BOOKS (/ARTICLE-TERM/BOOKS)

Alumni Books

New titles from Dartmouth writers (November/December 2021)

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PETER HELLER '82
Something Fishy

Kingfisher Lodge, the rustic but high-end fishing resort that is the setting for Heller's entertaining new thriller *The Guide,* seems like a paradise at first, if you can afford it. The fenced-in compound, owned by a famous biotech entrepreneur, features gourmet meals and a mile and a half of one of the finest trout streams in the Rocky Mountains. It is the perfect escape for the celebrities and billionaires who frequent it—a refuge from the prying public and the coronavirus pandemic brewing just outside the gates.

But a few paragraphs in, the hero, Jack—a 25-year-old Colorado rancher, fishing guide, and Dartmouth alumnus still reeling from twin traumas in his life—smells something fishy. During his orientation as the replacement for a fishing guide said to have quit, Jack is told that a special code is required to get in or out of the heavy metal gates. "Why do you need a code," he wants to know, "to open it from the inside?"

It's the first of several clues that the compound is far more sinister than the placid vacation hideaway it appears. After a day or two of blissful nature-communing and a budding romance with his first fishing-guide client, a country music star named Alison K, Jack becomes increasingly aware of the constant video surveillance, black-clad security agents, strange comings and goings at the property next door, occasional gunfire (supposedly from an overprotective neighbor), and menacing mastiffs (another neighbor's, allegedly).

That, regrettably, is the maximum plot summary allowable without spoilers, except to say that Jack and Alison, who becomes his partner in figuring out what's really going on, proceed to take matters into their surprisingly capable, necessarily violent hands. It's a neck-craning arc, for Jack in particular. One minute he's waxing poetic about the glories of nature, quoting Basho from memory, and recalling a conversation he once had at college with novelist Marilynne Robinson. A few fast-paced chapters later, he's proving himself handy with an assault rifle. Now that's versatility!

What begins as high-quality popular fiction with literary leanings—Heller's early chapters are full of richly detailed, almost ecstatic descriptions of the arcane world of fly fishing, along with some aching, elegantly handled reveries about Jack's troubled past—finishes as a solid genre exercise in the bone-crunching mode of Lee Child's Jack Reacher novels. It's tough out there.—*Kevin Nance*

Editor's Picks:

LOUISE ERDRICH ’76
The Sentence
HarperCollins

The tissue-thin separation between the living and the dead lies at the heart of this Pulitzer Prize-winning author’s latest novel. What starts as a gritty tale of a woman sentenced to 60 years in prison for absconding with a dead body unfolds into a slyly funny story. She gets out of prison early and happily marries the tribal cop who arrested her. But she must contend with a recently deceased woman who haunts her.

WILLIAM MEYER ’02
Healing Breath: A Guided Meditation through Nature for Kids
New World Library

A longtime teacher playfully introduces young readers to mindful breathing and meditation by taking them on an adventure around the planet’s colorful landscapes, which connects them with the beauty of the natural world. With illustrations by Brittany R. Jacobs, this charming book will appeal to adults as well as children.

BARTOW J. ELMORE ’04
Seed Money: Monsanto’s Past and Our Food Future
Norton

Monsanto genetically engineered seeds and transformed agriculture worldwide. It also produced the widely used but cancer-causing herbicide Roundup, as well as PCBs and Agent Orange. This sweeping investigation details how the firm suppressed evidence about the toxins, resulting in an avalanche of lawsuits and continuing consequences for public health and the food we eat.

REBECCA SACKS ’08
City of a Thousand Gates
HarperCollins

This debut novel plumbs the turbulent Israel-Palestine conflict through a collage of vivid characters whose lives intersect in unexpected ways. They each find themselves at a checkpoint—including a college student who enters Israeli territory illegally for work, a professor who fears she will die a lonely spinster, a social media influencer and her Israeli army reservist husband struggling with parenthood, a journalist covering the story of a Palestinian boy beaten into a coma, and a soccer star who was in the crowd that attacked the boy.

