

The Reader



at Literary Leftovers Bookstore

Issue 10

Jan./Feb. 2026

LETTER FROM THE PROPRIETRESS

Into the New Year

Heather Erwin, proprietress



Dear Reader, you're reading this in the new year—presents have been opened; champagne has been toasted; by now, stockings have been removed from the chimney with care—but I am writing this note before any of those things. I sit here in my gingerbread-patterned flannel sheets with my faux-fur comforter, cuddled up and reflecting on 2025 with a mixture of emotions.

Firstly, how wonderful, how blessed are we to have been part of 25 years of this precious used bookstore's life? It's honestly amazing that a used bookstore had the community, patronage and leadership to endure in an age increasingly marked (and sometimes marred) by the heavy use of technology and Amazonian access to "things." We are honored stewards, all of us, because bookshops usually do not survive—let alone thrive—in our current world.

Secondly, how will we continue to shepherd this community cornerstone? We dream of more space, especially for our children's programs, and more events to ignite community participation and connection. We all have book-adjacent passions, such as journalism, novels, poetry, and screenplays—how might incorporate more of them? What do our seniors need from us? And how can we partner with other community pillars to create valuable opportunities for all?

These are but a few of the things that keep our minds cogitating and ruminating. I pray you'll join us this year, become part of our community if you haven't already, and offer your own suggestions for how we might continue to evolve our core values: community, literacy, and quality.

Welcome to 2026, dear Reader—we can face this together!

BOOKSHOP NEWS

Toast to 25 Years

Your local booksellers



Join us on Thursday, January 29th from 5-6pm to celebrate 25 years of Literary Leftovers Bookstore. All day, used books will be 25% off, and for every \$25 you spend, you receive one raffle ticket to enter to win a \$100 gift card.

Write a toast about what the bookstore has meant to you in the last 25 years, submit it to us online through the link on our website, and we will pick our favorite. If we select your toast, you will win a \$25 gift card, and we ask that you deliver it during the party.

We cannot wait to celebrate with all of you.

