

A sampling of new releases by Penn Staters

▶ **A Very Hungry Girl**, Jessica Weiner '95 A&A, *Hay House*, \$14.95.

Weiner draws from her own struggles with eating disorders in this self-help book. Weiner's anecdotes from childhood—and a lengthy reflection on her years as a theatre major at Penn State—illustrate a woman who has triumphed over her self-image issues and personal tragedies. The last few chapters dissolve into empowerment axioms, but without a hint of blame-casting and finger-pointing, and without diluting her message of hope.

▶ **Big Cicadas**, Gregory Miller '00, '02 MEd, *Gardenia Press*, \$12.95. Miller's first novel revolves around a college professor, Jay Jarvis, who trades academia for a job as a middle-school teacher in a small Pennsylvania town. When one of his former students drowns, it sets off a chain of events that turns his neighbors against him and sends Jarvis reeling, searching for a way to reclaim his idyllic life and his good name.

▶ **Chip Kidd**, Veronique Vienne, *Yale University Press*, \$19.95. Kidd '86 A&A is better known as the designer of more than 1,500 book covers than the focus of what's in between them. Vienne's book escorts the reader inside the creative process behind many of Kidd's most memorable decisions. Some offer a revealing backstory: The cover for Jean Genet's bio is a portrait of the French novelist in a cracked

frame, which happened accidentally. Others—such as the close-up of a blood-caked face on a translation of *The New Testament*—need little explanation beyond their visual impact.

▶ **Animal Sense**, Diane Ackerman '70 Lib, *Knopf*, \$14.95.

In this collection of children's poems, Ackerman (author of the best-seller *A Natural History of the Senses*) playfully weaves together the wonders of nature with the five senses in a way that's both mildly educational and silly all at once. Take, for example, a reflection on touch and an alligator: "Never lend him your best sweater/Though he may sing an operetta/about being cold-blooded or perform/a hula dance just to keep warm." Ackerman's tales are accented by sophisticated illustrations.

▶ **A Boot Full of Memories**, David G. Douglas '76 Edu, *Gray Fox*, \$29.50.

Emmy-winning NFL producer Douglas had plenty of experience telling sports stories—dressing up sound bites and game footage with music and dramatic effects. But it took some convincing from his wife to tackle the tale hidden in his attic inside a black duffel bag, which protected 135 letters penned by his great-grandfather, Leonard Williams, a Civil War captain in the 2nd South Carolina Cavalry. Douglas presents the letters—written to the

captain's young wife—along with a narrative that provides historical context. Williams' descriptions of his cavalry's review by General Robert E. Lee and his thoughts on Lincoln's "employment of everything lawful and unlawful" to win the war make this a potent firsthand chronicle.

▶ **Air Battle Force**, Dale Brown '78 Lib, *William Morrow*, \$25.95.

With 14 *New York Times* best-sellers to his credit, Brown returns with another military thriller that borrows heavily from today's headlines. Major General Patrick McLanahan is back, this time leading a covert air force that's trained to assault any global target in mere hours. When a Taliban-led revolt ignites a conflict between Russia and the U.S., the fate of the free world once again lies in the hands of McLanahan and his compatriots. —RICHARD RYS

