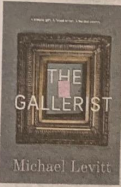




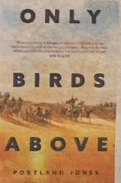
CHERYL AKLE
FOUNDER OF BETTER READING

Notable books



THE GALLERIST
By Michael Levitt
Freemantle Press, Fiction
244pp, \$29.99

The Gallerist is a mystery set in the art world. Former surgeon Mark Lewis has found solace, as a widower, running an art gallery. One day a client comes in, seeking a valuation. She claims the painting is the work of a local teenager but it looks uncannily like a painting by James Devlin, a world-renowned but enigmatic artist from Melbourne. Is this a fake or worth a fortune? The author, Mark Levitt, is himself a surgeon and art lover. He has been collecting for many years and has written extensively about it. This is his first work of fiction, combining an excellent, cosy mystery with a midlife romance.



ONLY BIRDS ABOVE
By Portland Jones
Freemantle Press, Fiction
216pp, \$29.99

Only Birds Above explores the effects of intergenerational trauma resulting from war. Blacksmith Arthur Watkins leaves his beloved wife Helen to serve with the 10th Light Horse Regiment in the Middle East in World War I, returning without his horse and forever changed. Years later, in World War II, Arthur's son Tom is taken prisoner by the Japanese. This story set between two wars was inspired by Portland Jones's own family history. Portland works with horses and is a lecturer in equine management. Her research into war trauma led her to explore how the death of their horses impacted WWI soldiers. This is a powerful read, using the relationship between horse and human to highlight courage and futility.



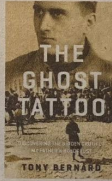
THE SWIMMERS
By Julie Otsuka
Penguin, Fiction
176pp, \$29.99

Julie Otsuka is the internationally bestselling author of The Buddha in the Attic. In her new book, The Swimmers, the protagonist, Alice, is one of a group of obsessed recreational swimmers who escape from the troubles of the world at their local swimming pool. Even as wildfires rage, it's always a comfortable temperature in the water, which doubles as a place for community and friendship. But then cracks appear in Alice's memory and she's returning to her childhood, a Japanese American incarceration camp, as well as other life traumas, leaving her daughter to navigate a new relationship with her mother.



IN THE MARGINS
By Elena Ferrante (translated by Ann Goldstein)
Allen & Unwin, Nonfiction
112pp, \$24.99

Elena Ferrante is the internationally acclaimed author of My Brilliant Friend and The Lying Life of Adults. Her writing has been described as "an oracle among authors". In the Margins is four speeches given – although not by Ferrante, whose identity remains a secret – at the University of Bologna that explore reading and writing, and the works and authors that have influenced her throughout her career. Ferrante reveals a little more of herself, especially in essay one, Pain and Pen, where she recalls her journey to writing. Translated from Italian to English by Ann Goldstein, this slim book is filled with inspiration for readers, writers and lovers of words.



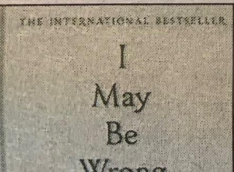
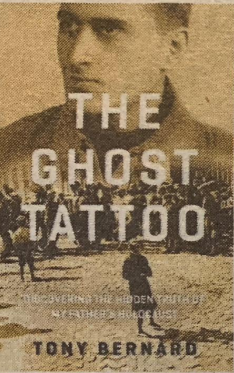
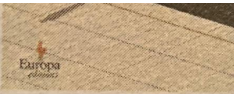
THE GHOST TATTOO
By Tony Bernard
Allen & Unwin, Nonfiction
336 pp, \$32.99

Henry Bernard was a well-respected doctor on Sydney's Northern Beaches. His son, Tony Bernard, grew up knowing that his father was a Holocaust survivor, but Henry had a bigger secret, one he didn't begin sharing with his son until after he was called as a witness in a German war crimes trial. Compiled from oral and written recollections, and from archival records, The Ghost Tattoo is an exceptional biography that bears witness to Henry's journey, the desperate choices he had to make and the "wrestling match with his conscience, an unfair match he could never win". In this fascinating book, Tony seeks to understand why his father was the way he was.



I MAY BE WRONG AND OTHER WISDOMS FROM LIFE AS A FOREST MONK
By Bjorn Natthiko Lindeblad
Bloomsbury, Nonfiction
256pp, \$29.99

Bjorn Natthiko Lindeblad at age 26 left behind a career, his family and friends, and all possessions to live as a forest monk. Shortly after returning to society, he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a disease of the nervous system. The Swedish author died in January this year. In this book he talks about the most important things he learned during his 17 years in the forest, living without money, sex, TV, novels, alcohol or any modern conveniences.



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