



Michael Giltz, Contributor BookFilter creator

BookFilter: A Brilliant Fantasy Debut, Micro-dosing LSD And More Great New Books Out This Week

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Hey Book Lovers! Welcome to our latest Top Picks Of The Week! Thanks for subscribing and be sure to share it with all your friends. We've uncovered great gems like a terrific new fantasy novel, a gripping read about the final days of President Eisenhower, a charming Dutch children's book about a little boy and his toy truck and a sleeper we think could become a word of mouth hit among book clubs. If you know someone who would pair up perfectly with one of these titles, why keep them a secret? And any time you're headed to your favorite bookstore, library or online retailer, head first to BookFilter and you'll discover all the best new releases in every genre.

What we're reading:

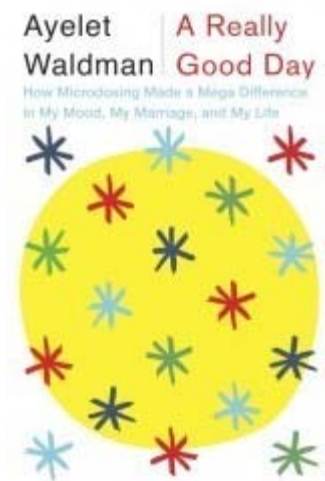
- THE BEAR AND THE NIGHTINGALE by Katherine Arden (**fantasy, young adult**)
- A REALLY GOOD DAY by Ayelet Waldman (**memoir, health, science**)
- RING OF FIRE by Brad Thor (**thriller**)
- THREE DAYS IN JANUARY by Bret Baier (**biography, history**)
- TOW-TRUCK PLUCK by Annie M.G. Schmidt (**kids books**)
- ECONOMISM by James Kwak (**current events/business**)
- THE AFTERLIFE OF STARS by Joseph Kertes (**fiction**)
- THE CYCLIST WHO WENT OUT IN THE COLD by Tim Moore (**sports/recreation, travel**)



THE BEAR AND THE NIGHTINGALE by Katherine Arden Sometimes, when you start a new book by a new author and it begins really well, you hold in the excitement. Often a good idea can be quickly spoiled by an author rushing too fast or going too slow or getting lost in the woods of a complicated plot. A good idea is hard -- yet bringing it to fruition is even harder. But you keep reading and the book gets even better and yet you still rein in the excitement. A new talent can be like a skittish colt and you don't want to startle it away with some sudden movement. Then you get to the end and exhale with relief: she did it. That's my reaction to "The Bear And The Nightingale," a marvelous debut fantasy by Katherine Arden. Comparisons to Naomi Novik's instant classic "Uprooted" are natural.... [Read More.](#)

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A REALLY GOOD DAY by Ayelet Waldman What's a little micro-dosing between friends? Micro-dosing is the

regimented taking of very modest levels of LSD for therapeutic purposes. Author Ayelet Waldman has battled depression her entire life and -- while no druggie and not inclined to reckless behavior -- decided to carefully and judiciously self-administer tiny levels of LSD she received anonymously in the mail (return address: "Lewis Carroll") and document the results. What could possibly go wrong? In this engaging memoir, Waldman alternates her daily diary of the experiment (it saved her marriage!) with a fascinating look at the drug's history, banning and current resurgence as a potential tool for medicine.... [Read More.](#)

