

Bookishness



Loving Books in
a Digital Age

Jessica Pressman

Bookishness



Loving Books in
a Digital Age

Jessica Pressman

BOOKS!!

ECL 596: Professor Jessica Pressman
Fall 2025

Day 17: Bookishness

ADMIN

- **Final project proposals:** completion grade. Feedback posted to blog so that others can see and benefit from suggestions
-I think I responded to those that posted (Trinity, Avery). Anyone else? Email me.
- **Grades at this point:** any questions, email me
- **More blog opportunities:**
- Blog for next week (if you choose to write one): What you need to learn/do in order to complete your final project
- Following week 15: what you learned from your projects
- Final week 16: What you learned in this class

ADMIN

- **NEXT WEEK:**

- **No class meeting on Tuesday— asynchronous peer review in Google doc.**

We will not meet during class, but this work can be done during class time. Here are the directions:

1. Post a draft of your thesis and plan for the final essay; thesis statement (2-3 sentences) before our class time (before 12:30 pm). You can add more content about your planned media format, if you want feedback on that too!
2. During class time, add comments on at least one peer's abstract— but hopefully every one— by Tuesday, November 25 at midnight.

NOTE: Do not change the content of anyone else's content. Add comments in Track Changes or below the thesis (in italics or a color, or something to denote your editorial presence) and add your name.

-

Final Project proposal brainstorming

- What is your topic/idea/research question?
- What object(s) do you want to examine/explore?
- What format do you want your presentation to take? Why?

Bookishness

- Questions/points of inspiration/confusion/contention with the reading?
- Where do you want to start our discussion?
- Questions about the research/writing process?

Twenty-first-century culture is obsessed with books. In a time when many voices have joined to predict the death of print, books continue to resurface in new and unexpected ways. From the proliferation of “shelfies” to Jane Austen–themed leggings and from decorative pillows printed with beloved book covers to bookwork sculptures exhibited in prestigious collections, books are everywhere and are not just for reading. Writers have caught up with this trend: many contemporary novels depict books as central characters or fetishize paper and print thematically and formally.

In *Bookishness*, Jessica Pressman examines the new status of the book as object and symbol. She explores the rise of “bookishness” as an identity and an aesthetic strategy. Bringing together media studies, book history, and literary criticism, *Bookishness* explains how books still give meaning to our lives in a digital age.

Bookishness



**Loving Books in
a Digital Age**

Jessica Pressman

Columbia University Press, 2020

Bookishness



**Loving Books in
a Digital Age**

Jessica Pressman

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Jessica Pressman

From your blogs

- ALLEA: Reading Dr. Pressman's *Bookishness* has tied everything taught and read over the semester up with a beautiful, perfect bow. While reading the chapter, it was cool to see all of the authors Dr. Pressman had mentioned and/or assigned for the class. Upon seeing the multitude of authors in the Introduction and Chapter 1 of *Bookishness*, it felt like this semester was a window into Dr. Pressman's research process and mindset as she had set off to write a book, at first about the "death of the book," and later became about "bookishness."

From your blogs- digital enables print and books

- KIERSTEN: I found this idea of a Mac BookBook the epitome of Bookishness itself: a digital device pretending to be a physical book. Not only does this device make a book appear to be something its not, but it shows something that is no longer there. I found this very fascinating and also shocking

From your blogs- nearness

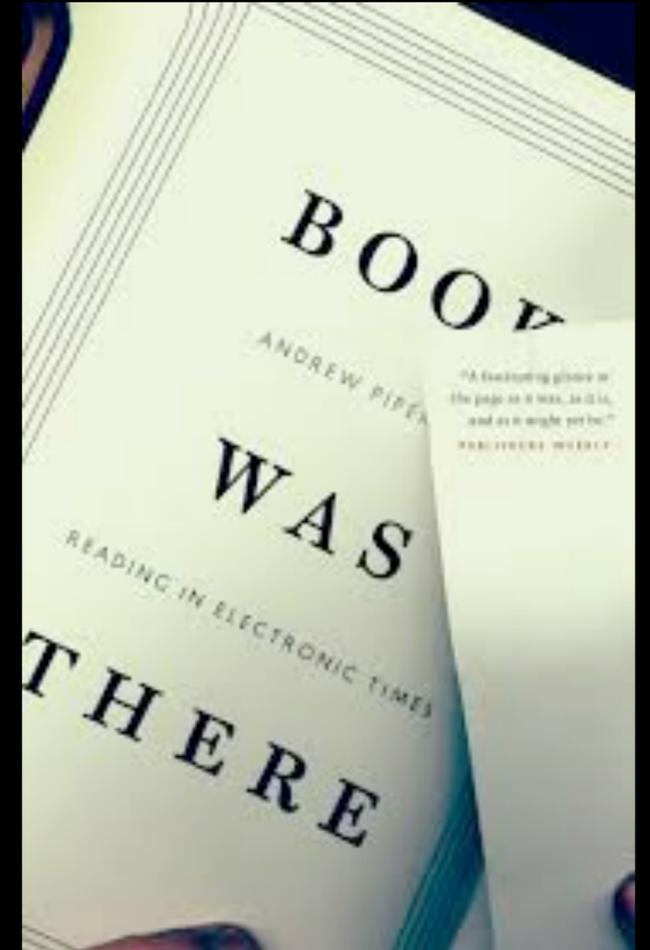
- KAAN: “Bookishness is about maintaining a nearness to books.” (p. 10) Nearness. There’s something quiet but powerful in the way Pressman uses that phrase. She isn’t talking about how much we read or how deeply we understand a text. She is talking about something simpler. Being close to books, keeping them around us, letting them shape the spaces we live in. And that idea immediately made me think about why books still matter in a world where so much has moved to screens.

Andrew Piper, *Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times* (2012)

“It is this thereness that is both essential for understanding the medium of the book (that books exists as finite objects in the world) and also for reminding us that we cannot think about our electronic future without contending with its antecedent, the bookish past” (ix)

“Books will always be there. That is what they are by definition: there” (xi)

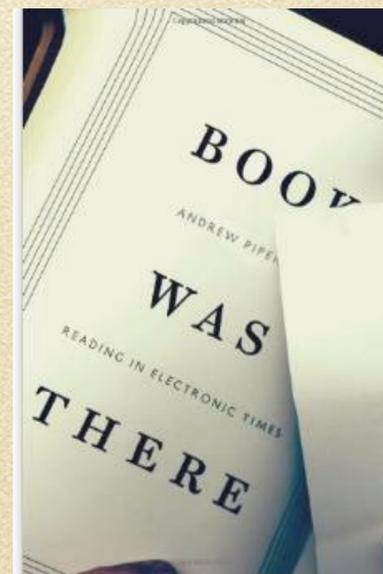
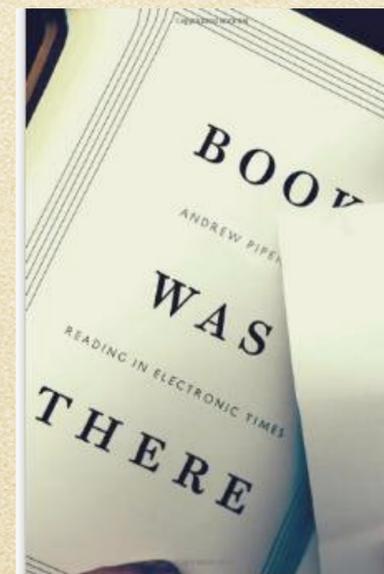
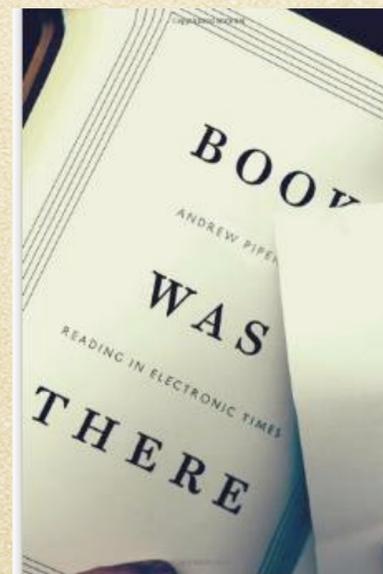
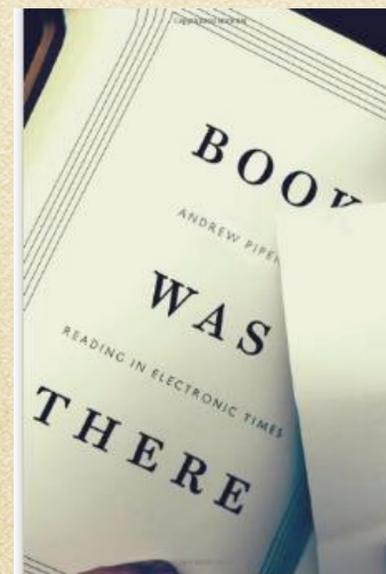
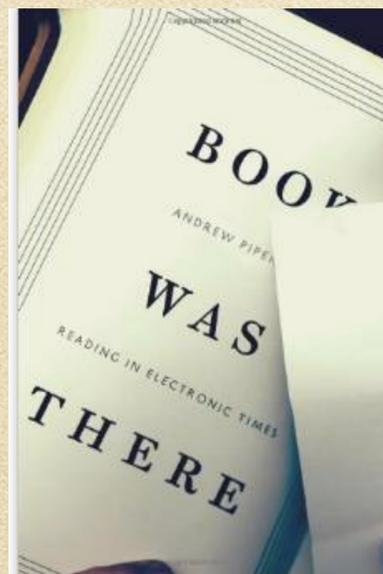
“Books have never been just objects of reading. To understand books is to understand the act of looking that transpires between us and them. It is to ask how we face books and how they face us” (26)