Additional books that were not included in our print edition:

Set in late 19th-century St. Petersburg, Russia, *My Russian Novel*—historical fiction by *Slaughterhouse-Five* screenplay writer **Stephen Geller '62**—follows a group of Jewish artists as they wrestle through the chaos and violence triggered by the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. (self-published)

Stephen Chase '63 investigates the notion of life-everlasting in his new novel, *Forever Sunrise: A River to Immortality,* by tracing the adventures of two women from opposite ends of the globe. (self-published)

In *Finding George Washington: A Time Travel Tale,* a zany lark of a debut novel by **Bill Zarchy '68**, an earthquake in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, bounces the Revolutionary War general into modern-day California, where he is befriended by several baseball-obsessed grad students who must get him back to avert major changes in the course of history. (Roving Camera Press)

For *Mt. Moosilauke: Tip Top News, 1880-1916,* **Robert W. Averill '72** has compiled an extensive collection of clippings, guestbook comments, reminiscences, photographs, and more from and about visitors to the Tip Top House on the College's mountain. (privately published)

A sports fanatic whose varsity-team aspirations are crushed refocuses on distance running and ultimately transforms his life as he trains with marathon champions in *Chasing Down a Dream: Tales from the Middle of the Pack* by **James H. Riehl Jr. '74**. (Palmetto Publishing)

In *The Savvy Sphinx: How Garbo Conquered Hollywood,* **Robert Dance '77** tracks Greta Garbo's trajectory from Swedish teen to intriguing icon of the silver screen. (University Press of Mississippi)

Clinical psychologist **John LoConte '84** distills the central lessons of Zen Buddhism for kids in *Zach Naturally: A Child's Zen Companion.* (self-published)

In *KGB Banker*, whistleblower and former banker **John Christmas '90** delivers a suspenseful financial thriller full of corruption and double-dealing in Eastern Europe. (Milford House/Sunbury Press)

Breezily written and peppered with inspiring snapshots of people who are making a difference, *Planting a Seed: Three Simple Steps to Sustainable Living* by **Kate Gaertner '93** details numerous ways we can soften our impact on the environment. (Page Two)

The mental bottlenecks that multitasking creates make people more distracted, stressed, inefficient, and error-prone, says **Thatcher Wine '94**, author of *The Twelve*

Monotasks: Do One Thing at a Time to Do Everything Better. Here he highlights the benefits of giving all aspects of our lives focused attention. (Little, Brown)

In *Feet Tucked Under*, her first collection of poetry, Denver-based **Aviva (Bender) Siegel '95** blends the everyday and the exceptional to explore themes of motherhood, lineage, and family life with a sense of humor. (Finishing Line Press)

Writing under the pen name "C.H. Avosa," **Chandra Gulik '97** explores questions of identity, relationships, and family in *Are You My Mother?*—a novel about a 30-year-old's unexpected dive into a search for her biological mother. (Avosa Books)

In this true story of adventure and change, *West of Wheeling: How I Quit My Job, Broke the Law & Biked to a Better Life*,**Jeffrey Tanenhaus '02** describes how he quit his corporate job to ride 3,020 miles from Manhattan to Los Angeles on a rental commuter bike. (Houndstooth Press)

Based on the idea that anyone can make a significant impact on systemic racism, *Tactics for Racial Justice: Building an Antiracist Organization and Community* by **Shannon Price '09** outlines techniques individuals can use to combat racial injustice. (Routledge)

Portfolio

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(/articles/lexi-krupp)

VOICES IN THE WILDERNESS

Mountain Air (/articles/lexi-krupp)

Radio reporter Lexi Krupp '15 covers rural Vermont.

FROM THE ARC

Some Like It (https://archive.dartmouthalumnimaga like-it-hot

Five firefighting alums explain what it's lik

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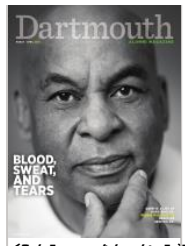

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