

5 BOOKS IN 5 MINUTES



1

Biography
PINK FLOYD: THEIR MORTAL REMAINS, Various authors
V&A Publishing \$74.99
 Syd Barrett should have been one of rock's greatest frontmen. Instead the "founder and guiding spirit" of Pink Floyd crashed and burned far too early in the British band's career, lost to LSD. Barrett's genius is explored in this superb book, authorised by Pink Floyd to mark the 50th anniversary of its debut 1967 album *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*. It's also an accompaniment to an exhibition at London's Victoria & Albert Museum. It's an impressive testimony to Pink Floyd's enduring appeal.
NICK HOPTON ★★ ★★



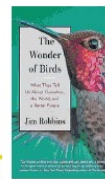
2

Memoir
MY LOVELY WIFE
Mark Lukach, Bluebird \$29.99
 Mark Lukach met the gorgeous Giulia at university. Both from warm and supportive American middle class families, they were a natural couple. They were inseparable and planned their married life together. But at 27, Giulia suffered a mental breakdown and spent weeks in a psychiatric hospital with psychosis and depression. Lukach is brutally honest about the demands of changing from friend and lover to his sick wife's carer. The story is not over, but they are still together, and it's another honest account which helps to lift the stigma of mental illness.
ROBYN DOUGLASS ★★ ★★



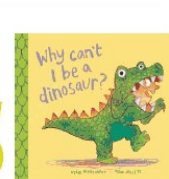
3

Fiction
THE MAKING OF CHRISTINA
Meredith Jaffe
Macmillan Australia \$29.99
 There's a lot to like about this follow-up to Jaffe's debut, *The Fence* - details and characters to emotionally invest in. Unfortunately, that doesn't include Christina, whose supposed epiphany gives the book its title. It's hard to like this woman, whose affair with a married man destroys not only her life but also her teenage daughter's. Perhaps that's the point, to illustrate the damage this flawed mother inflicts on the relationship that mattered in her life and the toll paid for being seduced by the money and power of her lover.
KATE UREN ★★ ★★



4

Science
THE WONDER OF BIRDS
Jim Robbins, Black Inc. \$34.99
 Robbins has an engaging style in which his obvious respect for birds shines through, even as he unashamedly states his love for hunting the objects of his affection. He takes the reader on a journey through bird evolution, the origins of flight and how their relationship with humans provides a window into a natural world we have left far behind. It appears to be well researched, but a startlingly wrong statement about bird anatomy undermines his authority. However this book will make you give more consideration to the magpie that next visits your garden.
SUSAN DOUBLE ★★ ★★



5

Picturebook
WHY CAN'T I BE A DINOSAUR?
Kylie Westaway and Tom Jellett Allen & Unwin \$24.99
 "Why can't I be a dinosaur?" yells three-year-old Nellie. Because you said you'd be a flower girl at Aunt Daisy's wedding. Fortunately, Nellie's parents have plenty to do getting themselves and little sister Riley ready for the great occasion and Nellie is able to make her own arrangements to deal with the dilemma - arrangements that will lead to some slightly bemused comments at the wedding and plenty of scope for Tom Jellett's characteristically hilarious warts-and-all illustrations.
KATHARINE ENGLAND ★★ ★★

A poet, his muse and a great love lost

WORDS KATHARINE ENGLAND

Steven Carroll is one of the handful of Australian writers whose new novels I await with the most confident impatience, avid to discover where he will take me now, to ferret out the links with his own previous work, with literary or social history, with the life of the mind and of the spirit. His latest novel is the third in a proposed four-novel sequence riffing on T.S. Eliot's seminal *Four Quartets*. Taking Eliot's *The Dry Salvages* as its reference, it looks back after the poet's death to replay in far more detail the relationship between Eliot and his Boston muse, Emily Hale, that Carroll imagined so potently and painfully in *The Lost Life*. In the first two books of his *Quartet*, Carroll

has depicted a monumental Eliot as "Westminster Abbey on legs" and as the prow of a liner advancing very slowly, but in *A New England Affair* he chooses a far more delicate and telling image: A crystal glass with a tiny flaw, a weakness that gives way when a young Emily Hale reaches the top notes of her parlour performance and leaks red wine, drop by drop, on to the white tablecloth. The book opens with a description of the Dry Salvages, a group of treacherously low rocks off Cape Ann in Massachusetts around which a young Eliot used to sail. Now Eliot is dead and a disciplined 74-year-old Emily intends to consign his hundreds of letters to the waves breaking on the Dry Salvages while she interrogates the history of their relationship and tries to pinpoint where everything went wrong.



A NEW ENGLAND AFFAIR
 Steven Carroll
 4th Estate \$27.99



"Is it possible," Eliot asks, "to be in the midst of some great event, possibly the great event of your life, and miss it? Just not see it?" For Emily, love is the great event; is it her single off-day of contrary impatience that

hides it from the poet, or his own flaw? For Eliot, love is something quite different, something difficult and demanding, perhaps between himself and God, and quite possibly his only salvation were he even sure he could be salvaged. It is certainly not to be Emily's. As always with Carroll, it is not so much the plot or the characters, well-drawn as they are, but the richness of ideas, the allusive, measured prose, the subtle cross references to other books and literary theories that captivate the reader. A bonus addition here is the abridged version of a 2015 Meanjin essay, *Notes for a Novel* and a postscript in which Carroll talks about his process and aims for the *Eliot Quartet*.
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