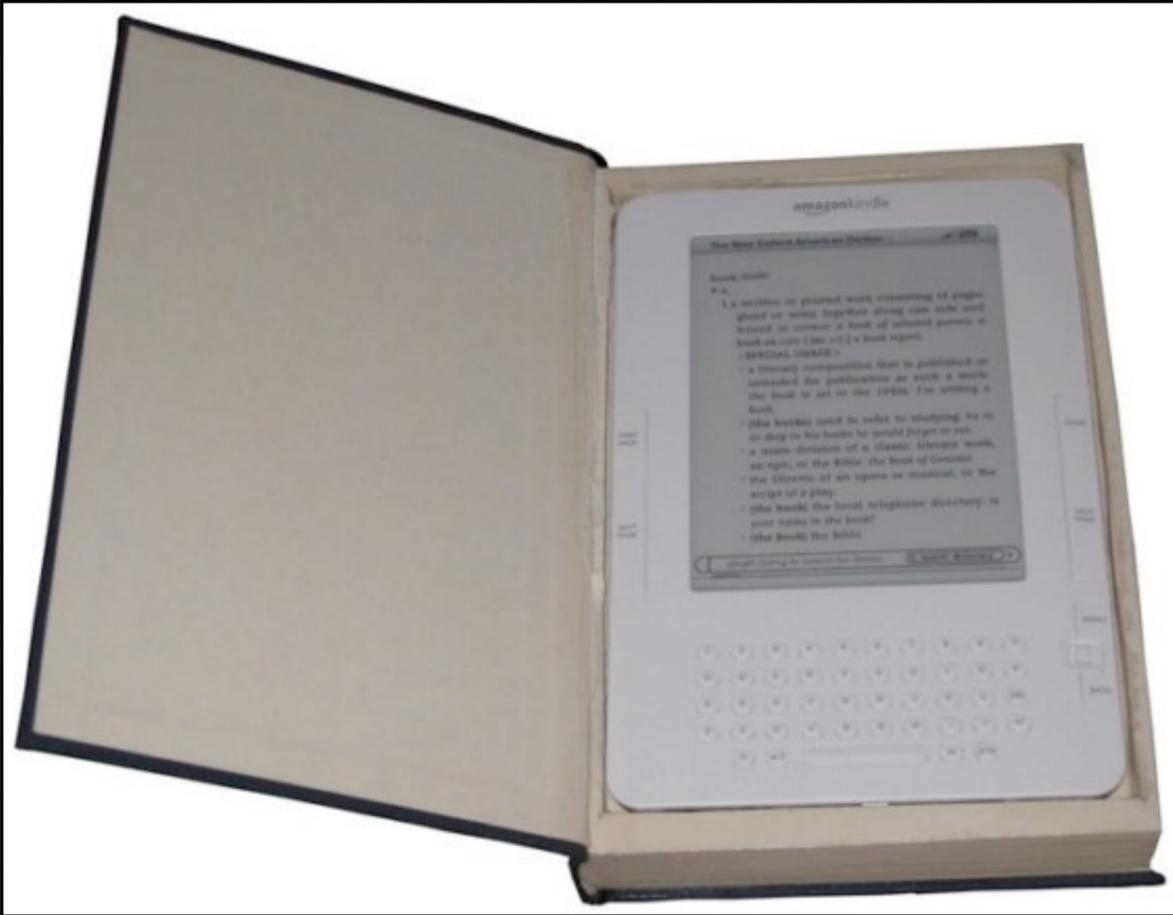


—Andrew Piper, *Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times* (Chicago UP, 2012)

Andrew Piper, Book Was There (Chicago UP, 2012)

- “Now is the time to understand the rich history of what we have thought books have done for us and what we think digital texts might do differently” (xi)





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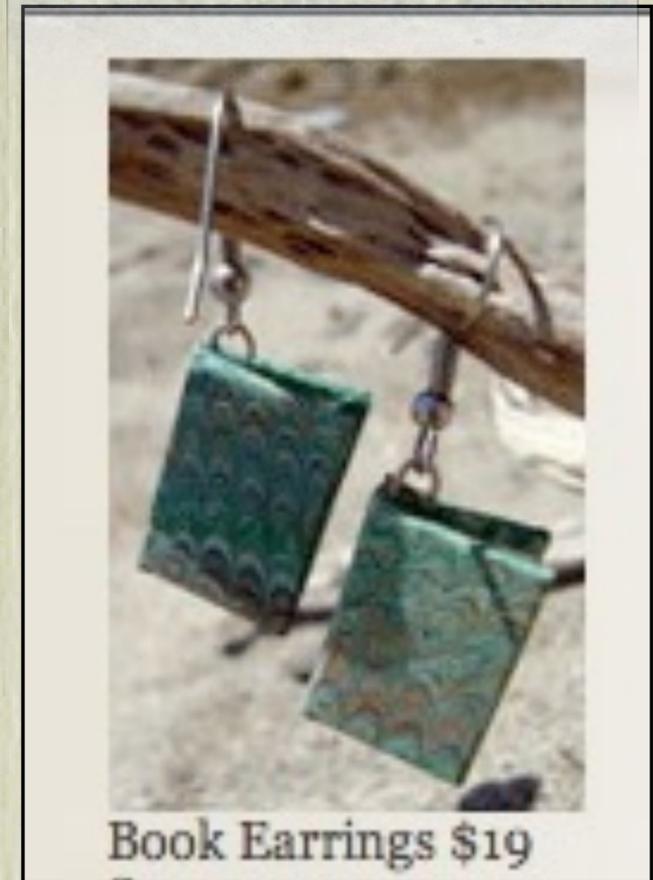
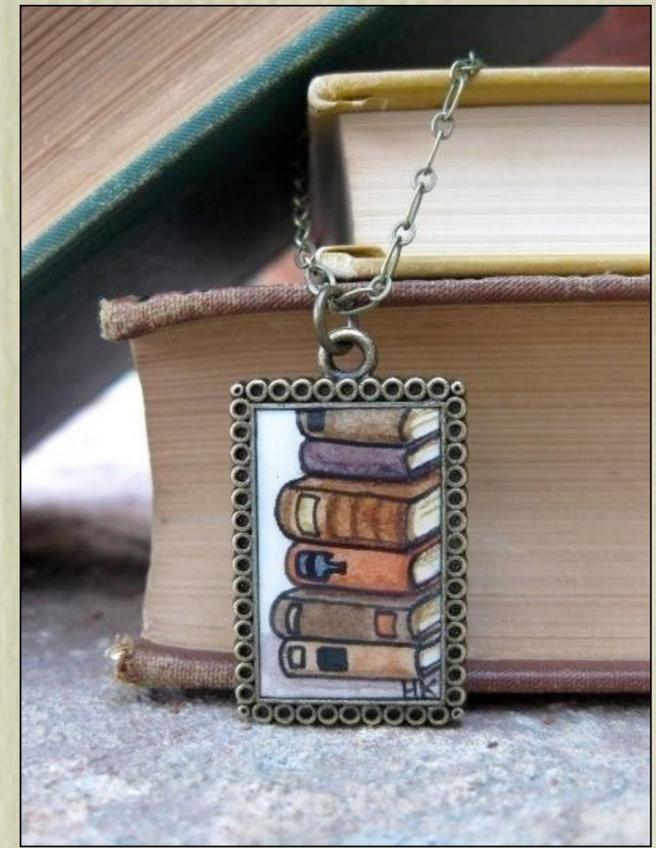


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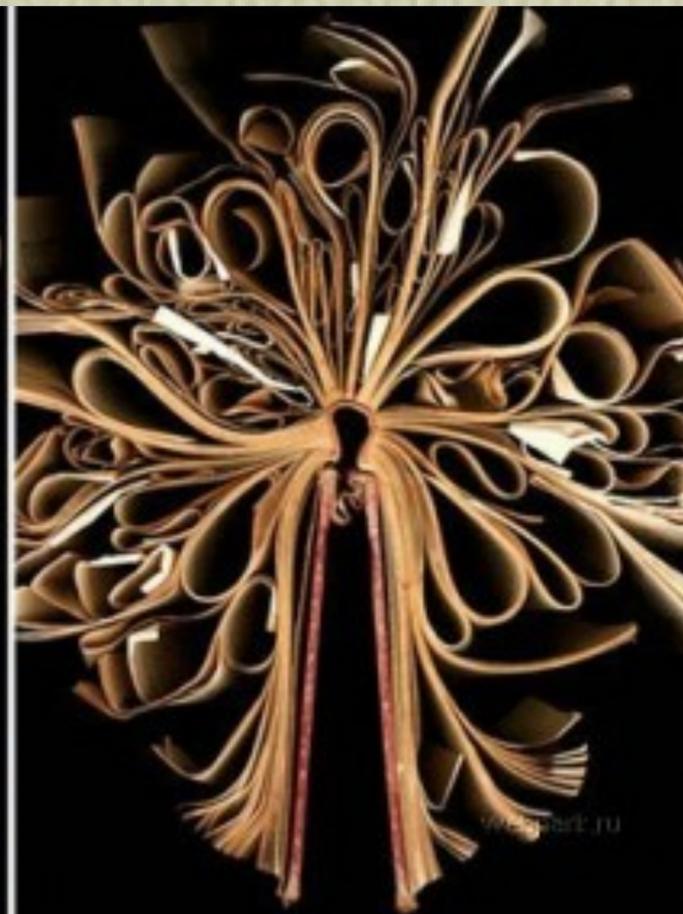
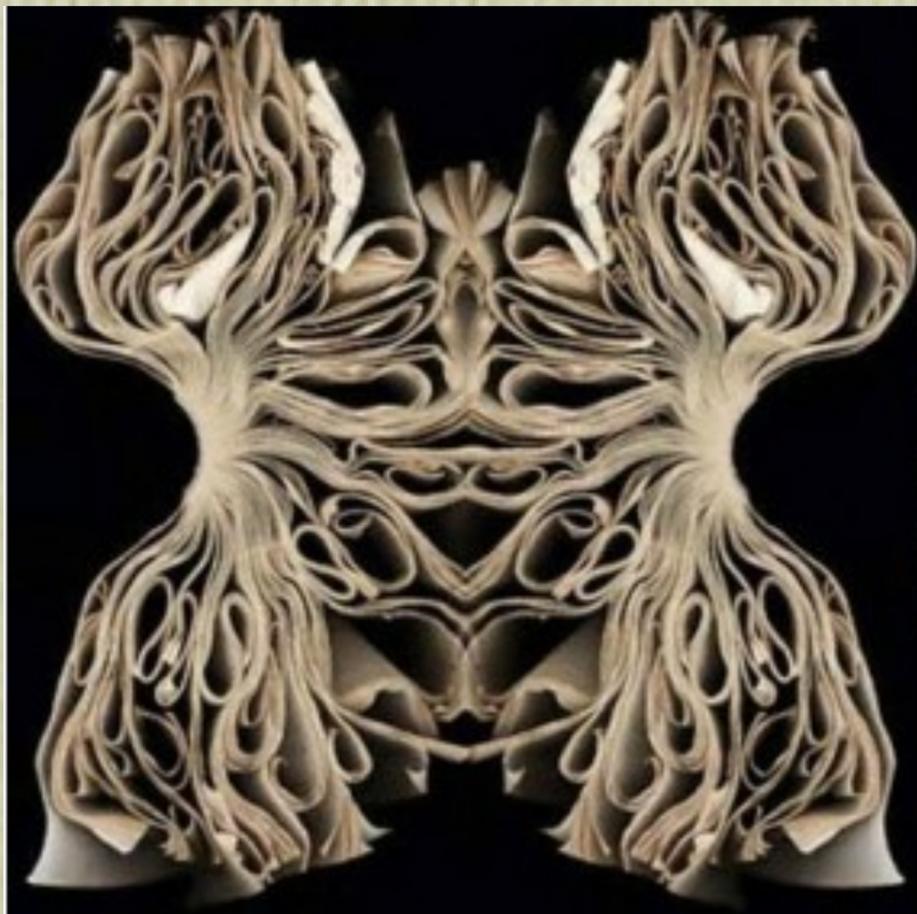
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Cara Barber