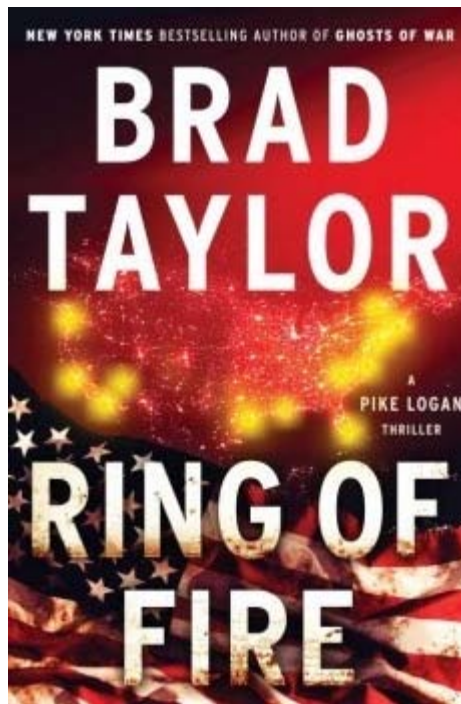
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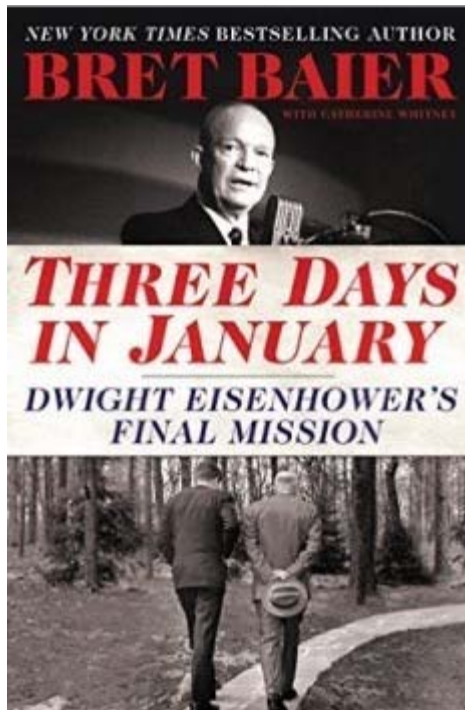
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO "THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL!"

This week in 1868 -- on January 9 to be precise -- writer John William De Forest called in *The Nation* magazine for a distinctively American style of writing. His essay was titled "The Great American Novel" (yep, he was the first to use that phrase) and we've been arguing over which title deserves that honor ever since. (Like everyone else, DeForest was more passionate about who had NOT written the Great American Novel -- he was no fan of James Fenimore Cooper, for example.) At LitHub Daily, Emily Temple collects some famous quotes naming this or that book the G.A.N. "Moby-Dick?" "Beloved?" "The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn?" "Infinite Jest?" We know what they think, but what book do YOU think is the Great American Novel and why? Email us at newsletter@bookfilter.com and we'll share some of your choices in a future newsletter. Because the next best thing to reading a great book is sharing it with others.



RING OF FIRE by Brad Thor Thrillers are often dismissed as junk food for action lovers who want a fast-paced tale with enough up-to-date tech to make the late Tom Clancy jealous. No question -- the eleventh Pike Logan adventure delivers all that in droves. (Or should that be drones?) But it also features author Brad Taylor's instinct for turning headlines into plot points with pin-point accuracy. Here you've got big business using bribes to further their aims in the Middle East combined with the Panama Papers (a revelation of off-shore accounts that revealed epic levels of corruption among world leaders) and a terrorist attack planned for US soil dubbed "Ring Of Fire" that is NOT a tribute to the Man in Black.... [Read More.](#)

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THREE DAYS IN JANUARY by Bret Baier Wherever you fall on the political spectrum, it's clear Dwight D. Eisenhower was one of our most fascinating presidents. Fox News figure Bret Baier zeroes in on his final three days in power and dubs it "Eisenhower's Final Mission." That makes sense since those days were bracketed by one of the greatest farewell addresses in history (with Eisenhower warning about the military-industrial complex and the rise of special interests) and the inauguration of JFK, a young untested leader Eisenhower would do everything in his power during those 72 hours to prepare for the awesome responsibility of leader of the free world.... [Read More.](#)

