

Information, Answers & Reviews

Caribou



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It's National Poetry month, so I want to introduce a new book of poetry to you, Charles Wright's *Caribou*. Pulitzer Prize winner, Wright composes strong, elegiac poems in an easily accessible style and whatever subject matter they cover, all lead back to the world's incredible yet fragile beauty. Here's a sample from *Natura Morta*: "The tiny torches of the rhododendron leaf tips / Trouble our eyesight, / and call us into their hymnal deep underground."

The most touching poems discover the magical world of night while also exploring the mystery of death as in "Time and the Centipedes of Night": "When the wind stops, there's silence. / When the waters go down on their knees and touch their heads / To the bottom, there's silence, when the stars appear / face down, O Lord, then what a hush." [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on April 22, 2014

[Caribou](#)

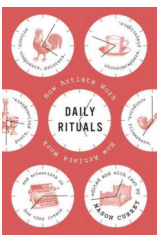
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How Artists Work



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Do you believe creative artists should be disciplined? Honor routines? Sit (or stand) at their desks, go to their studio every day? Or do you think they should be free spirits? Explore the world? Pound the pavements; hike in the woods? Visit coffee shops and saloons and meet people? Write or paint or compose as the feeling strikes them? Perhaps after delving into this book of 161 summaries of artists' routines, you will change your mind.

It's surprising how many of these creative spirits rise at sunbreak and commence work quickly. This book gets into the nitty gritty. Did you know that Beethoven made his own coffee every day? He routinely counted out sixty coffee beans. He also loved to bathe before a sink, splashing

pitchers full of water over himself, but unfortunately, this water spilled on the floor and dribbled downstairs to his landlord's place, forcing the owner to put a concrete base under the great composer's sink. The esteemed composer's servants also had a laugh-fest each time he bathed because he did so while "bellowing up and down the scales." [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on April 14, 2014

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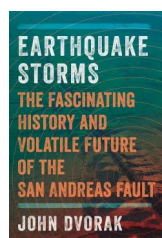
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Earthquake Storms



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This is the kind of interesting read that can make you dream of switching fields. Both the title and subtitle are misleading, it's about much more than earthquake storms (a series of large quakes that strike the same fault close together in time), or even the San Andreas Fault, famous for being that volatile line that runs from the California redwoods to its southern deserts.

Although it does focus on ground shaking in California, it's also a compendium of earthquake lore that describes quakes in Turkey, Italy, and other places. One intriguing section describes how recent research confirms that the famous Delphi of Greek mythology was a site of earthquakes. The priestesses there supposedly sat before a crack in the earth and made prophecies. Scientists have found that the earth nearby released ethylene, a gas that is now known to cause trances.

The book begins with the narrative of a young San Franciscan mechanic who took a daily swim in the ocean. One morning he walked to the beach as always and after being whacked repeatedly by waves, then thrown upon the [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on April 3, 2014

[Earthquake Storms : The Fascinating History and Volatile Future of the San Andreas Fault](#)

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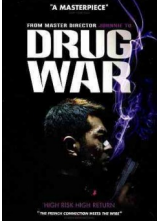
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Drug War



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If you are looking for a good, modern crime thriller, and are not averse to subtitles, this new Johnnie To movie is definitely worth checking out. A contemporary of filmmakers like [John Woo](#) and [Tsui Hark](#), [Johnnie To](#) has been known for making good (crime) pictures in China for awhile now, but this new one is a great blend of action and plot. Reviews I have read compare it to [Infernal Affairs](#) (which Martin Scorsese's [The Departed](#) was based on), though the plot here is not THAT convoluted. [Read more](#)

Posted by Brandon R. on March 29, 2014

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The Flight of a Painting of a Little Yellow Bird



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?Bad artists copy, good artists steal.? Toward the end of this novel, Hobie, the elderly painter of masterpiece copies, says this to Theo, his sorta-kinda adopted son. Is it ironic that Theo has stolen a famous painting, *The Goldfinch*? This long, convoluted, powerful novel tells the story of a young boy whose life was transformed at age 13 by this random act.

And a random bombing in the art galleries of New York?s Metropolitan Museum that killed his mother. Theo?s mom had left him to buy a present in the museum store when the bombing happened. After the blast, Theo crawls amid bodies on the floor to find one older man alive. With some of his last breaths, the man points to the painting and says, ?I beg of you.? Theo interprets this as a plea to rescue it. The dying man Welty also gives the boy an elaborate ring and the name of a business in Manhattan: Hobart and Blackwell. ?Ring the green bell.?

Thus begins the travels/travails of Theo. His dad, an alcoholic is alive, but in no shape to care for him.

Ditto for his one surviving grandparent. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on March 25, 2014

[The Goldfinch](#)

[Art](#)

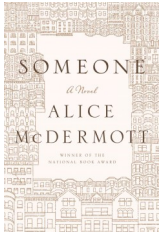
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Someone



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No one else writes with the lyric flow of Alice McDermott. Or covers childhood and adolescence with so much immediacy as though it were happening right now. When I surfaced for breaths while reading this novel, I had to remind myself that I wasn't in a stuffy walk-up in Brooklyn listening to children play ball and jump rope in the street.

The novel tells the story of Marie Commeford as a child, teen, young woman and as an older woman with grown children of her own. Marie is the stubborn second child of Irish Catholics. Her brother Gabe is remarkably obedient and good, already in grade school, on a path for the priesthood, whereas Marie is rebellious, adventurous, and not one for rules.

Her dad takes her on walks to speakeasies and encourages her fiery temperament; her mother tries to discipline her and tamp down her rebellious spirit. Saturday mornings, she runs to her best friend Gerty's house and buries herself in her mother's lap, but Gerty's kind mother dies in childbirth. This tragedy convinces Marie to refuse to learn how to cook. Gerty had learned and look what happened to her. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on March 19, 2014

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