Alex Arnold



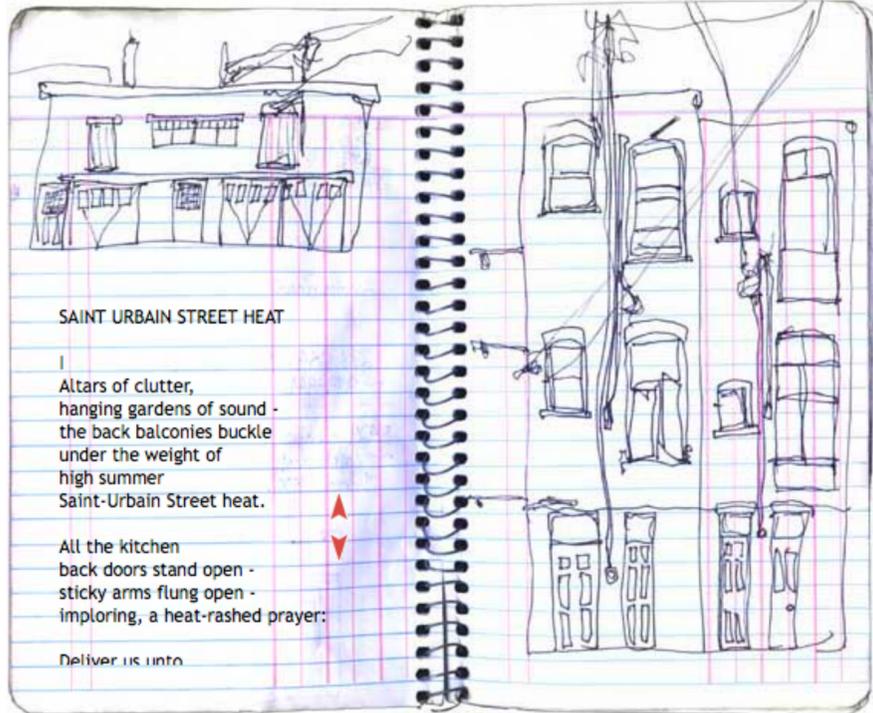
Long-bin Chen

<< ENTRE VILLE >>

<< high summer Saint-Urbain Street heat >> J. R. Carpenter



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SAINT URBAIN STREET HEAT

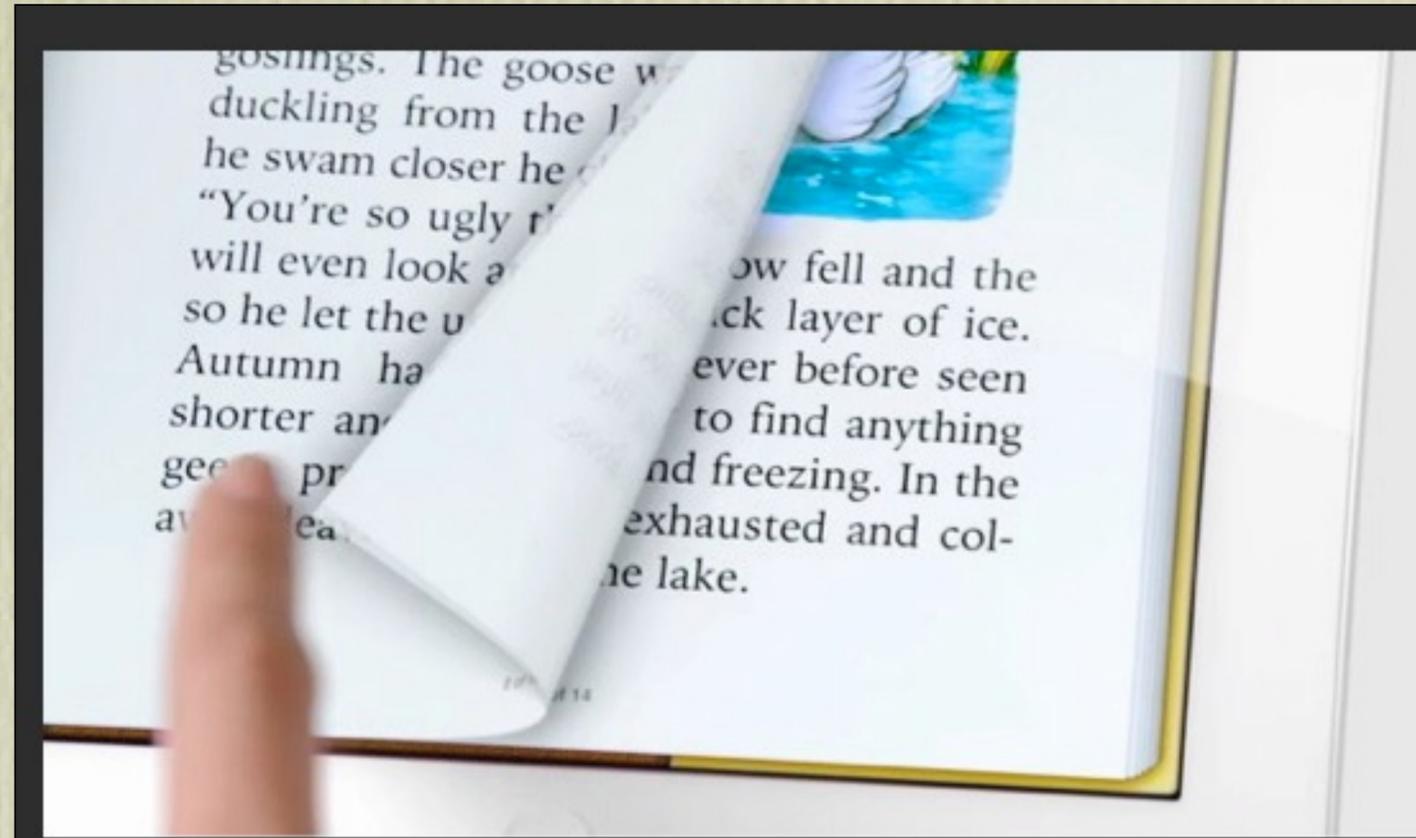
Altars of clutter,
hanging gardens of sound -
the back balconies buckle
under the weight of
high summer
Saint-Urbain Street heat.