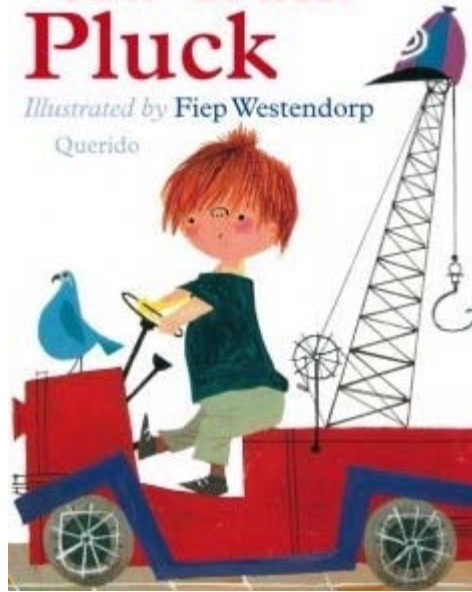
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Annie M.G. Schmidt

Tow-Truck Pluck

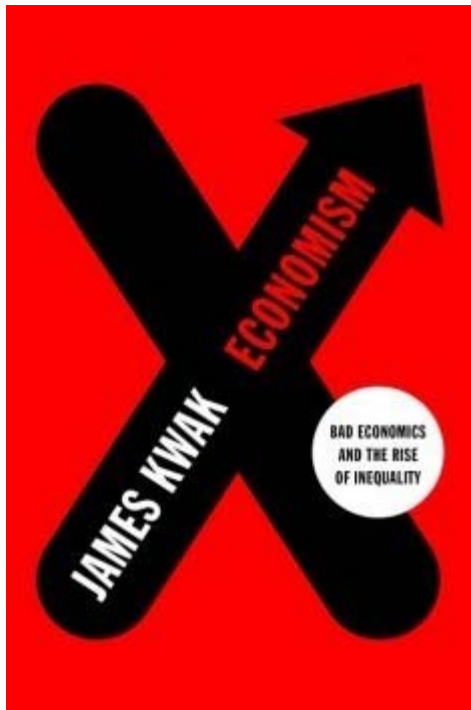
Illustrated by Fiep Westendorp

Querido



TOW-TRUCK PLUCK by Annie M.G. Schmidt The low-key charm of this story was a treat from start to finish. A little boy named Pluck has a red tow-truck and toodles about the city. He discovers an empty room at the top of an apartment building and moves in, making friends with most everyone from the store owners nearby to many of his neighbors and above all the animals. Pluck has mini-adventures in every chapter, from befriending the little girl whose mother insists she never ever go out and play (because she might get dirty) to rescuing a bird fated to be killed, stuffed and displayed in a bird museum. Each adventure leads casually to the next and the challenges facing Pluck become satisfyingly more complicated as the book goes on. Sly and smart and not so easy to pigeonhole..... [Read More.](#)

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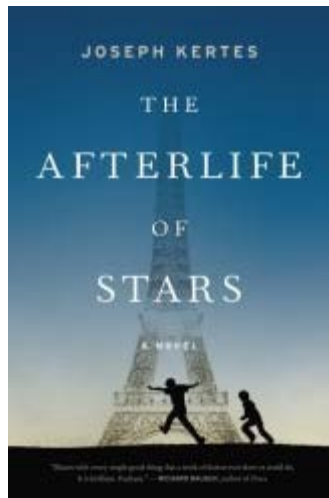
ECONOMISM by James Kwak Best-selling author James Kwak has one over-riding purpose in this easy to follow take-down of the political philosophy of what he calls "economism." Kwak wants you to recognize how often a winner-takes-all philosophy that is no more right or wrong than liberalism or libertarianism cloaks itself in the wardrobe of scientific fact. He easily demonstrates how radio stars and TV talking heads and lazy politicians either knowingly or unwittingly denounce anyone who disagrees with their morality as failing to understand Economics 101 when in fact it is they that don't have an economic leg to stand on. He gives a quick primer on the basic ideas of economics and shows how applying them to the real world is never as simple as a basic graph chart demonstrating supply and demand. Then Kwak applies this more nuanced view of how economics really works to major issues of the day like the minimum wage, health care and so on, revealing again and again how the simplistic mantra of "economism" fails utterly to understand how the real world and economic analysis works. [Read More.](#)

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PRINT IS BACK! SORT OF!

