

The Reader



at Literary Leftovers Bookstore

Issue 4

Jan./Feb. 2025

New Year at the Bookshop

Heather Erwin, proprietress



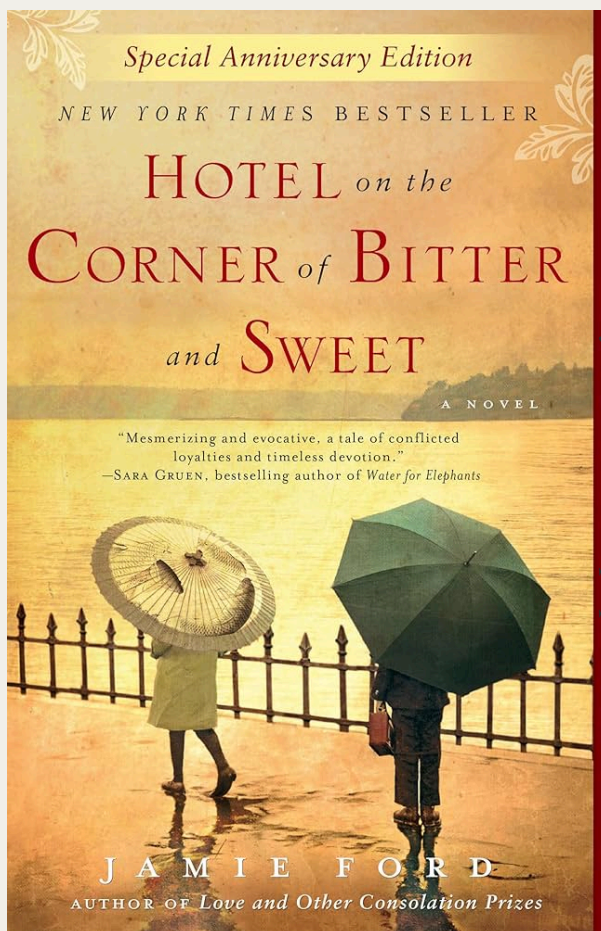
We just entered our fourth year of owning this precious community hub, and we're itching to dream up fresh ideas and programs and opportunities to engage in the new year. **We wish you could hear the conversations we have around our big table, about all of our hopes and dreams for bigger spaces and more programs;** we dream of more space dedicated to our children's programs, books, homeschool materials, and play area; we'd love to expand romance, mystery, and nonfiction of all kinds; and how might we add even more space to sit and read, to stay a while? What could we do to be able to purchase a building so we aren't as exposed to the constant increase in commercial leases?

We love where we work because **it's so much more than work—this is our mission.** We love searching through donations and pulling out the gems. We clean and mend the books, lovingly preparing them for their future homes. We plan and decorate and dream with you in mind, with Battle Ground in mind. It's like carefully and dutifully tending a garden, pruning and weeding, watering and feeding, ensuring this place is a place you can come and feel something special. This Christmas and New Year, we were overwhelmed with emotion at all of the sweet gifts and notes we received, letting us know our existence here matters, that we mean something to so many of you. Our hearts are full, and after our Christmas break, **our cups are full, and it's time to get back to this work we hold so dear.**

BOOKSELLER'S REVIEW

Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet

by Jamie Ford



reviewed by Heather Erwin, proprietress

BOOKSHOP EVENTS

Local Author Panel, February 2025

Loving books doesn't mean you always want to meet the people who write them—but many of us do want to. We want to hear their stories, fictional and factual. **We want to celebrate the ways that books come into our world.** Especially if their authors are part of our local community. Then we consider it an honor and a thrill to invite them into the shop to share their work. **This takes the form of local author panels, where 4-6 local writers talk about and read from their work.** Once readings conclude, books are available for purchase and signing. Organizing this as a panel allows readers to encounter a wider array of authors and genres in one place, and gives authors a chance to meet other writers working in their area. It's been particularly rewarding to see that camaraderie emerging between writers during the events.

