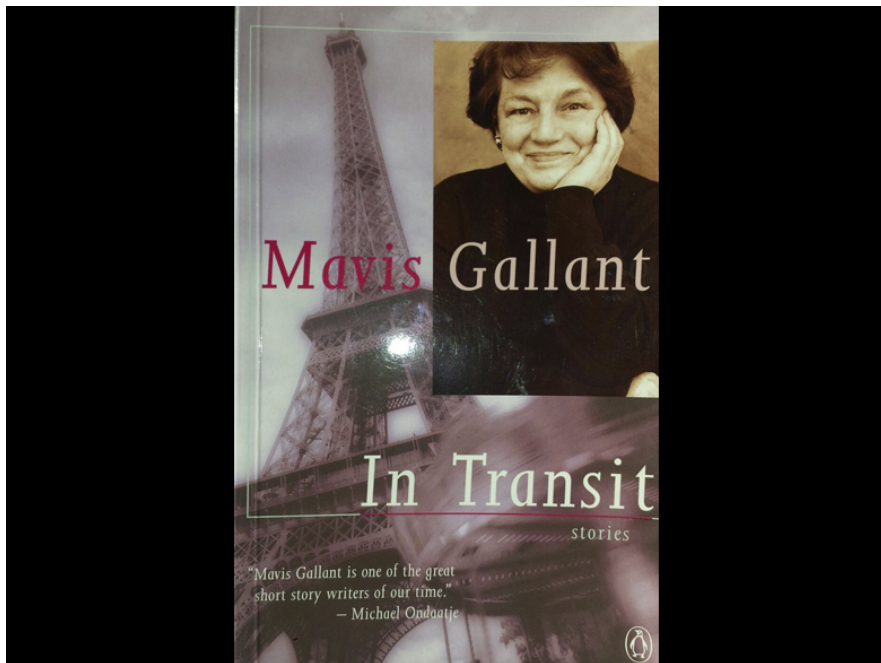
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## "IN TRANSIT"

"Mavis Gallant's books, including this collection of stories, are not nearly as well known as they deserve to be. She was a genius, and with a few lines she could describe an entire life. Likewise, her comic touch was graceful and light." — *Christine Sneed, author of Little Known Facts*

Available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

Credits: Courtesy of Penguin Books



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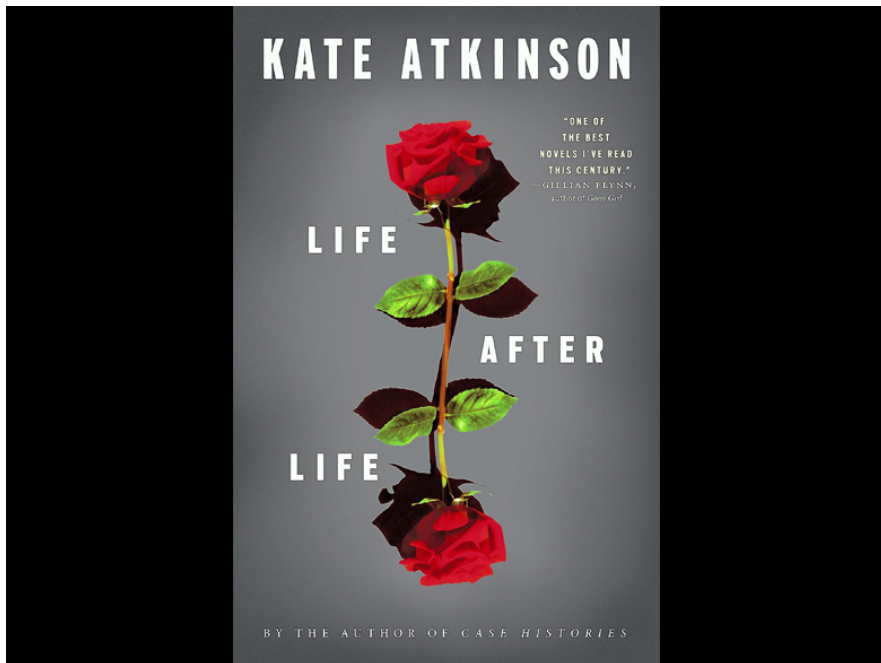
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## "LIFE AFTER LIFE"

