

Group Efforts

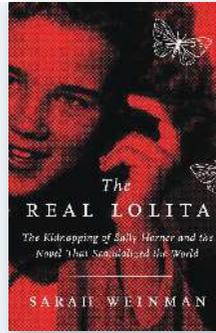
Library communities, true-crime communities, artists and bee colonies, restaurant and community outreach workers, the quick and the dead all jump off the pages of my fall picks. Nonfiction superstar Susan Orlean isn't a librarian, but she enters that vast clubhouse with **The Library Book** (S. & S., Oct.), which connects many stories: the devastating 1986 fire that burned for seven-plus hours, destroying Los Angeles's Central Library; a weird, wonderful history of L.A. and its citizens and librarians; Orlean's love affair with books and libraries; and the saga of a man whose dreams of stardom were fulfilled when he was the center of attention at an arson trial. Every page is a wonder, and even the most knowledgeable librarian will learn something new.

Another nonfiction star on the rise is Sarah Weinman, who has been on the crime scene as editor and writer, fiction and non. Her breakout title, **The Real Lolita: The Kidnapping of Sally Horner and the Novel That Scandalized the World** (Ecco: HarperCollins,

Sept., see review, p. 108) looks at a little-known true crime that (she argues) influenced one of the most scandalous novels of the 20th century, Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*. Many early readers have commented along the lines of "you won't be able to read *Lolita* in the same way," and that's true, but Weinman's book will also impress readers with its dogged research and empathetic telling.

Empathy figures in Marion Winik's **The Baltimore Book of the Dead** (Counterpoint, Oct.), along with her sharp eye and wicked wit. This sequel to *The Glen Rock Book of the Dead* has more achingly beautiful and succinct obituaries of the people (and a few pets) from Winik's wide, idiosyncratic circle of family, friends, colleagues, lovers, and enemies. This superfast read will spur rereading and the terrible wish that more people in Winik's circle would expire just so she could memorialize them.

Urban naturalist Leslie Day writes about the flora and fauna of New York City in **Honeybee Hotel:**



The Waldorf Astoria's Rooftop Garden and the Heart of NYC

(Johns Hopkins, Oct.). It tells of how a community formed around a garden and beehives high above Midtown Manhattan. The most uplifting part of the

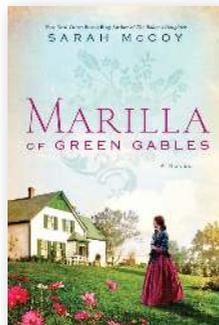
story reflects on how the bounty from this rooftop jewel is shared with a nearby homeless shelter.

Uplifting her community was what Harlem Renaissance sculptor and artist Augusta Savage was all about. Cofounder of the Harlem Artists' Guild and the first director of the Harlem Community Art Center, she offered free art classes to locals at her studio and went on to influence many artists, including Gwendolyn Knight, Norman Lewis, and Romare Bearden. Art historian Jeffrey Hayes's **Augusta Savage: Renaissance Woman** (D. Giles, Oct.) is packed with photos of Savage's work and art by those she influenced, correspondence and period images, and essays by art and African American studies scholars.—LF

Personal History

While there's nothing quite like curling up with L.M. Montgomery's original series, I can hardly complain about the many *Anne of Green Gables* adaptations, on page and screen, that have become especially prevalent in the last handful of years. The latest comes from Sarah McCoy, who imagines the farm long before Anne shows up in **Marilla of Green Gables** (Morrow, Oct.). Fans get to see the formidable Marilla during her younger years while she keeps order for her family, meets her best friend and local gossip Rachel, and considers life in—and beyond—Avonlea. I'm particularly excited to read about her relationship with John Blythe, eventual father to my first and most important literary crush, Gilbert. The courtship is only briefly mentioned by Marilla as a missed chance in Montgomery's work, but it becomes the crux of McCoy's and provides more dimension to the woman Anne would come to know and love.

Another lady getting some recognition this fall is Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton (1757–1854), who was raised in an influential New York family; married a Founding



Father; birthed eight children; endured a cheating scandal and the death of a child; founded an orphanage that exists today; and secured her slain husband's legacy. Tilar J. Mazzeo unpacks all of that and more in **Eliza Hamilton: The Extraordinary Life and Times of the Wife of Alexander Hamilton** (Gallery: S. & S., Sept.).

Actors Megan Mullally and Nick Offerman give readers a different kind of history: that of their own romance. **The Greatest Love Story Ever Told: An Oral History** (Dutton, Oct.) has the couple reminiscing about their 18 years

together. And if the blurb is any indication, it will be filled with the humor each is known for in their careers as well as the silliness and joy that they exude as a couple. Relationship goals, indeed. A different kind of personal story comes from actress and activist America Ferrara's **American like Me: Reflections on Life Between Cultures** (Gallery: S. & S., Sept.). Ferrara discusses her identity as American and the importance of her Honduran heritage. The book includes 31 other contributors (including author Roxane Gay, Broadway composer/star Lin-Manuel Miranda, and Olympic figure skating medalist Michelle Kwan) discussing growing up with strong connections to more than one culture.—KD ■

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