Our first local author panel of the year will be Thursday, February 20th at 6pm, and will feature five authors writing in five different genres. **R.W. Hill**, author of *The Grieving Society and Other Stories*, writes fiction focused on interpersonal relationships, community, and grief with a hint of the mystical, as well as 'reflective documentary' stories responding to his own life. **Alesa Corrin** is the author of *Jonathan: Prince of Dreams*, the first in an epic young adult fantasy trilogy. **Stephanie Louise** writes the *Bridge City Beats* novels, a series of steamy romantic thrillers featuring 1990s Portland, band culture, and powerful friendship. **Shannon Capps'** most recent novel is *Runaway Train*, following a TV reporter caught in a web of corruption. His childhood memoir, *No One Special*, is coming in 2025. **Carley Meuchel** is an inspirational speaker and author of *The Wheel Truth*, a disability memoir about her life with cerebral palsy.

Come by the shop on February 20th, 6-8pm, enjoy refreshments and bookish fellowship, and support writers working in and around Battle Ground.

In a publishing era replete with World War II novels set in Europe, I was refreshed to discover this gem, which focuses on the life of Japanese-Americans in Seattle during the same time period, told through the eyes of a Chinese-American boy, Henry, as he comes of age.

The novel begins in 1986 at the Panama Hotel, as the hotel opens its doors for the first time since the 1940s. This reopening unlocks **decades-old treasures the hotel once held safe for Japanese-American families who were sent to internment camps.** For Henry, the reveal of a single parasol from the hotel's horde is all it takes to cast his mind back to his forbidden friendship with Keiko, a 12-year-old Japanese-American girl, and to remind him of Sheldon, his adult jazz-playing friend.

I appreciated the inclusion of Seattle's music scene, as well as the shift back and forth from past to present—I'm a fan of the **non-linear timeline.** The narrative is less dramatically told than most popular historical fiction, with an even temper and small but mighty voice from the author. If you can live without resolution to the injustices and prejudices portrayed, and if you enjoy a **sweet story with bitter moments told in a mellow and composed tone,** I highly recommend this novel. It's in my top five of 2024.

BOOKSELLER'S COLUMN

Intuitive Reading: On Reading Resolutions

Eily McIlvain, bookseller

I don't have any reading resolutions this year. I'm already quite a disorganized, haphazard reader, who reads based on her mood, and only sometimes out of a sense of real urgency or studiousness: if someone has told me to read something and then lent it to me; if there's a book club approaching; or an exam, back when I had those. **Otherwise I'm an intuitive, mercurial reader.** I pick up whatever I crave, whenever I crave it, and abandon things if I lose the taste for them. I'm morally against telling anyone they should do as I do—but I can say that this approach works for me. I enjoy it. I get something out of it. **And I don't want it mucked up with lists and plans and projections.**

Oscar Wilde said, **"It is what you read when you don't have to that determines what you will be when you can't help it."** I think that's true, and I further think reading this way leaves room for acts of real commitment and discipline, like reading *Atlas Shrugged*, or *War and Peace*, or the King James Bible, just because you want to. I spend enough time generally reading what I want that I actually crave the challenge of longer, older, more unfamiliar experiences. I enjoy reading long articles now. **When I have the space to read just because I want to, I'm sometimes surprised by what I actually do want.**

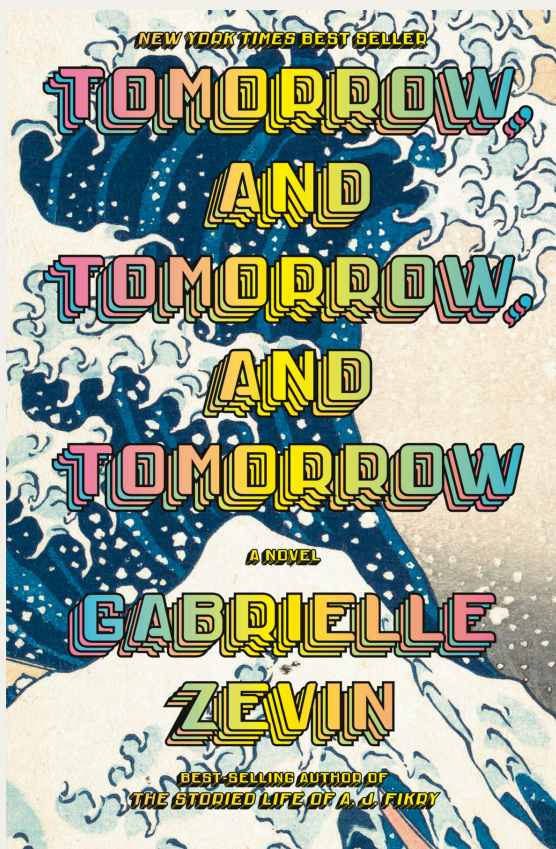
We can surprise ourselves like this when we're directed by things we actually want, not things we tell ourselves we want. **If relentless bibliophilia isn't the cornerstone of your lifestyle,** meaning you have to carve out time to read what you really want, then **all the more reason to fiercely defend that precious time and try not to pollute it with any well-intentioned but insincere resolutions** like, *Read more nonfiction.* (By the time I'm recording it in a new year's resolution, I've usually already lost the battle with my true nature.)