"For me, the ideal book is one I can't put down — and I find those to be rare. This one by Kate Atkinson is one such rarity. It lures you back over and over again — in much the same way that its protagonist (who dies a dozen or so times) is lured back to life after life after life." — Mara Shalhoup, editor-in-chief of Chicago Reader

Credits: Courtesy of Reagan Arthur Books



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## "THE CHRONOLOGY OF WATER"

"I keep coming back to Lidia Yuknavitch's gut-punch of a memoir about gender, sexuality, art, family, and what it means to not only survive this life, but to live the holy hell out of it. The craft of this thing blows my mind: Each chapter features different forms; the language charges her grief her joy her

Credits: Courtesy of Hawthorne Books



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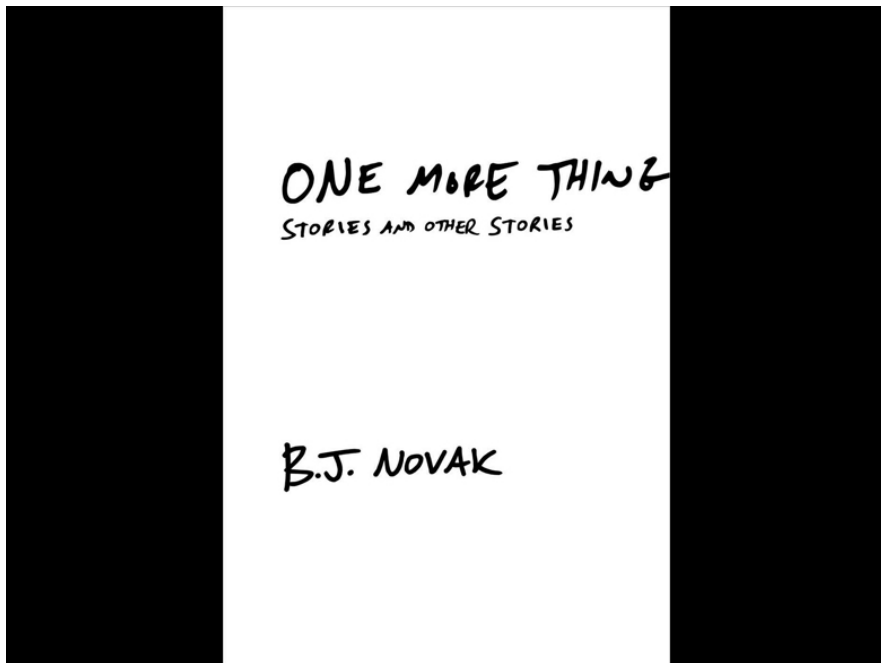
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## "ONE MORE THING"

"I'm currently reading B.J. Novak's short story collection, which has taken me aback several times already with its humor, snark, and poignance. It moves quickly and is refreshing, not because it's outright funny but because Novak makes it easy to empathize with his characters." — *Amina Elahi*, *founder/editor of Brown/Blotter*

Credits: Courtesy of Knopf



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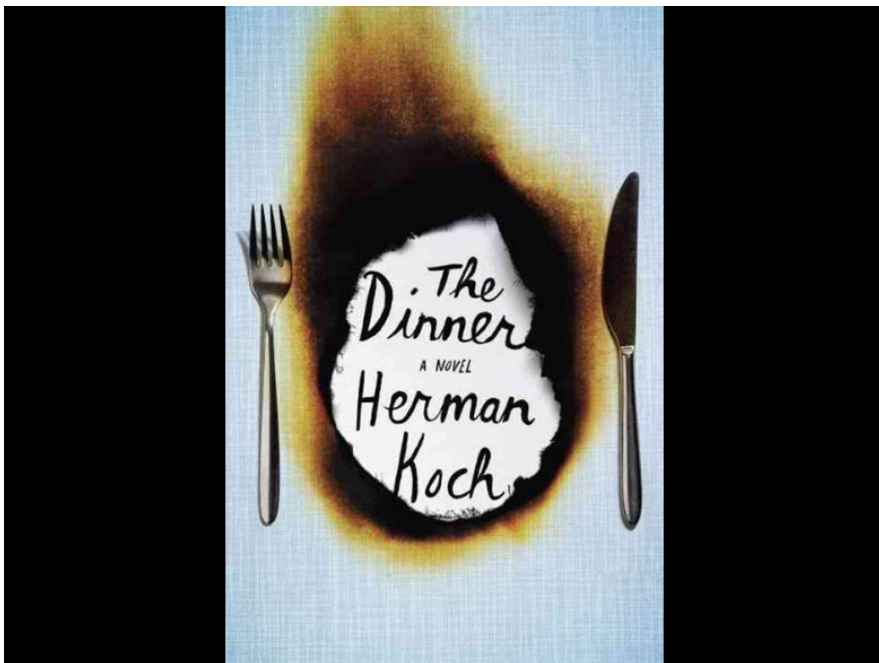
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## "THE DINNER"