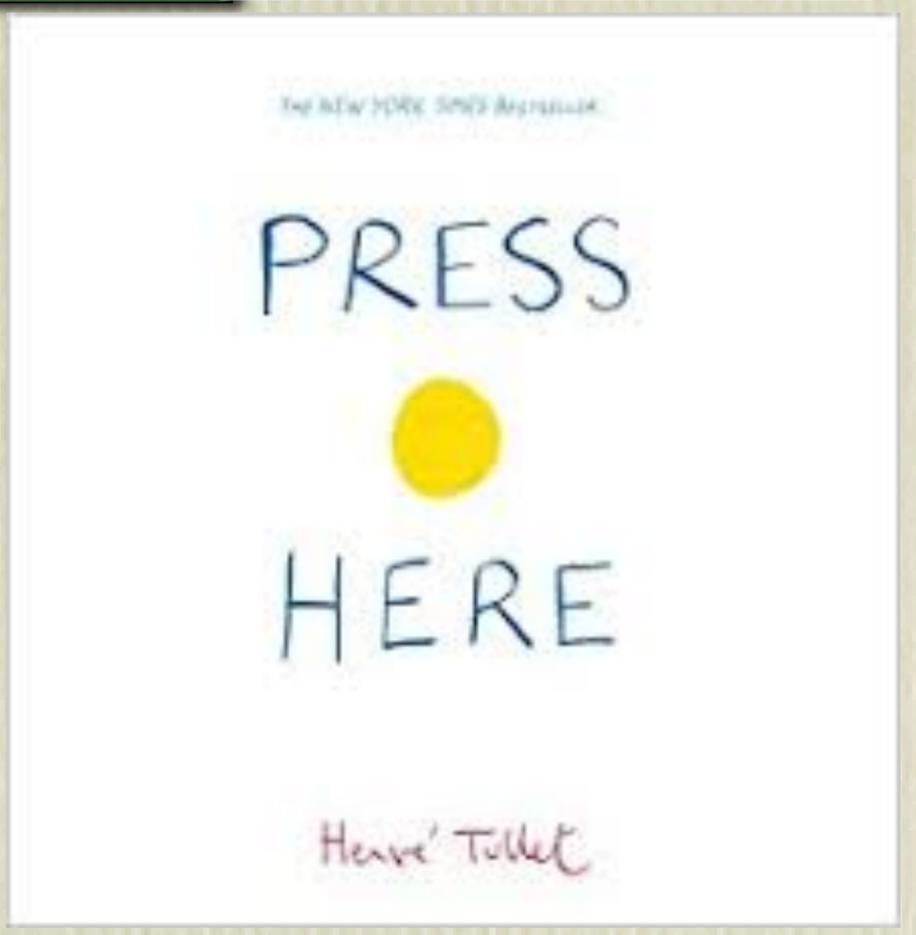
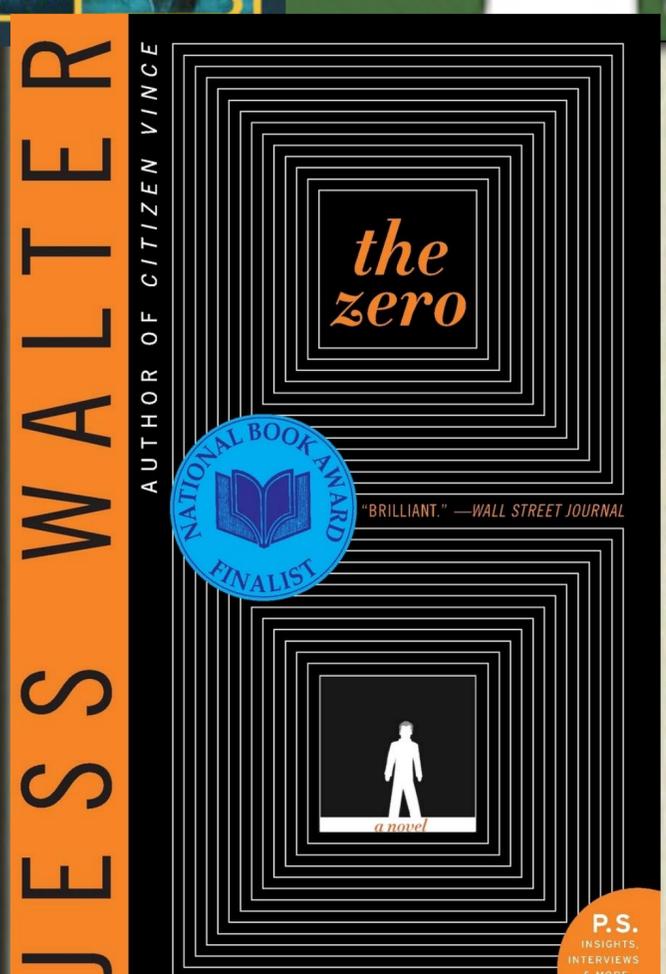
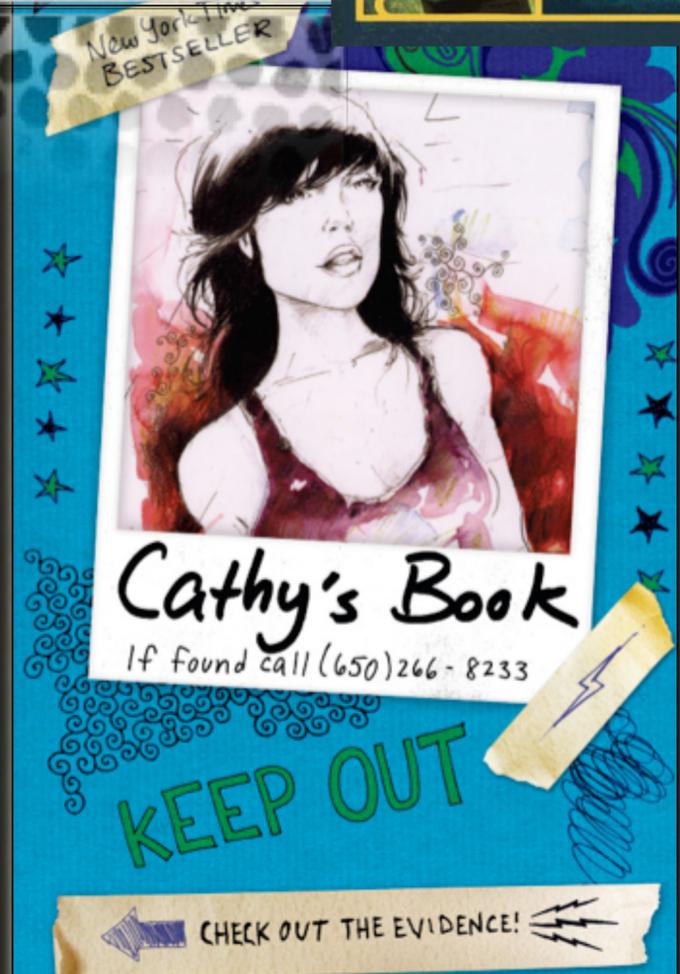
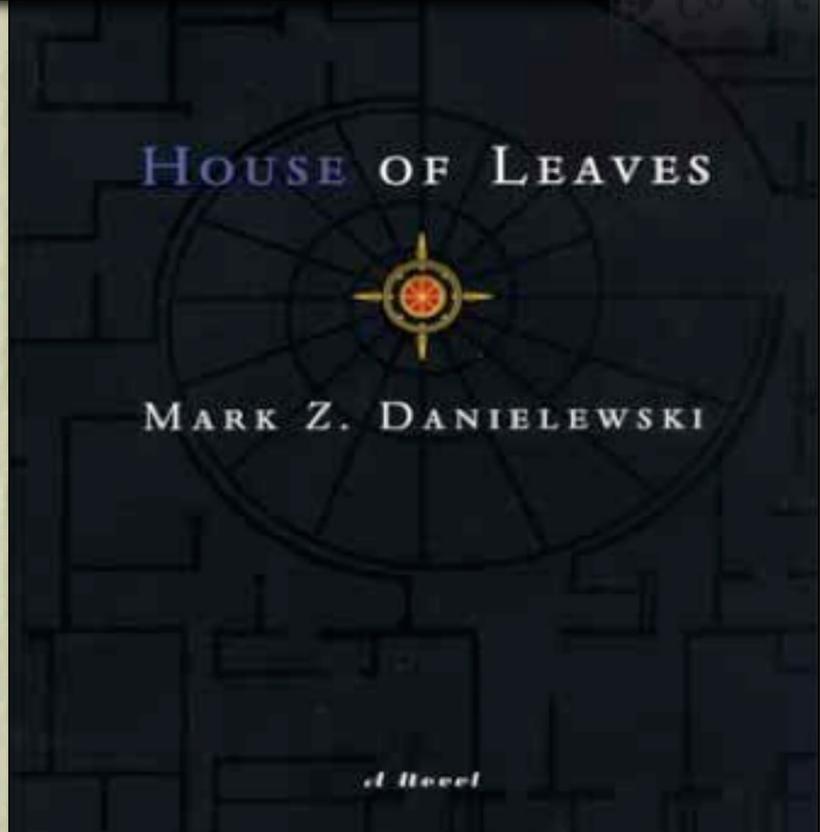
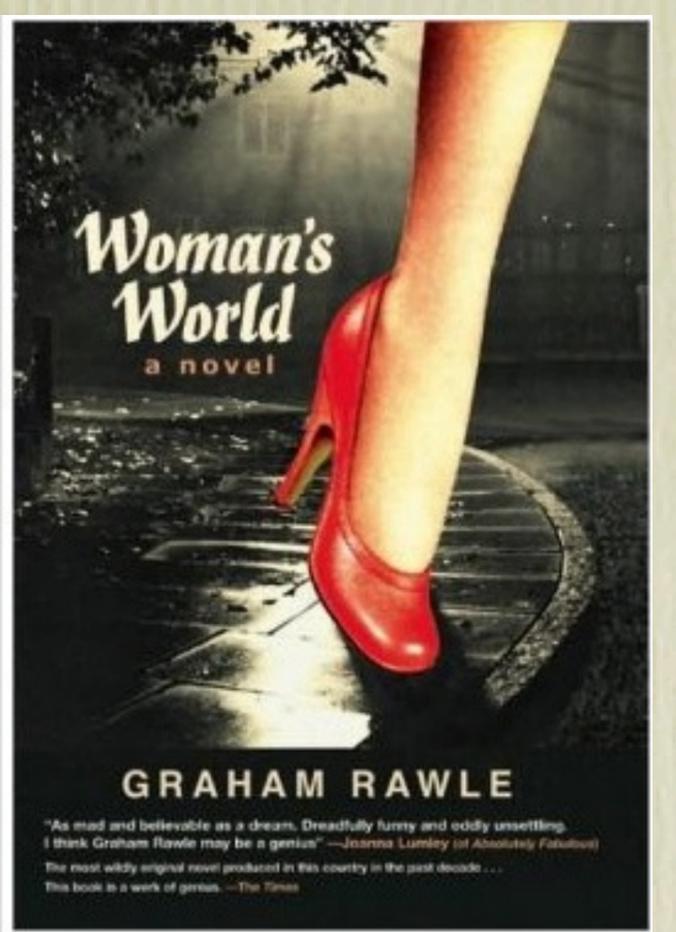
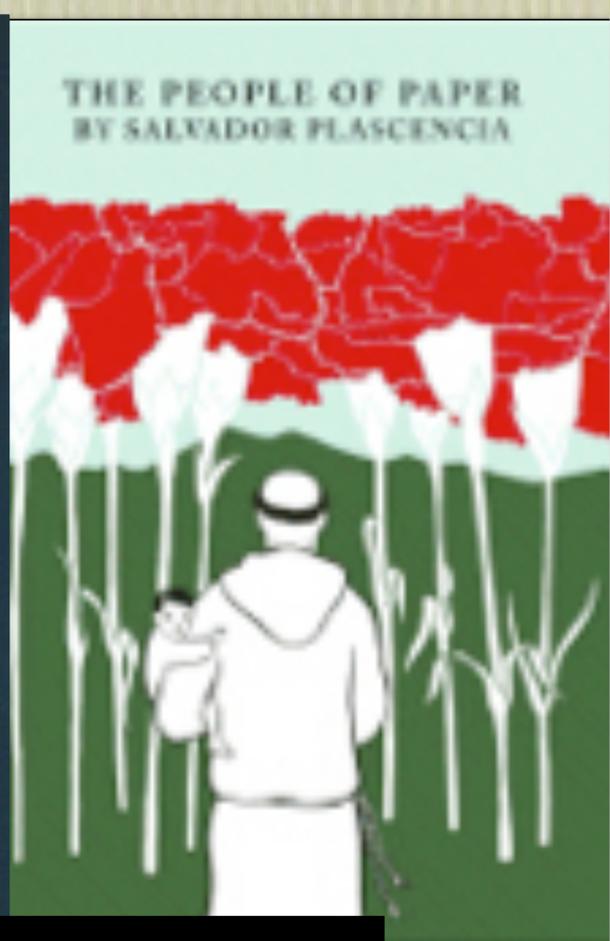
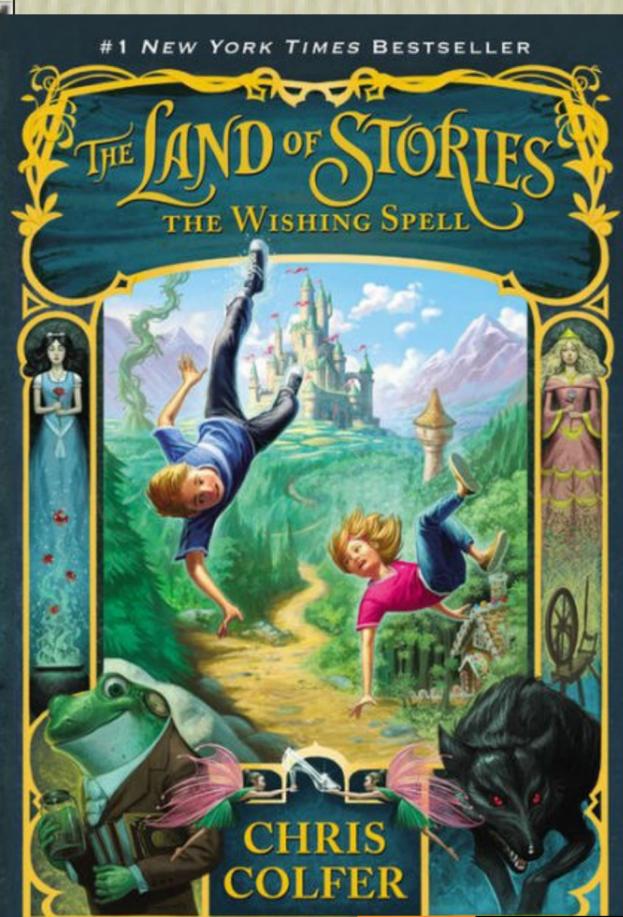
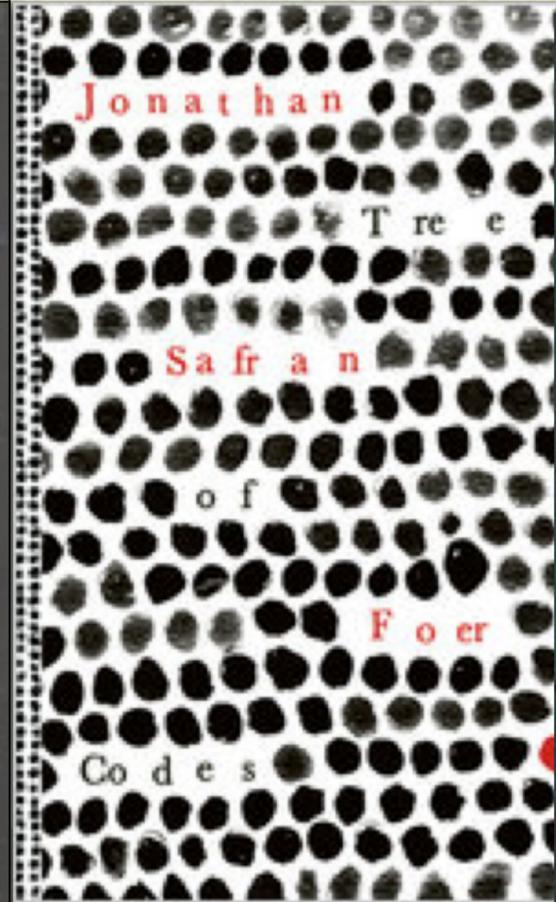
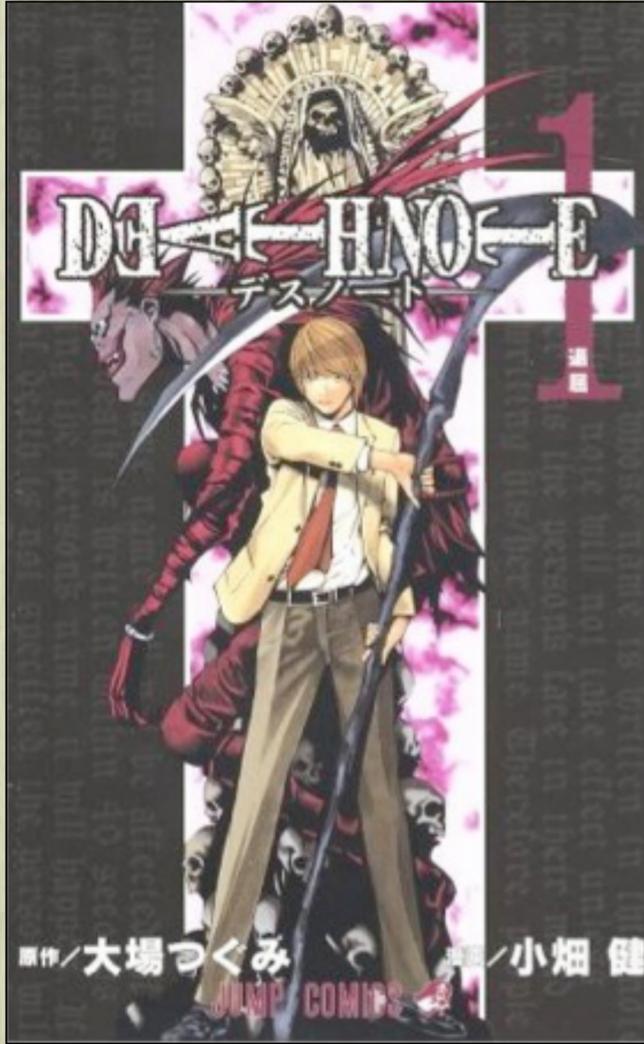
All the kitchen
back doors stand open -
sticky arms flung open -
imploring, a heat-rashed prayer:

