

Who cares if one of his characters goes around knocking out animals by pinching the backs of their necks? His strange worldview is hilarious. In “Knockout,” the narrator drives up to his victim’s home and considers the scene:

There were no lights on, but I knew that didn’t mean a damn thing. Most tiger owners I knew liked to sit at their kitchen tables and clean their guns and knives by the light of the moon, and I could only assume this tiger owner was exactly the same, sitting in the dark and waiting for that time when he could use those super-clean guns and knives on anyone who tried to steal his pet.

The narrator completely misses the point about why people clean their weapons. And how many tiger owners does he know exactly?

Another way Jodzio mitigates the bad behavior of his characters is by creating a tone of nonchalant, ironic fatalism that permeates all of his stories. This quality of voice also adds to the humor. The brutality in these tales, however, can be pretty intense and animals often take the worst of it. There is scarcely a story in which an animal isn’t killed, often in horrible and inventive ways. Fortunately, these scenes are usually brief. They are gut-shot, arrow-shot, dismembered, killed with a golf club and poisoned. In one story, a woman takes revenge on her cheating husband, a committed vegetarian, by eating nothing but meat after they split up. She’d also been a vegetarian and throws up every time she eats.

Humans take their share of abuse as well. In “Winnipeg,” which is set during an imagined war between the US and Canada over fresh water, one character is missing his tongue and the other has only half a face. The soldier without a tongue had invented a chemical weapon, which was dropped on US soldiers until “their skin peeled away like husks and their bodies began to flop on the ground like pieces of bacon in hot grease.”

That the chemical weapons inventor has his tongue cut out brings up an interesting question: Is Jodzio trying to teach us something about justice? Many of Jodzio’s stories create a twisted moral universe. The guilty seem to get what’s coming to them, but it’s often wildly disproportionate—too much or too little. And the wrong characters often endure the worst punishments. This is a distressing kind of moral universe, one that leaves the reader with a sense of injustice. But like the Book of Job, it makes for a good story. It’s also probably a lot closer to the truth. If Jodzio teaches us anything with his writing, he teaches us that the moral universe either doesn’t exist or it’s completely unjust.

Nabokov once wrote that “There are three points of view from which a writer can be considered: he may be considered as a storyteller, as a teacher, and as an enchanter.” He also wrote that these qualities “are prone to blend in one impression of unified and unique radiance, since the magic of the art may be present in the very bones of the story, in the very marrow of thought.” Jodzio is a storyteller, a good one, and he does teach us something about the moral universe. And while I don’t think Jodzio has quite achieved the level of enchantment Nabokov describes, there are shimmers. His well-chosen details, idiosyncratic characters, and inventive plots create something very exciting.

—Steffan Hruby

***Literary Publishing in The Twenty-First Century.* Travis Kurowski, Wayne Miller, and Kevin Prufer, Editors. Milkweed Editions, 2016.**

No one reads; people read more than ever. Amazon is killing the book; Amazon is saving the book. Publishing is a dying industry; publishing is undergoing a transformation. Literature is fragmented and irrelevant; literature is diversifying and vibrant.

Whether pessimist, optimist, or somewhere in-between, those invested in books and letters seem to agree: ours is a time of disruptive change. Set aside for a moment disagreements about the relative pace, intensity, scale, and historical significance vis-à-vis Gutenberg of said change—the important thing is, the times, they are a-changing.

Given the difficulty of mapping a storm from within, Milkweed's new volume about contemporary literary publishing has a sensible scope. "The idea behind *Literary Publishing in the Twenty-First Century* isn't to be exhaustive," the editors write in the introduction. "Things are changing too quickly for that..." Instead, the editors offer "a snapshot" of what they hope to be an ongoing and growing contemporary literary publishing "conversation."

For this snapshot, the book collects twenty-three publishers, editors, agents, authors, critics, writers, and literary thinkers to present a set of diverse, informative, and occasionally moving perspectives on what, exactly, it means to be in the business of publishing literature now.

Literary Publishing is a valuable resource, particularly for those of us who are less established in the literary scene. Many of the book's entries act as field dispatches: brief, Cliffs-Notes-like guides to specific literary segments or perspectives. These dispatches form the core of the book and cover specific types of publishing—literary magazines, translation, self-publishing, comics, university presses, small presses, NYC publishing—as well as issues surrounding publishing—the VIDA count, diversity, the rise of Amazon, the role of agents and editors, the purpose of book criticism. Opening and closing the volume are framing pieces that provide historical context and offer theoretical frameworks.