Read more of what I particularly find interesting should do nicely. *Make a little more time in my day to read* can virtually never fail, though it is basic. *Read aloud* is one I personally recommend; if you don't regularly read aloud, or know someone who does, you cannot imagine how positive and borderline healthful it is not only for yourself, but your family and friends too. **Read something that makes me feel changed is a constant and consuming hope,** and if we drift too far from that evergreen goal, we arrive at the dreaded Slump.

These resolutions never expire, and you can't really fail them. *Read 50 books,* or *Read every day for half an hour,* or *Learn one new word a week* all pale in comparison. Though they're worthy enough goals on the surface, they don't have the same kind of charm and subjectivity. They're too metrical to really enter the vibrant, messy, internal world of the reader. They can't join you there, but they can limit and measure and impose on that world.

That said, some rules and constraints make any game more interesting, and if you like reading resolutions, I'm sure you'll continue with them no matter what I say here, as you should. For me, I feel no impulse to make a list of my must-read books in the new year. I don't know if this will be the year that I read *Infinite Jest* or *Anna Karenina* or *Moby Dick* or *Ulysses*. I trust my vocabulary to improve on its own, if I feed it well. **If I read less than a hundred books in 2025, I won't feel like I've failed a task.** The worst I may feel is the incredible weight of a year's limit, and all the books that could never fit into my infinitesimal lifespan.

We already have the resolutions we need to better ourselves, to appreciate and reckon with our world, and maybe to one day understand our own emotional lives. Our task has been set. Good luck. Happy new year, and happy reading.



reviewed by Christian Bullock, volunteer

COMMUNITY REVIEW

Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow by Gabrielle Zevin

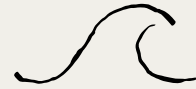
Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow is about different types of love: of people, places, and circumstances. The story revolves around chance encounters, the evolution of friendships, and the complexity of jealousy. The novel explores life's ever-present "what-ifs", and things that are beyond our control. It's about the moments beforehand as well as the aftermath that follows. It's about accepting the different phases in life, and being okay with how people flitter in and out of them.

The book is also about trauma and how different individuals meet, process, and move through it.

Different circumstances warrant distinct journeys. You'll experience multiple points in their journeys with multiple people in the story. This and much more is what you read about in *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow*, an engaging, reflective novel where you undoubtedly will find some parallels to our own life.

Read this book if: you like examining and reflecting on life's twists and turns; you've been pursuing a passion in your life for a significant amount of time; or you have a little bit of knowledge and nostalgia about the video game industry of the early 2000s.

"Why wouldn't you tell someone you loved them? Once you loved someone, you repeated it until they were tired of hearing it."



The Little Reader

You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.
C.S. Lewis

LETTER FROM THE CHILDREN'S EDITOR The Next Chapter

Corrie Albertson, children's program manager

So, what if, instead of thinking about solving your whole life, you just think about adding additional good things. One at a time. Just let your pile of good things grow.

Rainbow Rowell, *Attachments*

As we finish chapter 2024 and turn the page, instead of writing a list of New Year's resolutions I'd like to do as Rainbow Rowell suggests and, "think about adding additional good things". **Grown-ups are usually prone to making lists that seem more like punishments.** Writing things down like exercise three times a week and eat vegetables and protein at every meal. As the children's editor, I suggest that we set a different example for the kids in our life by creating something more akin to a bucket list for the year. What if we wrote down things like: ride bikes (not the stationary bike at the gym), go to the beach, hike to a waterfall, read (for fun), paint (not touching up the paint in the living room), look for treasure (antiquing counts), and try new food. If we did, we'd have an incredible opportunity to **help our kids see this year as an exciting new chapter** full of adventure seeking, dream chasing, and goal conquering.