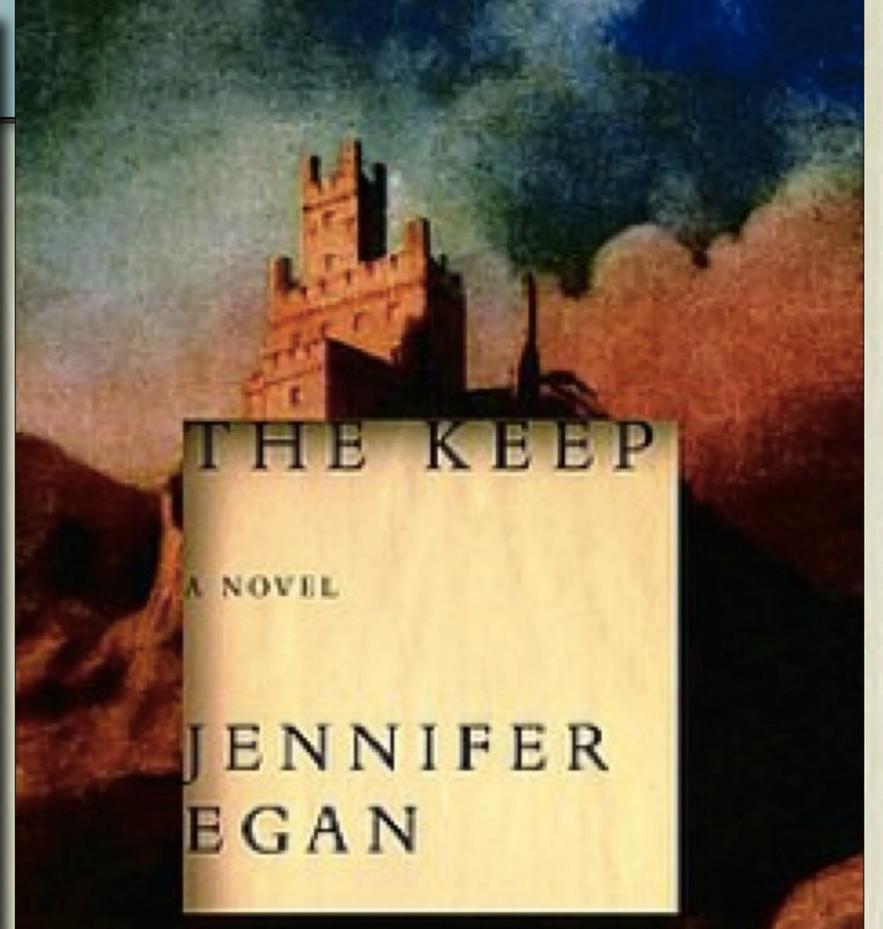
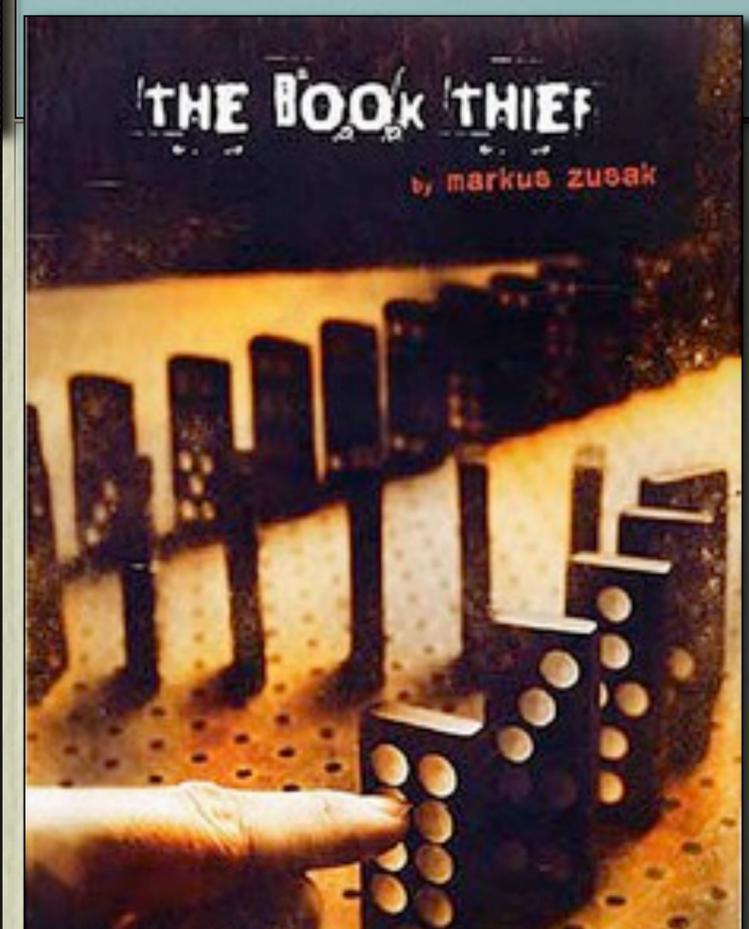
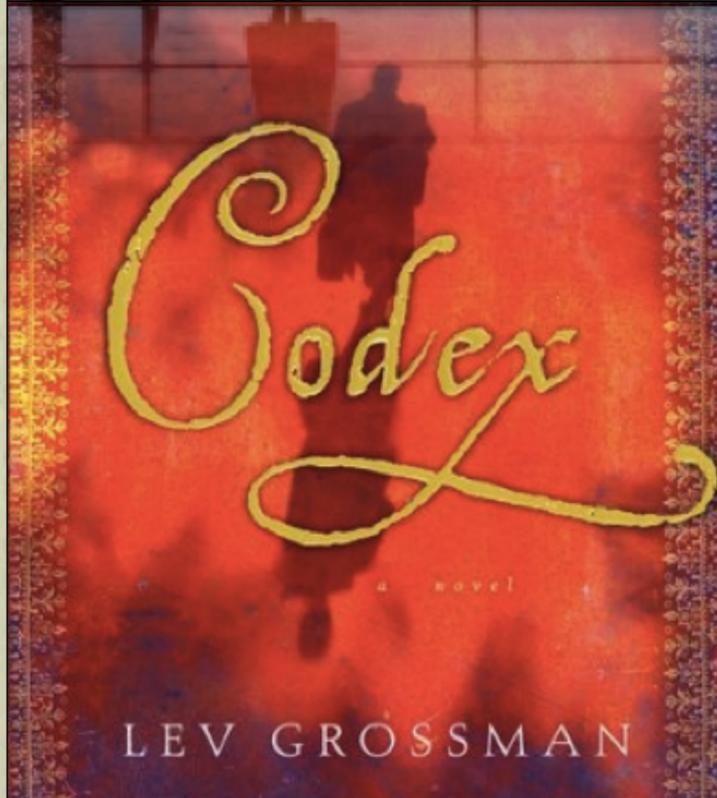
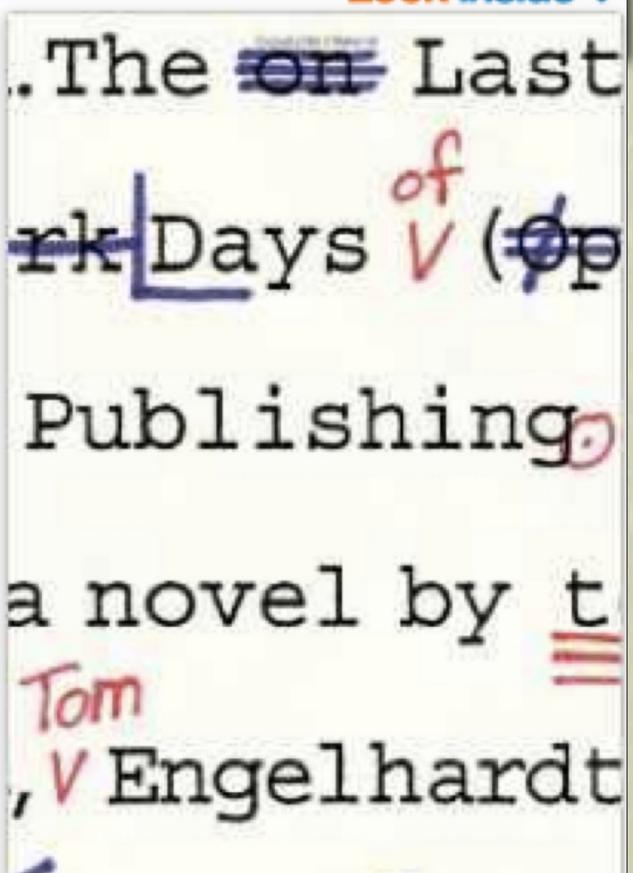
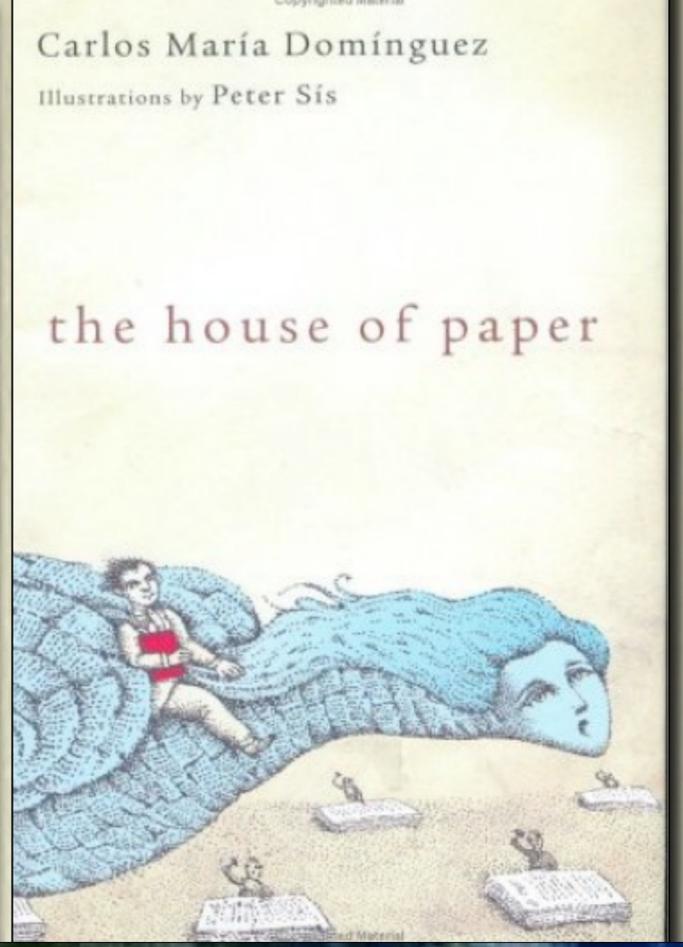