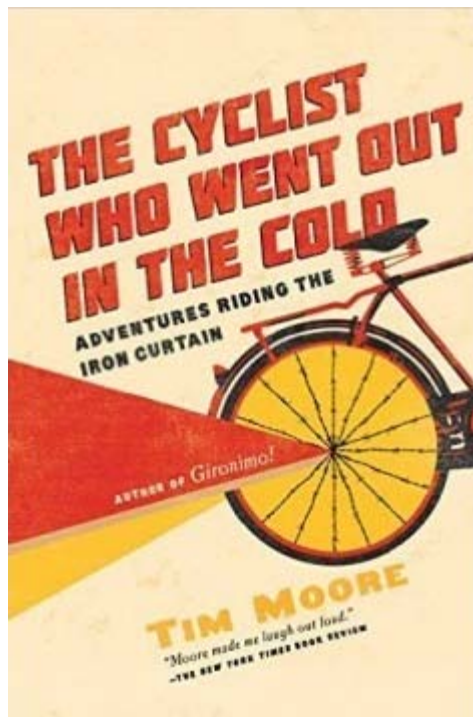
Sales of physical books (as opposed to e-books) are up! If you ever read articles about the publishing industry, you'll see constant stories about format wars and which one is up and which one is down. E-books are taking over the world! No, wait, print is back! (Actually, print sales rose in 2016 mostly because adult coloring books were still popular, a fad that's not exactly what we talk about when we talk about books.) Here's the truth: it doesn't matter. As long as people are reading, do we really care if they're reading a trade paperback or listening to an audio book in their car or catching up on an e-book via their smart phone? Of

course not. What matters is the joy of reading, whether you are crazy about the smell of your favorite titles when you pull them off the shelf or can't walk out the door without your e-reader. And guess what? As long as a few of you are passionate about it, no format will ever die. That's why LPs are big business again! So read a hardcover or a trade paperback or an interactive download with a built-in soundtrack if you want. Just keep reading.



THE AFTERLIFE OF STARS by Joseph Kertes This highly buzzed work of historical fiction could be the sleeper of the year. Think "All The Lights We Cannot See" by Anthony Doerr. It begins in Hungary in 1956 as Russian tanks overrun that country and follows two young brothers as they flee to safe haven with relatives in France. (That happens to be the same history of author Joseph Kertes, though his family fled to Canada.) "The Afterlife Of Stars" features rave early reviews, blurbs from big names like Tim O'Brien, Jim Shepard and D.M. Thomas and a gorgeous cover. (Never underestimate a gorgeous cover). And then there's the mysterious family secret that will haunt the two boys for years.... [Read More.](#)

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THE CYCLIST WHO WENT OUT IN THE COLD by Tim Moore British author Tim Moore has turned cycling into an art...or at least a way of traveling the world that allows (forces?) him to really see the landscape and the people and not miss the stories that a plane might fly over or a car pass swiftly by. Moore's latest travelogue is a bold affair: he determines to cycle along the 6000 mile route of what used to be the Iron Curtain, cutting a swath through Europe on a dependable if poky East German shopping bike. After three months and a close-up look at some 20 countries, Moore has a very funny and poignant story to tell that combines his own misfortune and mini-triumphs with a look at post-war European history in slow motion. Really slow motion, since that bike only has two gears.... [Read More.](#)

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Thanks for reading our very first BookFilter newsletter! Tell us what you think -- drop us a line. Do you want more picks? Fewer? Did you click on any of the links like "More Fiction!" to find even more great new picks? Will you share it with a friend? Will we keep asking questions? If you love it, share it with your friends -- forward them the newsletter or just send them this link so they can sign up for themselves.

REGISTER TO VOTE!!

It's easy, it's fun, it's empowering.

Here's a nonpartisan site that will allow you to easily access your state's voter registration site.

Are you in New York? You can register online right here.

If you don't register and vote, you don't get to complain.

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