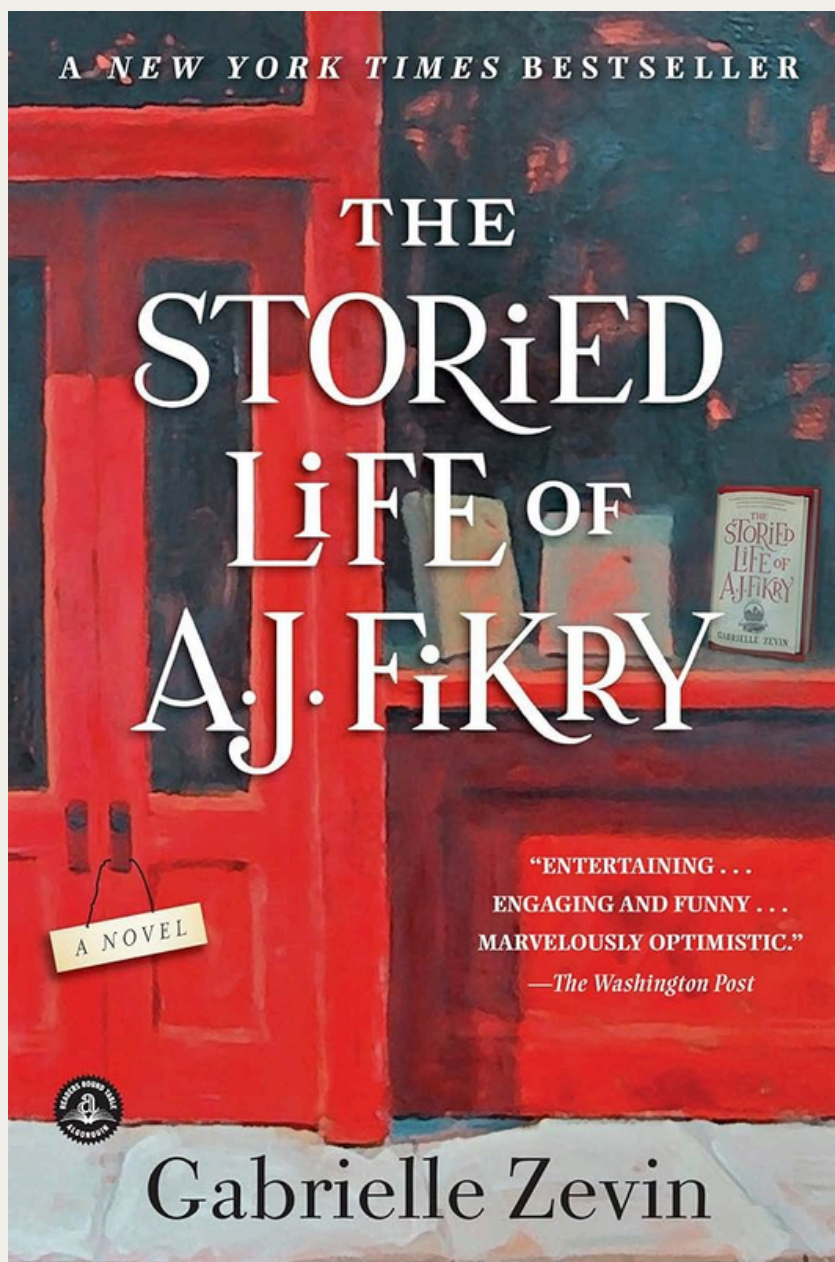
POETRY CORNER

Rain Ruby

Carol Hayes

Carol Hayes is a life-long writer and poet. She currently lives in the Pacific Northwest on five acres with her husband of 18 years, and their horse, dog and two cats. Carol enjoys observing the world around her and interpreting it through her poetry and writing.

Rare ruby raindrop
sparkling from the thicket,
an illusive gem
of sunshine after rain.
Sodden fence rails bask
in the unexpected heat,
and from them rise
the streaming wraiths of January.

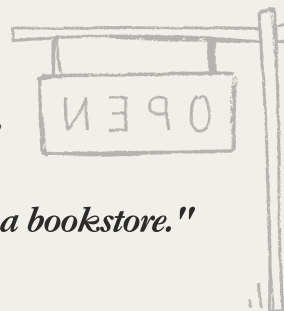


BOOKSELLER'S REVIEW

The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry

by Gabrielle Zevin

reviewed by Eily McIlvain, bookseller



"A place is not really a place without a bookstore."

This book reminds me exactly what I like about being a bookseller. Suffice it to say, all booksellers are (for now) people, and so different, but so the same.

A.J. Fikry has just lost his wife. He lives on Alice Island, a small, insular community who treats their remaining surly bookseller with a combination of well-meaning condescension and stand-offishness. One night, a baby is left in the bookstore, with a note for said surly bookseller, which changes things.

Every chapter opens with a blurb for classic and modern short stories, stories that relate cleverly to the chapters themselves, sometimes very obviously, others more subtly. The book comes together as a series of well-interlocked episodes, which exemplify Zevin's talent for sharp, lean storytelling.

This is a booklover's book, but it has something to offer beyond navel-gazing for the self-satisfied bookperson. This book is about our profound suffering, and our comforts. It is for anyone who has ever loved a child, or lost someone, or felt genuinely changed by even one good book in their life. Every time I read it, it makes me cry with its bittersweetness: to be alive, to be part of the book business, to be able to read and write at all.

And the book itself doesn't take any of that too seriously, even though those things are the most serious things that can possibly be. There are lots of little unserious turns of humor in A.J. Fikry, with maybe an additional layer for those of us whose lives are also caught up in books. (LL also serves Costco mini-quiches at our events sometimes.)

This was the perfect book to revisit at the top of this year, as I have been thinking about the past and future of our little shop, and all bookstores.

BOOKSELLER'S COLUMN

End of Beginning

Eily McIlvain, bookseller

Blessed is he who plants trees under whose shade he knows he will never sit.

—Disputed proverb

This year, both the bookshop and I turn 25.

I had some difficulty finding the angle of approach for this topic, because it's bittersweet. When I think of the shop's birthday, I think about mine. My frontal lobe is developed, apparently (though I did recently see an article suggesting adolescence may last into our 30s—hurrah). A large part of my story has already been written. My life, which up to this point was only just getting started, has officially begun. The beginning is over. I can feel things now that I couldn't before.

After 25 years, the shop has also come into itself, but in some meaningful way, I hope, is just now getting to the good part. It has a history. More than potential—which it also has—the shop has tangible impact. Over the last 25 years, due to the work of five different owners and a variety of vital staff, we have developed relationships with teachers and students; our local library; restaurateurs and business owners; writers and creatives; and of course, readers from every walk of life.