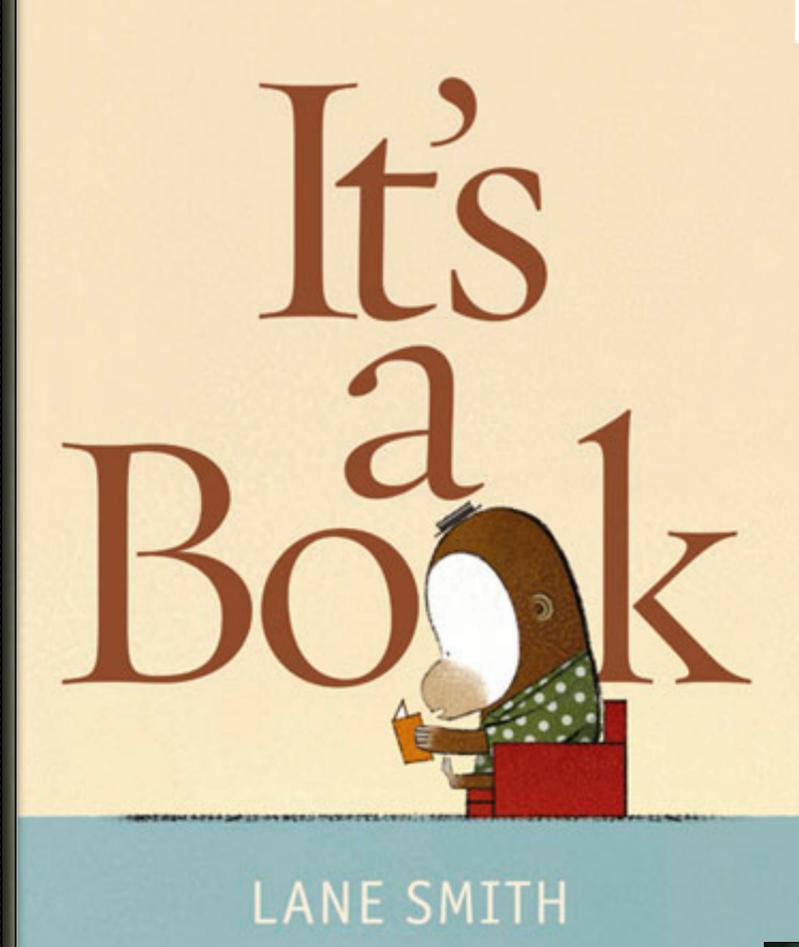
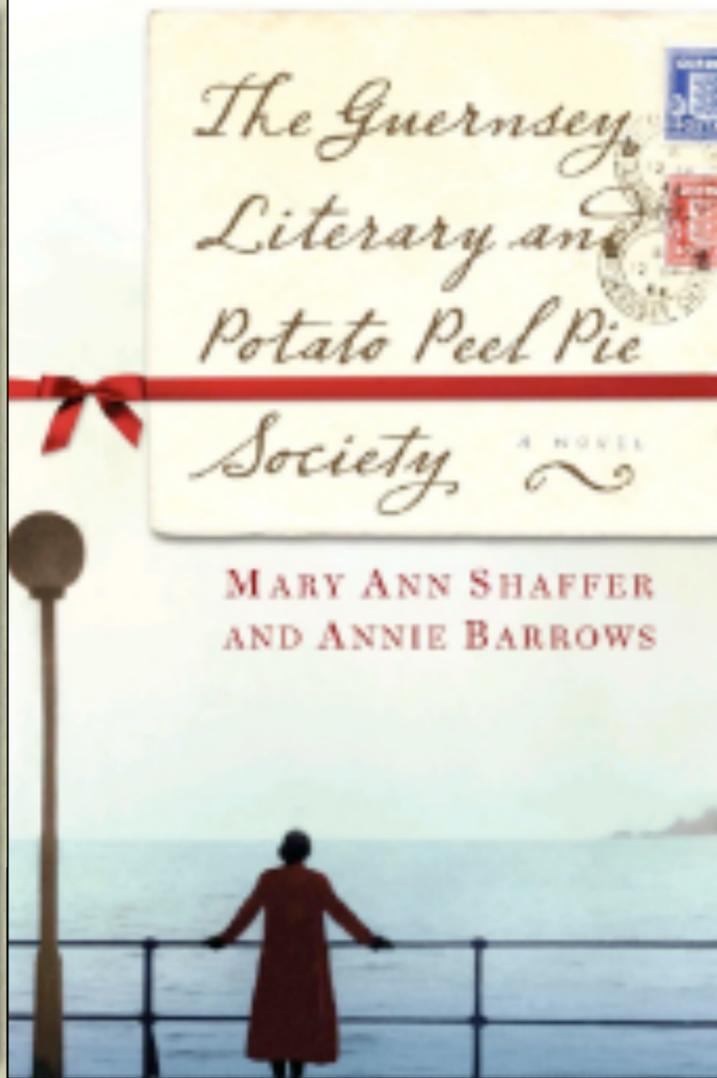
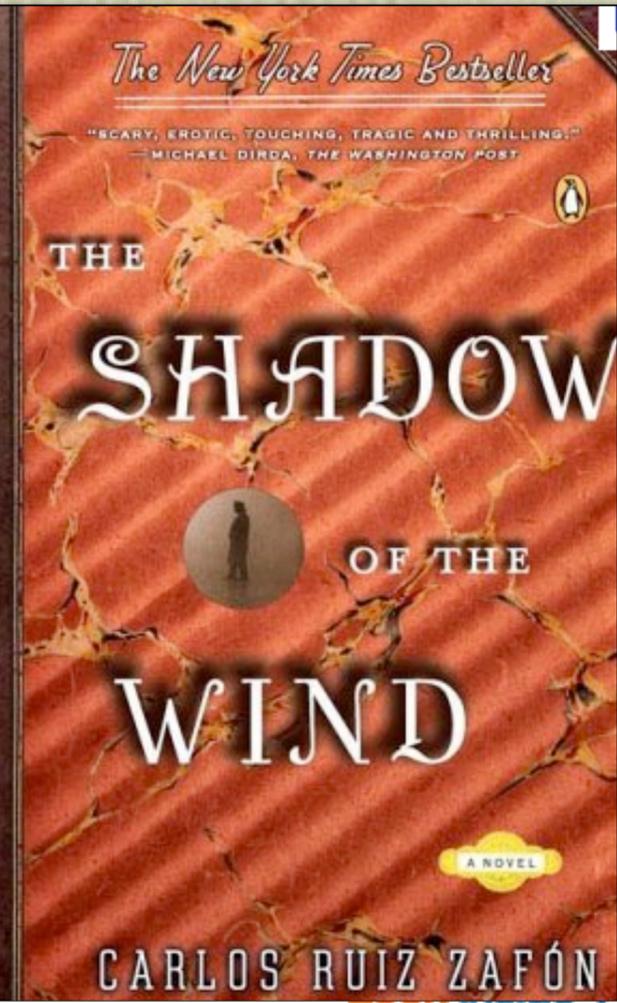
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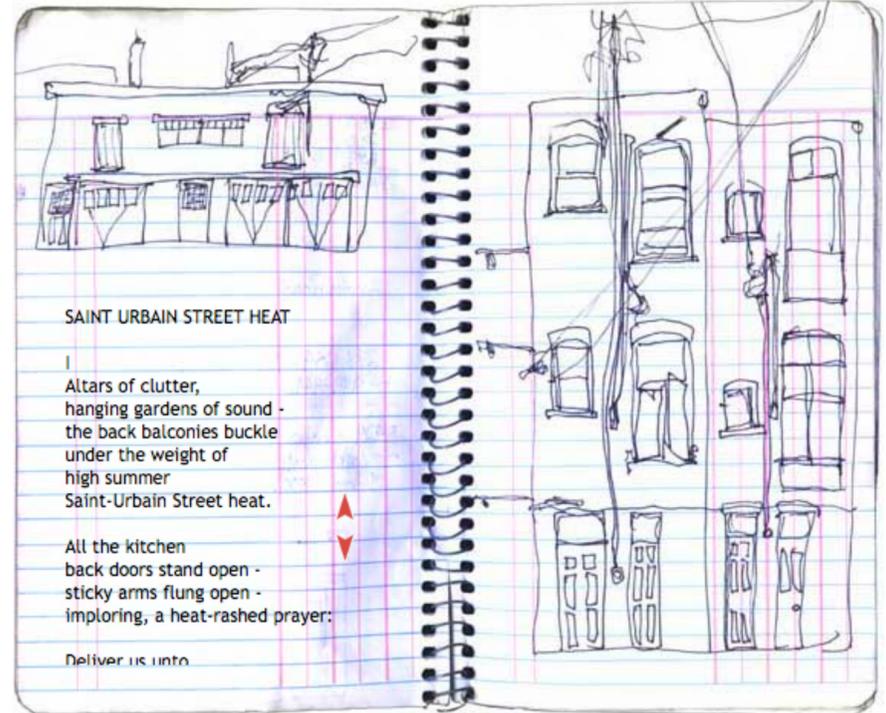








