

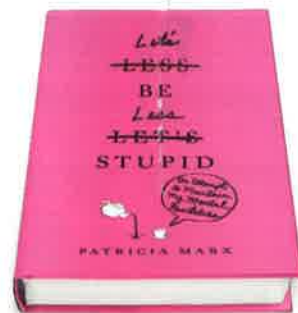
(FICTION)

AFTERWARD

Jamesian love in the ruins *By Lisa Shea*



Mary-Beth Hughes's body of work casts a dreamy, hypnotic effect, even while slyly exposing the risks and rewards of love and its devastations among the upper class. Edith Wharton and Henry James own the mansion housing this slant of prose, all style and substance, and Hughes moves ever closer to such mastery with her second novel, *The Loved Ones* (Atlantic Monthly Press). Set in New York, London, and at the New Jersey shore in the late '60s/early '70s, *The Loved Ones* homes in on the Devlins in the aftermath of the family's loss of its young son. The world they inhabit is a cornucopia of private schools, members-only clubs, ocean-liner crossings, multiple homes, and chauffeurs, none of which can shield them—winsome Jean and debonair Nick; their teenage daughter, Lily; Jean's mogul father; Nick's backstabbing brother—from their deepest tragedy or their own everyday foibles. Jean and Nick struggle to regain the physical intimacy they'd always relied on to re-spark their often-sputtering marriage. Writes Hughes, "At some point Nick reached for her in a way she almost remembers...[H]is hands felt hard under her thighs, holding her up, catching her weight as if her whole body could be suspended in the air for a while, and for a moment it was." ●



(BOOKS)

TRUST US

FUNNY GIRL

Somebody had fun composing the memoir-slash-cognitive practicum *Let's Be Less Stupid: An Attempt to Maintain My Mental Faculties* (Riverhead), and her name is Patricia Marx, a former SNL writer now at the *New Yorker*. Smarten up with Marx's quizzes, brain teasers, anecdotes, and self-help guides while giving your funny bone a witty workout.

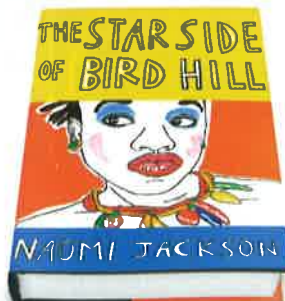
COLLECTIVE GENIUS

Top-shelf contemporary tales of all stripes—from neorealism to sophisticated horror to meta-physical hllinks—by Zadie Smith, Mary Gaitskill, Yiyun Li, Anthony Doerr, and 28 other scribes seduce us, and then some, in the *New American Stories* anthology (Vintage). Writes editor Ben Marcus, "When I want to be ambushed, captured, thrust into a strange and vivid world... I read short stories"—I like this stellar selection.



ISLAND-HOPPING

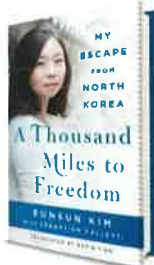
Naomi Jackson's *The Star Side of Bird Hill* (Penguin) moves forcefully between Barbados and Brooklyn in this plangent coming-of-age debut novel about two sisters torn between their absent father's reappearance and their strong, matriarchal Island family.—L.S.



(NONFICTION)

THE DEPARTED

A young woman's epic escape from North Korea *By Elyse Moody*



Eunsun Kim is a famished 11-year-old, alone, scrawling her will in her last notebook, when her gripping memoir, *A Thousand Miles to Freedom* (St. Martin's), opens. From a "privileged" family, she, her sister, and their mother embark on a nine-year ordeal to escape North Korea during the famine of the mid-'90s after her father starves to death. They cross the frozen Tumen River into China only to be enslaved, arrested, and sent back—but slivers of luck get them, eventually, to Seoul, South Korea. Kim first shared her story with her coauthor, *Le Figaro's* Seoul correspondent Sébastien Falletti, in 2011, when they met at the NGO where she works to combat complacency about the 25 million North Koreans suffering across a border 40 kilometers away. Blaming their fate on an "absurd totalitarian regime," she writes, does "not satisfy me and [does] little to assuage the unease in my heart." ●



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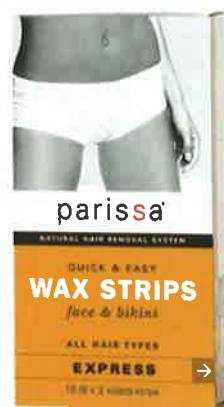
The pop/rock girl/schools haters, thanks fans, and admits gems like, "I have tied my hair up with my underwear way too many times."



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