"The twists and turns in Herman Koch's best seller, *The Dinner*, are delightfully creepy ... just like my former dating life."  
— Emily Belden, author of *Eightysix*

Available at [amazon.com](#).

Credits: Courtesy of Hogarth



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## "RUBY"

"I just finished a galley to be published in April by debut novelist Cynthia Bond. This book is like no other I have read. A Southern gothic tale filled with mysticism and a frightening power of religion, it tells the story of two potential lovers alternating between past and present." — *Teresa Kirschbraun, owner of [Cin-Tis Books](#)*

Credits: Courtesy of Hogarth

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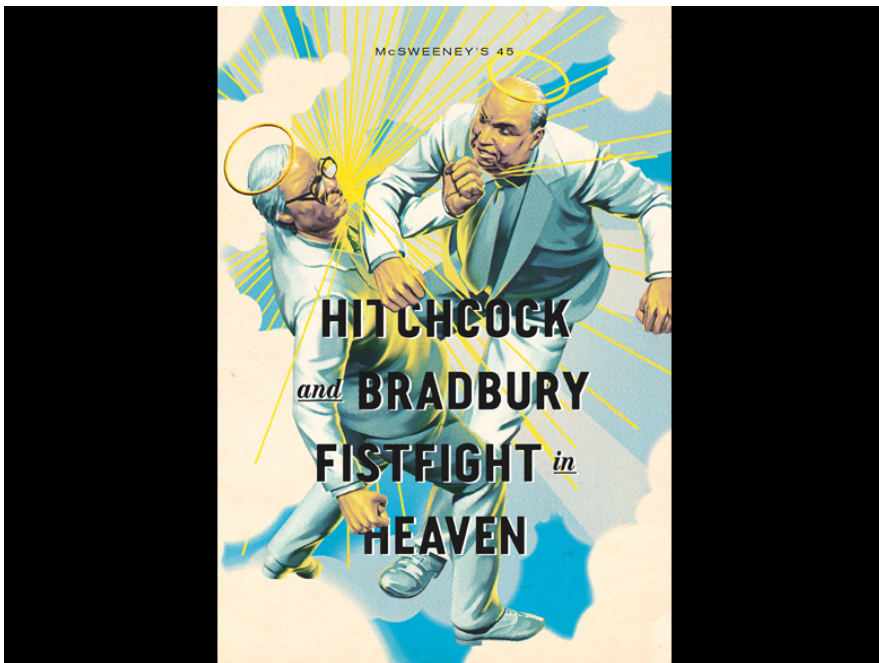
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## "MCSWEENEY'S," ISSUE 45

"Most of what I read in my professional life is so rooted in reality (albeit interesting reality!) that this collection has me enthralled. Culled from anthologies edited by Ray Bradbury and Alfred Hitchcock, these short stories are surreal, fantastical, eerie — and totally delightful." — *Kate Bernot, nightlife and events reporter, Red Bull*