This year is a good place to mark the end of our beginning. The adolescence of Literary Leftovers Bookstore is over. I want to believe our adulthood is still ahead.

But nothing is promised to anyone. We want to live forever. We want what we've built to last. And yet. We get what time we get, and no more. If that seems dire, I don't think it's any cause for despair. After all, a book I've read and forgotten is not a book I regret reading, because it has the power to affect me beyond what I consciously realize or remember. Many such cases.

Whether we make it another hundred years or only ten, whether we're remembered or we're not, it won't have been for nothing. I believe in what we've done, and what we stand for. I've been part of something important, even though it isn't immortal, and I have been extremely lucky.

It's human that I can't help but project a future that may never arrive. 25 years from now, we could be celebrating 50 years. 25 years beyond that, a diamond jubilee, and then a centennial, which certainly none of us here now will be there to see. I can't help but believe in it: not just bookshops of the future, but a future for our bookshop.

I imagine the person, very young now or maybe not even born yet who will carry on after us. (After all, I was only just born 25 years ago, at the beginning.) Even if she only exists in my imagination, she is real to me, because I am determined to keep things running until she can get here.

Thank you to everyone, every single person, who kept it going until we arrived.

The Little Reader

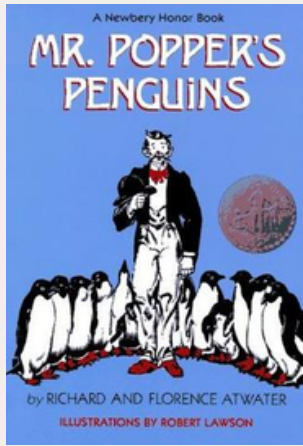
"You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending."
C.S. Lewis

THE LUCY CHRONICLES

Mr. Popper's Penguins

by Richard and Florence Atwater

reviewed by Miss Lucy,
and Corrie Albertson,
Children's Program manager



Lucy was a bookstore cat who, quite by accident, found that an open book was a magical portal. She had curled up and fallen asleep on its pages, only to discover herself transported into the story. It had been a wonderful, albeit frightening, experience. After her first adventure, she thought that maybe books were too much excitement for a nap-loving, indoor cat such as herself. Still, she couldn't help but wonder what it would be like to do it again.

A few weeks later, in his haste to answer his parents' call, a young boy left a book open on one of Lucy's chairs. She sauntered over, just to smell it and maybe peek inside. Surely there was no harm in that. This time, there was more than just squiggles and lines. Where was a picture of an odd creature. What was it? Lucy was curious. Cats are known for being curious. But they're also known for being scaredy cats. Lucy paced and circled the book. She sniffed and pawed at the pages. Then, in a moment of bravery, she mustered all her courage and jumped onto the book. Nothing happened. She remembered that the last time she was transported into a book, she'd been sleeping. Well, if there was one thing Lucy was good at, it was napping. She yawned, closed her eyes and...

"Places! Places! Everyone!"

Lucy's eyes popped open. Before she could get her bearings, someone was pushing her from behind, into a line of those mysterious creatures as they marched forward. Now that she was close to them, she saw that they were black and white. They wore tuxedos, just like her—but surely whoever pushed her into line couldn't have mistaken her for one of these things! They had flippers! And a beak! They waddled!

"Excuse me? By any chance do you know where we're headed?" inquired Lucy of the creature in front of her.

"Gork!" replied the creature.

"Oh dear," she said. Apparently animals couldn't talk in every book.

There were bright lights up ahead, and suddenly a loud voice rang out.

"May I present: Mr. Popper's Penguins!"

Lucy was thrust forward and found herself on a stage in front of a room full of people. The penguins began to walk in formation, but Lucy wasn't sure where to go or what to do. So she did what always seemed to work at the bookstore: she sat down, looked cute, opened her mouth, and said, "Meow." The crowd went wild. They laughed, they cheered, they clapped. Works every time, thought Lucy. Then she woke up.

Lucy was disappointed, she rather liked the applause, and wished she knew what happened to the penguins next.

If you know, please come and tell Lucy, or if you'd like to find out you can read, *Mr. Popper's Penguins* by Richard and Florence Atwater.