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SAINT URBAIN STREET HEAT

Altars of clutter,
hanging gardens of sound -
the back balconies buckle
under the weight of
high summer
Saint-Urbain Street heat.

All the kitchen
back doors stand open -
sticky arms flung open -
imploing, a heat-rashed prayer:

Deliver us unto



bookish



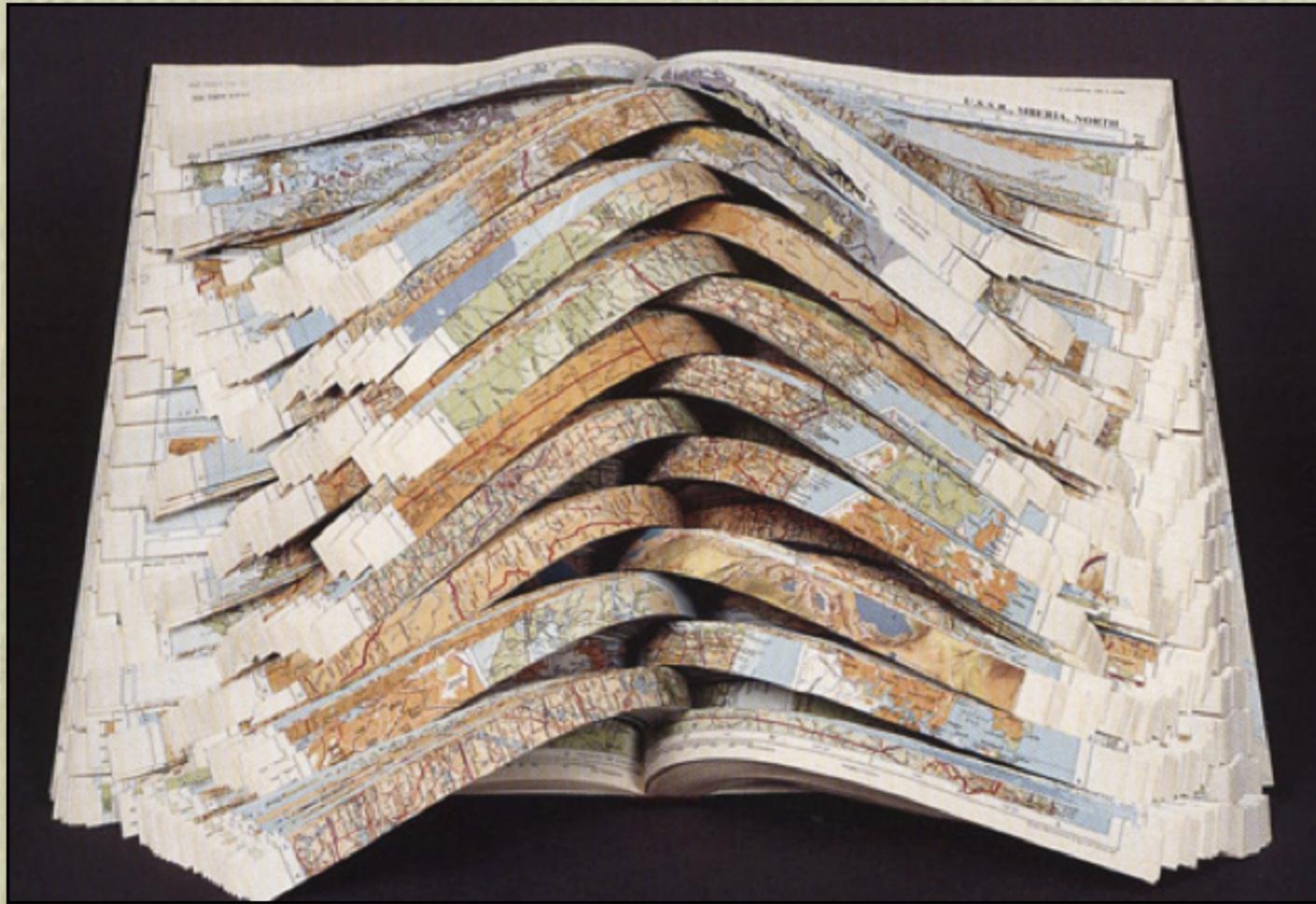
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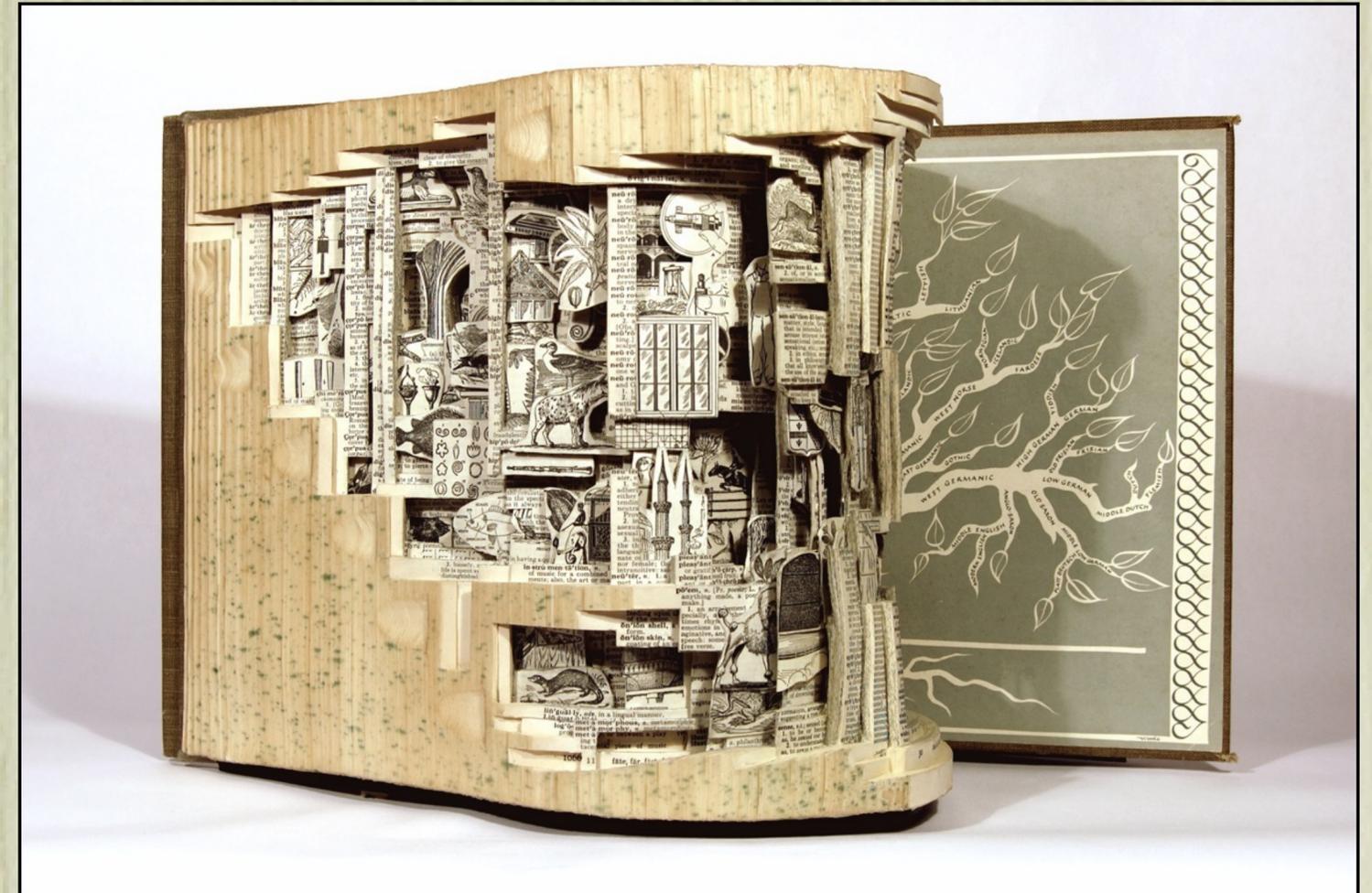
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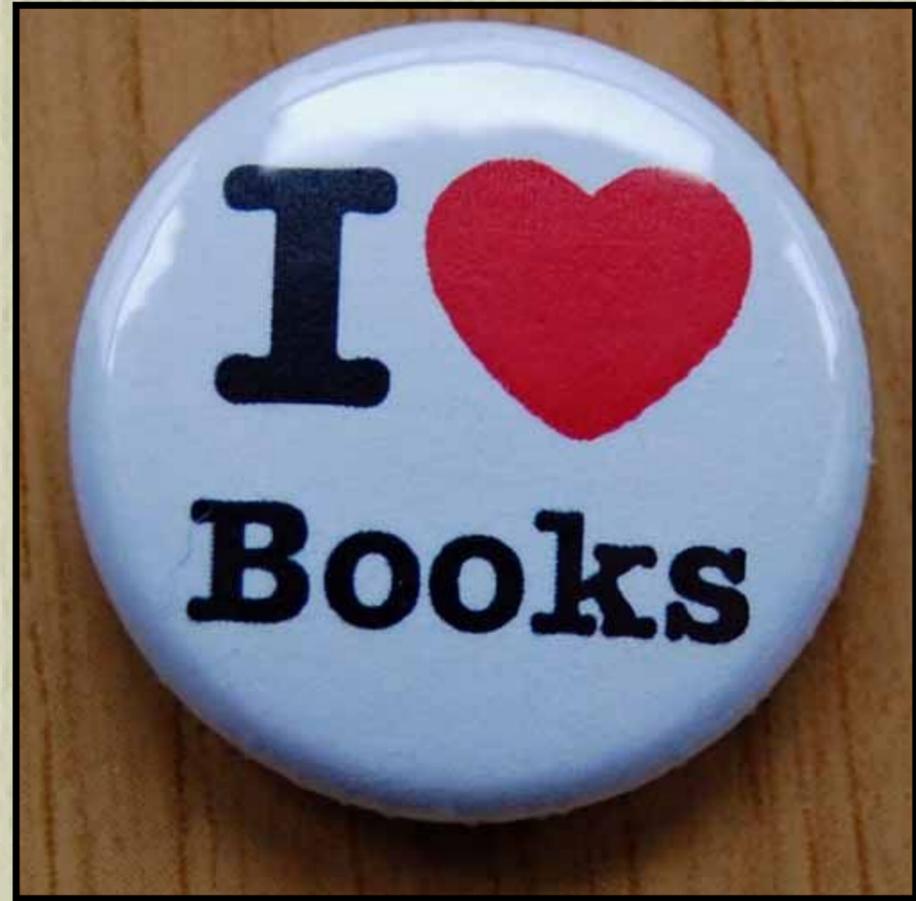
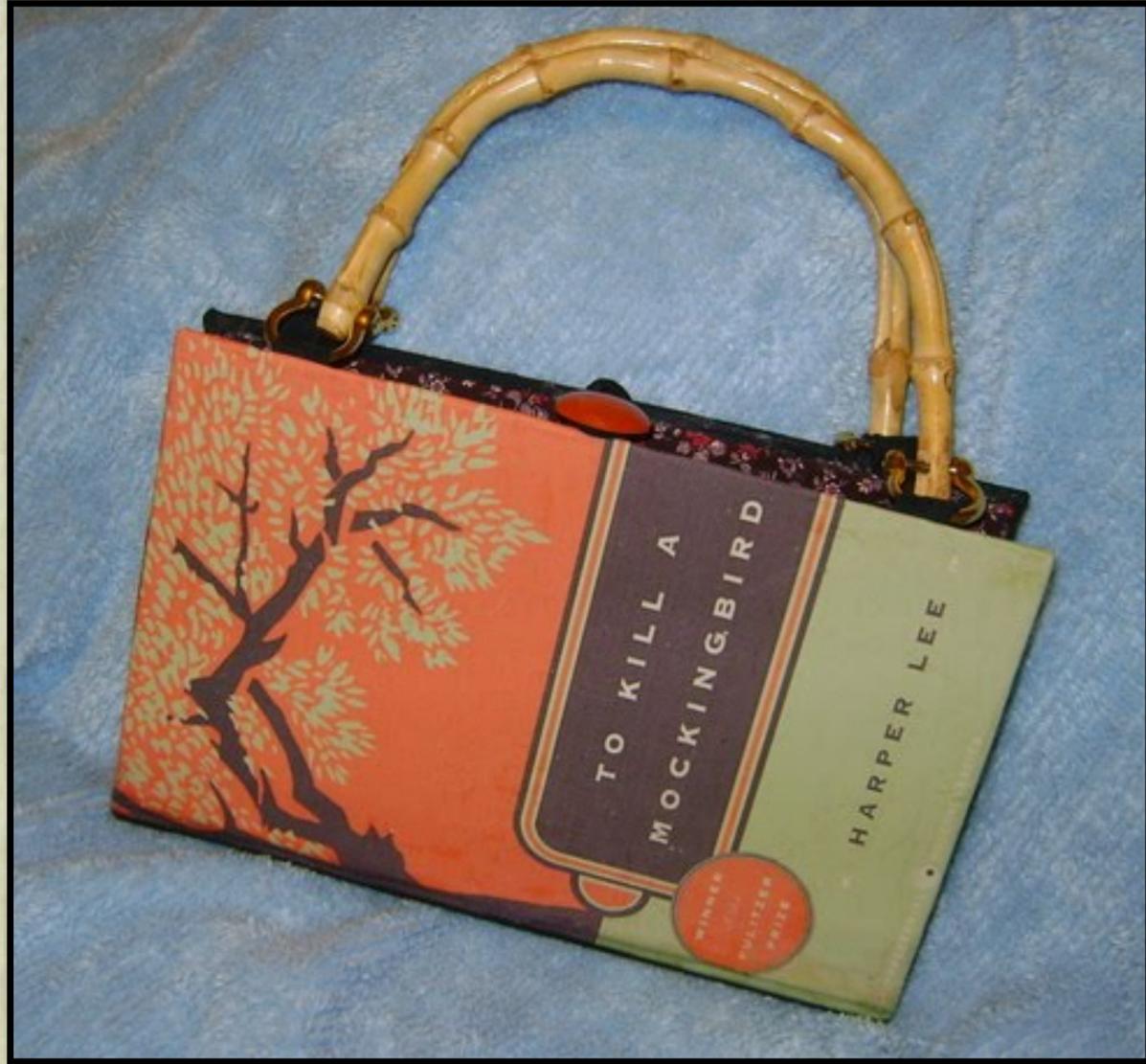
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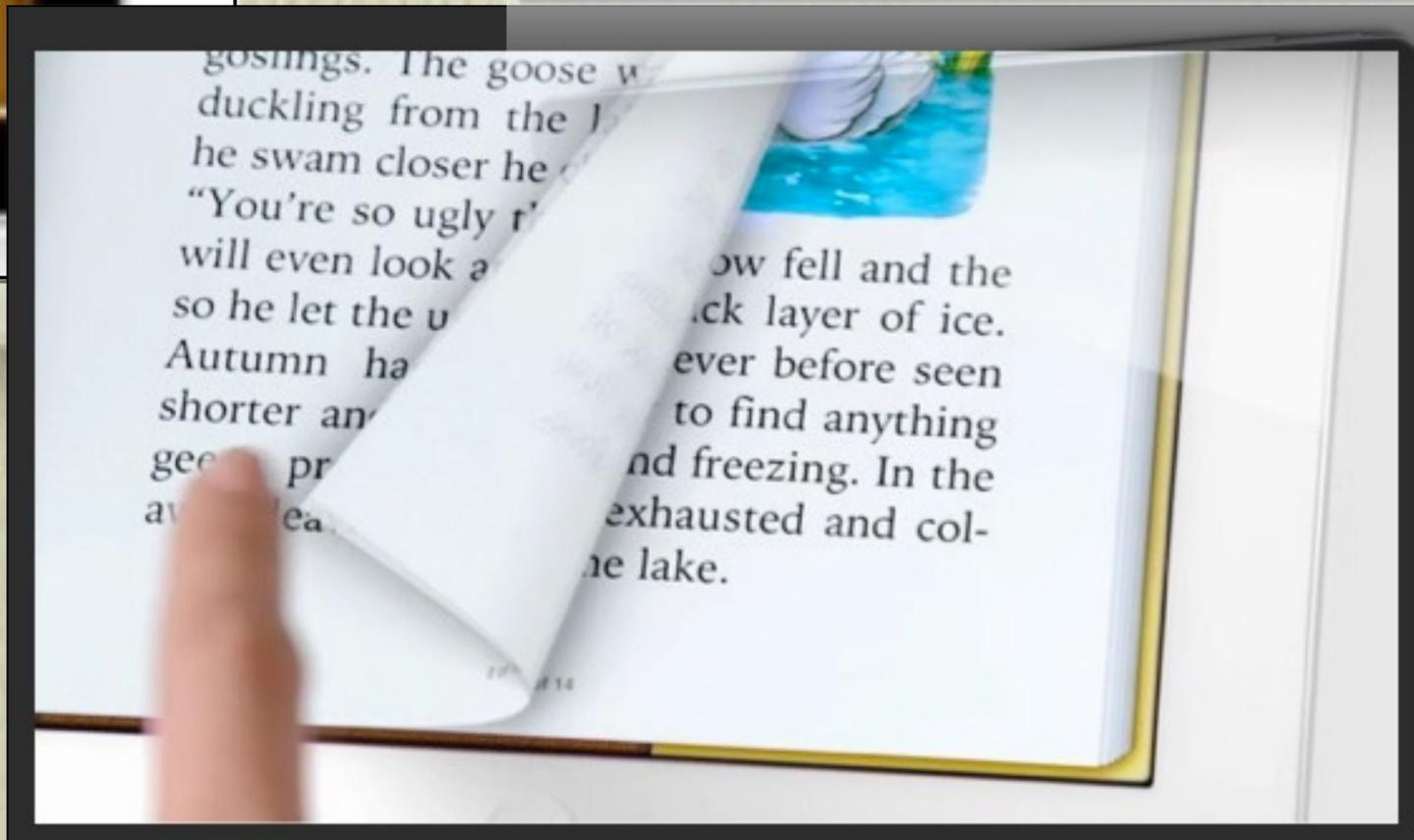