Credits: Courtesy of Amazon

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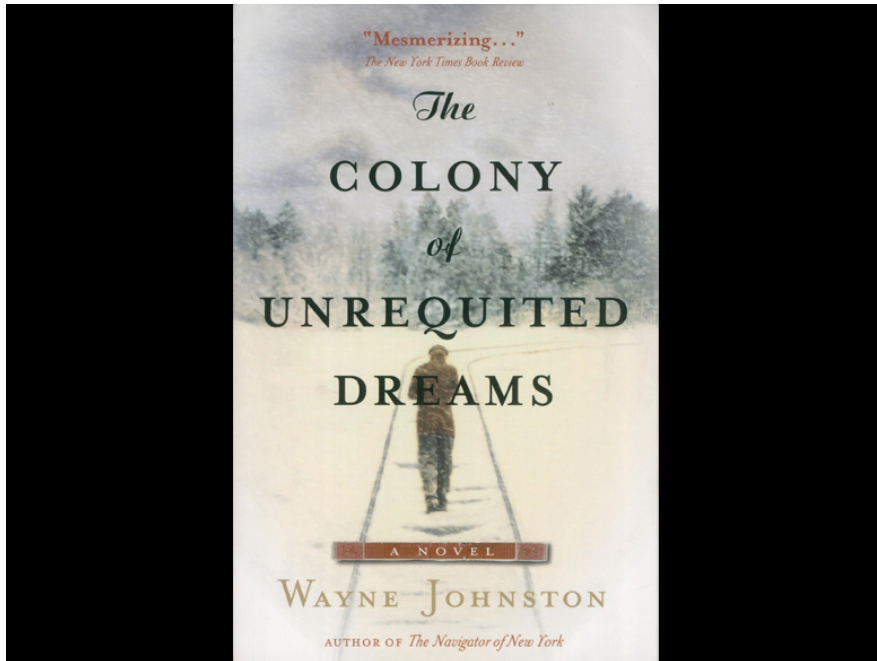
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## "THE COLONY OF UNREQUITED DREAMS"

I'm feeling rhapsodic about Wayne Johnston's wonderful historical novel about the first premier of Newfoundland. It's this very personal bildungsroman that somehow also encompasses the entire history of Newfoundland up to Confederation and seamlessly mixes real people and unforgettable invented characters

Credits: Courtesy of Anchor



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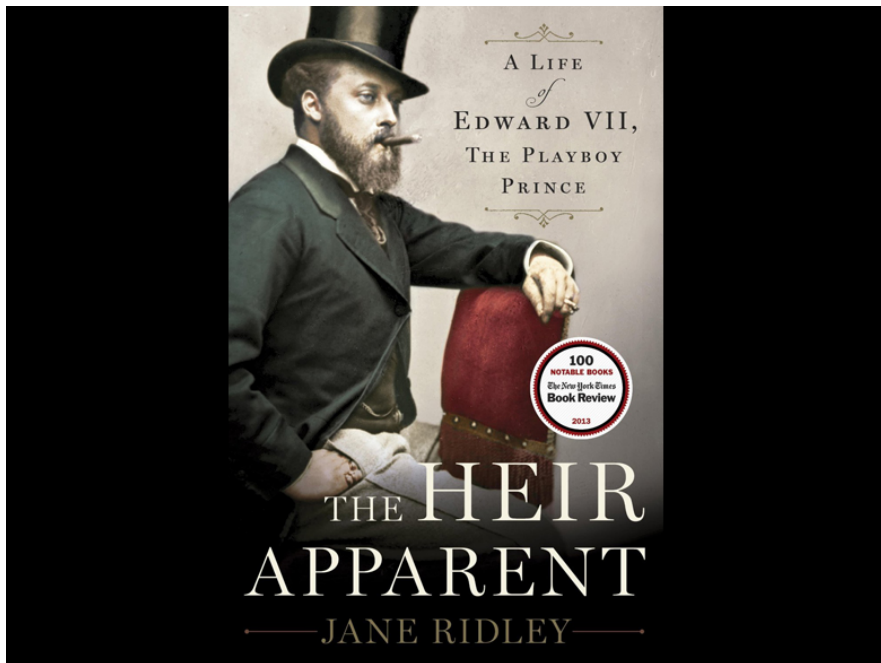
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**"THE HEIR APPARENT: A LIFE OF EDWARD VII, THE PLAYBOY PRINCE"**

"I go into these British history wormholes from time to time, and this book is full of details from the royal archives (like letters from Queen Victoria, who sounds like a real piece of work). Plus, the author, Jane Ridley, writes in a tone that I'd say is academic snark so it's a great

Credits: Courtesy of Random House



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