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The owl who liked sitting on Caesar: living with a tawny owl

From The New York Times Book Review: “Anyone who thinks the bond between man and dog or cat is the supreme human-house pet attachment will have to reconsider after reading Martin Windrow's touching account of the bird who changed his life, a possessive and characterful tawny owl named Mumble who was his domestic companion for 15 action-packed years...[The Owl Who Liked Sitting on Caesar is a] tribute to [Windrow's] grand avian attachment, which is all the more affecting because of its gruff understatement.”

A spy among friends: Kim Philby and the great betrayal

From The New York Times Book Review: “When devouring this thriller about Kim Philby...I had to keep reminding myself that it was not a novel. It reads like a story by Graham Greene, Ian Fleming or John le Carré, all of whom make appearances, leavened by a dollop of P. G. Wodehouse. But, in fact, A Spy Among Friends is a solidly researched true story...Ben Macintyre...takes a fresh look at the grandest espionage drama of our era. And like one of his raffish characters relaxing around the bar at White's, that venerable clubhouse of England's old boys' network, he is able to play the role of an amusing raconteur who can cloak psychological and sociological insights with dry humor.”
Only the dead

From Publishers Weekly: “Like the central movement of a dark Grieg symphony, this brief second installment of Norwegian author Sundstøl’s Minnesota Trilogy resounds with two stunning variations on a single theme: the complex motivations behind murders that link brotherhood, love, and death...as Lance’s relationship with his brother frays, he is consumed by a maelstrom of suspicion and fear that parallels Sundstøl’s eerie interpolated recollections of Lance’s distant relative, the pietistic Lutheran immigrant boy Thormod Olson, on a harrowing winter trek in search of the American dream more than a century earlier. As an ice storm builds around him, Lance’s emotional stability is shattered by the waking nightmares of a ghostly Ojibwe medicine man who mysteriously vanished from the same forest years earlier.”

Our Declaration: a reading of the Declaration of Independence in defense of equality

From Kirkus Reviews: “A slow and careful reading of America’s founding document. The Declaration of Independence, itself the product of many hands, addressed everybody: "a candid world" the signers presumed capable of judging the facts and approving the reasons that impelled the colonies to take the fateful step of separating from Britain. Allen (Social Science/Institute for Advanced Study; Why Plato Wrote, 2010, etc.) insists we take the signatories at their word and that we need not be steeped in history to comprehend a text that works simultaneously as an eloquent statement of philosophical principle and as a utilitarian memorandum.”

Helen of Troy: beauty, myth, devastation

From Publishers Weekly: “...In this scholarly work, Blondell (The Play of Character in Plato’s Dialogues) casts the real Helen by the wayside, focusing instead on the ways in which the mythical beauty has been depicted in Greek literature, including the Iliad and the Odyssey, Sappho’s poetry, the tragedy Agamemnon, and Herodotus’s Histories. The University of Washington classicist’s primary concern, expounded upon in thematic
chapters, is how these stories depicted, promoted, and transformed ideals of beauty and female agency.”

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"Do your little bit of good where you are. It's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world." - Desmond Tutu