As a store we want to embrace this same spirit and dream into the future of our children's programs, adding good things. So we've decided, because we love to read, and we want to pass on the love of books to the next generation, **to add an online element to our storytimes.** Thirty minutes once a week is not enough time to share all of the beautiful stories we want to. We look forward to reading longer books for our older kids who are ready for what comes after picture books, though we will read those as well.

According to www.readitloud.org, reading out loud to kids helps develop language skills, improve listening comprehension, increase attention span, build vocabulary, expose kids to grammar, and stimulate the imagination. (Their list is actually much longer, but you get the idea.)

Our hope in launching **this new program is to offer a quiet online alternative to the usual overstimulating online children's content.** We want to make storytime available to those kids who are unable to make it in person, introduce kids to timeless classics, offer a chapter book story time, and give parents a tool that helps instead of harms. This exciting new program should be ready to **launch sometime in the new year**, so be on the lookout.

EPHEMERA

Why We Read

For those of you who like making lists, an alternative to the traditional New Year's resolution, inspired by authors.

Excerpted from in Eve Ensler's *A Velocity of Being*

- I got to travel the rainy dark streets of London
- I felt unexpected things for pigs and spiders
- I got lost
- I got found
- I developed the skills of a detective

Why we read at **Literary Leftovers Bookstore:**

- To see beauty in ordinary things, like Anne
- To be brave and hold fast to my convictions, like Jane
- To talk with animals
- To escape
- To see the point of view of others
- To make things clearer
- To make things more complicated

Why do YOU read?



YOUTH FICTION

The Pinecone Contest

Hunter Sass, age 7

Once upon a time, Hunter went on a nature walk with his homeschool group. The nature walk took place in a beautiful green forest in a valley. It was a nice sunny day. The trees were some of the tallest in the world with big pinecones. One of the parents said they were going to do a contest. The contest was to find the biggest pinecone.

There were 600 kids, and they were happy about the contest. Soon the contest began. Hunter was feeling excited for the contest. He thought he would win. The contest began and Hunter immediately found a huge pinecone that was at least 20 inches long. Hunter was feeling happy that he would probably win the contest.

The contest ended and everybody gathered under a tree because it started to rain. They checked the pinecones of all 600 children. It took about an hour to check every pinecone.

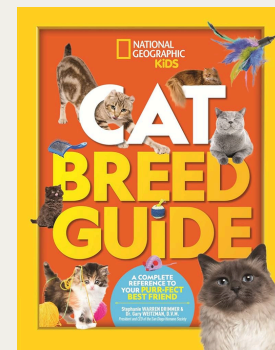
Hunter found out he won the contest and got a book about pinecones as a reward. Hunter cried tears of joy and had not been happier than he felt in this moment. All 600 children lifted Hunter onto their shoulders, carrying him out of that beautiful green forest in celebration of him winning the contest. Hunter lived happily ever after!



READER'S NOTES

National Geographic Kids' Cat Breed Guide

Madelynn Geronime, age 10



Madelynn highly recommends this book to anyone who wants to know more about cats.

A favorite fact that she learned from the book was

why cats purr. She loves to read nonfiction.

Miss Lucy quite approves.



Schedule

LEGO CLUB

at 10am Tuesdays & 4pm Thursdays.

STORYTIME WITH CORRIE

at 11am Tuesdays, right after Lego Club.

ALL AGES CHESS CLUB

at 4-5pm, 2nd & 4th Fridays of the month.

All children's programs are free.

Upcoming

LOCAL AUTHOR PANEL

Feb. 20th, 6-8pm

BOTTLED BOOK CLUB

Jan. 9th, 6pm at Emanar Cellars, \$5

OVERSTACKED BOOK CLUB

Jan. 23rd, 6pm at the shop, \$5

Accepting submissions!

Tues.-Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-5
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