YOUTH FICTION

Goodbye, Purple Spike!

Elliot Rice, age 10



Where we left off, Amber the Dragon King was surrounded by a calamity, so he went on a quest to destroy Purple Spike. When he got there he fought with Purple Spike. But Purple Spike was winning...

In Amber and Purple Spike's fight, Amber's tail whipped Purple Spike off the edge of his castle. Amber thought he won. But did he??? On his way back home he noticed something. IT WAS A BIG LASER!!! Amber followed it and it led to a desert island. He looked up and he saw...

Purple Spike!!! And then he noticed that he had in his sharp talons gripping onto Amber's younger brother, Scale!

"Why are you here? And why do you have my brother?" said Amber.

Purple Spike responded, "Because he is bait. And I want a rematch." He grinned. "So are you up for the challenge?"

Amber said, "Fine." And the battle began. Amber tried his tail whip again but Purple Spike knew, so he dodged it. Suddenly, Amber saw his youngest brother, Clover! And he was flying in the sky. Amber said, "Hey, Clover!! Can you help me with the fight?!"

Clover responded, "Sure!!" And they worked together against Purple Spike. So they each clawed against him. Purple Spike was getting tired so he accidentally let go of Scale. He wiggled out and said, "Ha ha, take that, Purple Spike!" And then all three punched Purple Spike off to space somewhere.

Amber the Dragon King came home that day. Everything was back to normal.

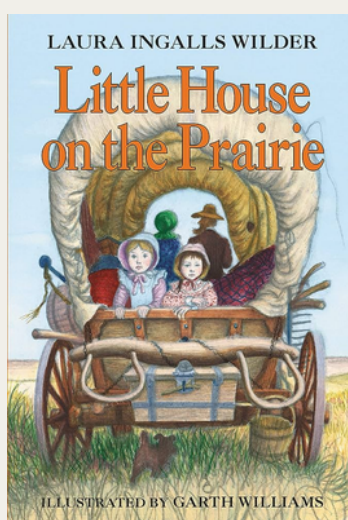
THE END.

YOUTH REVIEW

Little House on the Prairie

by Laura Ingalls Wilder

reviewed by Cora



Cora gives this book four stars and says she would recommend it because you get to see how they lived. What she liked best about the book was that they created a beautiful house. Cora liked the character Laura the best because she was a troublemaker.

YOUTH FICTION

The Wim

Troy, age 13



It was a dark and gloomy night. All was still. Not even an owl was looking for its hourly dinner. At the crest of the forest, sitting there was the wim. The wim sat there watching all, from the littlest below to the stars above, for it was jealous of everything, because it was not pretty like the birds of the forest and the beautiful butterflies that soared high in the sky. All it wanted was to be pretty like the rest of them. As the wim sat there, it finally decided to look for the wizards of old and ask them for their help to turn her pretty like the rest of them.

YOUTH POETRY

Everything

Chylah Scott



For All the times I forgot to say "Thank you"
For all the special little things you do,
For all the words that sometimes go unspoken,
I need to say, "I love you, mom... I do"
I love you for the way you stop and listen,
And for your kind support throughout the years,
For teaching me the meaning of compassion,
And sharing in my smiles and tears.
And, if at times, I may have seemed ungrateful,
I want to say, "I truly hope you see.
That nothing you have done has been forgotten,
And day by day you mean more to me."

Schedule

LEGO CLUB

at 10am Tuesdays & 4pm Thursdays.

STORYTIME WITH CORRIE

with special guests once a month
at 11am Tuesdays, right after Lego Club.

Upcoming

25 YEARS OF LITERARY LEFTOVERS

January 29, 5-6pm at the shop

MEET CUTE IN A BOOKSHOP

February 13, 6pm at the shop, \$TBA

OVERSTACKED BOOK CLUB

January 22, 6pm at the shop, \$5
February 26, 6pm at the shop, \$5

THE BOTTLED BOOK CLUB

at EVERYBODY'S BREWING
January 8, 6pm, \$5
February 12, 6pm, \$5

Accepting submissions!

Tues.-Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-5
813 W. Main St. #105, Battle Ground, WA.
IG: @literary.leftovers
literaryleftoversusedbooks@gmail.com
thereaderatliteraryleftovers@gmail.com



Kindly printed by Ink Ability.