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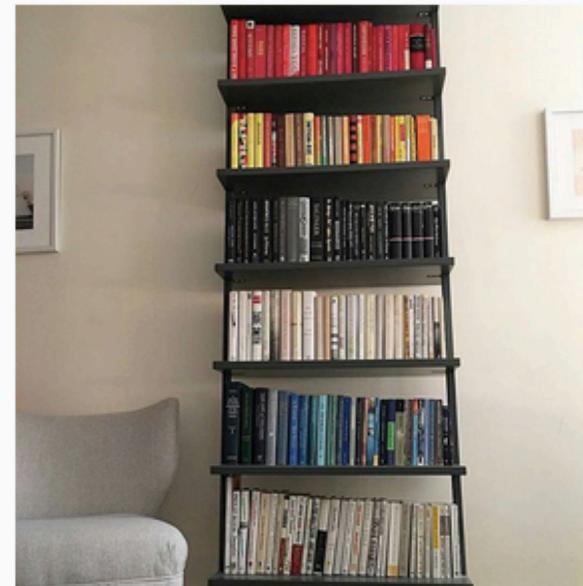


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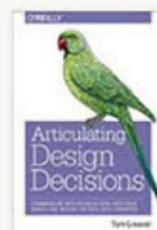
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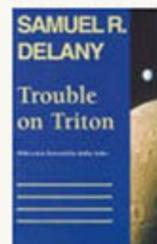
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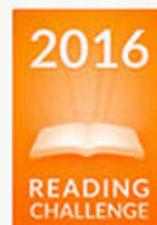
The Complete Cosmicomics by Italo Calvino 70/432 (16%) Update Progress



Trouble on Triton: An Ambiguous Heterotopia by Samuel R. Delany Update Progress

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2016 23 books completed 4 books ahead of schedule 23/35 (66%) View Challenge

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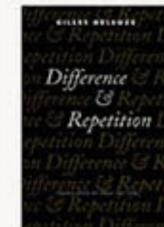
Update: Jessica is now friends with Noura (rated 819 books, 4.08 avg). Currently Reading: Why Not Me? Add Friend, Like, Comment, Write a comment...

Update: Marisa Atkinson rated a book Hot Little Hands by Abigail Ulman (5 stars). This exceptional collection of stories is about young women of different ages... Want to Read, Rate it, Like, Comment, Write a comment...

Update: Vernice liked a quote by Margaret Atwood: "Don't let the bastards grind you down." Like, Comment, More quotes by Margaret Atwood, Write a comment...

RECOMMENDATIONS

A few recommendations for you in Philosophy



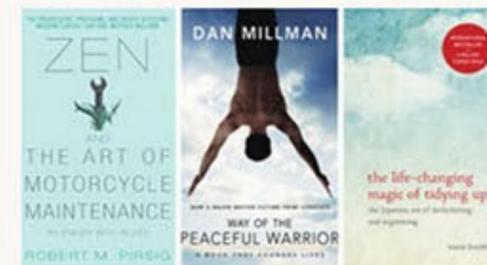
Difference and Repetition by Gilles Deleuze 4.20 avg. rating Want to Read

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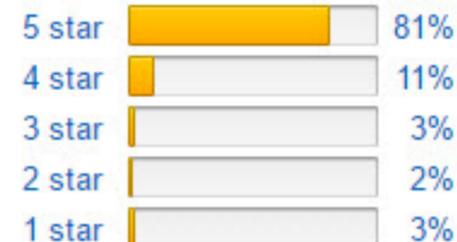


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Bookishness after December 2020



>> ESSAYS

Fake Books and Fake News

By [Jessica Pressman](#)

02/03/2021

There is much to discuss — and avoid — on Twitter these days, but one tweet that has roused bookish folk and demands our consideration is about fake books.

On January 9, 2020, former Trump spokesperson Erin Elmore did a live interview with the UK's Sky News in front of fake bookshelves, and a crease in the fabric incurred the internet's wrath. In a tweet that received 30,000 likes and over 4,000 retweets in just a few days, Twitter account Bookcase Credibility ([@BCredibility](#)) smartly aligns fake books with fake news: "Credibility is hard to maintain when you forget to iron the creases out of your bookcase."

**Bookcase Credibility** @BCredibility · Jan 9

Erin Elmore. Credibility is hard to maintain when you forget to iron the creases out of your bookcase.

**TRUMP CONCEDES**

FORMER TRUMP CAMPAIGN SPOKESPERSON

ERIN ELMORE

skynews.com ACCINE FOR USE IN THE UK WITH 17 MILLION DOSES ORDERED BY THE GOVERNMENT BREAKING NEWS THE MAYOR C

How might you use the concept/paradigm of
Bookishness?

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What is our relationship to print in 2024? To books and bookstores? E-readers and electronic publications? How does that relationship signify in our lives and the lives of others when the word "print" carries such a plethora of meanings?

The New Americanist will explore, across both its issues in 2024, "Print Cultures and Bookishness in Contemporary Life." "Bookishness" is what Jessica Pressman has described as "creative acts that engage the physicality of the book within a digital culture, in modes that may be sentimental, fetishistic, radical." For the bookish among us, our engagement with the printed word has shifted remarkably in this century. At a moment where we can refer to biblio-style and shelfies, where BookTok and Bookstagram bring new modes of bookish engagement, and concepts like bibliodiversity and algorithms challenge norms both within the book trade and within literary studies and book history, this volume explores new and expansive ideas around print cultures in the twenty-first century.

The New Americanist

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Matthew Chambers
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Articles

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- Melting Wax and Warming Hearts: *Heartstopper*, Scented Candles, and Bookish Social Media
Malcolm Noble 
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- Gen Z and Millennials: Contrasts in Reading *Behavior* and Readerly *Identity*
Rachel Noorda  and Kathi Inman Berens 
3(1), pp. 47–71
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Discussion

- What does this add to our learning/thinking?

Discussion

- Questions about the research/writing process?
- What does this add to our learning/thinking?

Take-aways/Questions?