As a newly minted MFA, I was grateful to hear publishers and editors write frankly about the economic factors that drive their decision-making. Doubleday VP and editor Gerald Howard's list of considerations will be my guide to writing a pitch

letter, should I ever muster the fortitude to write a book, and the book's many publishing case studies will help me determine what type of press might see my project as a worthy investment.

Whatever your level of literary clout, there is one must-read piece in the volume. In "Hold the Damn Door Open: Idealism is No Currency," writer and editor Megan M. Garr does what many bookish people won't—she digs into the numbers. Garr gathers and analyzes data, presenting charts and graphs of things like literary magazines' overall financial health and audience vs. staff size, and in doing so, she builds an evidence-based case for what many of us *feel* to be true: something is wrong with our business.

The literary magazine economy, Garr writes, is caught between "the strong contradictory forces of pay-to-play and donation." She continues:

To put it simply: the cash that flows in flows right back out to pay the printer and the post office, largely, if not entirely bypassing the makers of the art (be that the art of writing or the art of publishing). Meanwhile, the reliance on gifts to make the art *the art*, the trade of time for masthead, work for reputation, circumvents the fact that *to publish* requires money.

Garr does more than simply gather depressing data; she provides ideas for how we might change our market. Most compellingly, she outlines the parameters of a proposed annual benchmarking report. While other of Garr's suggestions are more amorphous (what exactly are the "healthier submission practices" that we should encourage?), she has nonetheless skillfully laid the groundwork for a much-needed shift away from a model that presents a false equivalency between "artistic community" and "unpaid labor."

Two other essays are worth specific mention. "The Self-Hating Book Critic" by Jessica Crispin,

editor-in-chief of *Bookslut*, elevates information conveyance to art, presenting a moving and stylish meditation on the higher purpose of book criticism. And Richard Nash's "What is the Business of Literature" (previously published in the *Virginia Quarterly Review*) provides such a comprehensive context for the literary publishing field that I wondered why it did not open the volume.

Other pieces in the book are well-intentioned, but fall short. Especially following Garr's rigorous analysis, Daniel José Older's piece on diversity presents too many ideas without practical steps for action, and the interview with the three editors of the now-defunct international journal *Mandorla* meanders for more than twenty pages yet fails to consider obvious questions: why did *Mandorla* fail, and what does that mean about international/multi-lingual/translation publishing?

And at times, I struggled to understand the book's overall organization. Daniel Slager's personal narrative of leaving the NYC publishing scene for Milkweed Editions provides an elegant transition from the two NYC-based entries to two small publisher profiles (Lookout Books and The Southern Review). But why not place Donna Shear's piece on university presses here, with all the other publishers? Ordering and organization are subtle forms of argument, and I found myself wishing for a bit more guidance from the editors on this larger point.

In the end, the book's strongest argument might simply be this: literature is a business. When we write, edit, or publish books, we make art, yes, but we also make a commodity. Even Matthew Stadler's piece, which argues for a re-envisioning of book selling in terms of "publics" rather than "markets," doesn't propose a complete elimination of commerce. And as Nash writes, ". . . books were not dragged kicking and screaming into each new area of capitalism." Whatever future form literature takes—digital or paper, print-on-demand, or mass-produced—it seems likely people will still buy and sell it.

I recently talked to a small-scale meat processor

who said the biggest challenge facing the farmers and meat producers is not technical skill or knowledge but managing their business. The same seems to hold true for those who produce literature. So many writers I know openly proclaim their lack of facility with math. Yet if we want to ensure the success of our industry, some of us will have to follow Garr's lead and crunch the numbers. As Garr writes, "For far too many of us, the lack of hard currency means that *some of us cannot make the art. . . To give is an economic luxury.*" For the sake of our art, we should applaud this book for reminding us: selling a book does not mean selling your soul.

—Maggie Anderson

Estella B. Leopold. *Stories from the Leopold Shack: Sand County Revisited*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

Aldo Leopold—often regarded as one of the premier nature writers and conservationists of the 20th century—left his mark not only through his writing, but by influencing an entirely new generation of conservation-minded writers as well. The most recent being his own daughter, Estella Leopold, whose book *Stories from the Leopold Shack: Sand County Revisited*, offers a behind-the-pines look at her family's time spent at their south-central Wisconsin "Shack" in the 1930s and 1940s. Estella B. Leopold recalls how her father, mother, and four older siblings traveled to their Shack every weekend to partake in outdoor adventures, but also to practice Leopold's concept of the *land ethic*, a pioneering theoretical framework related to humankind's ethical treatment of the landscape. Part memoir, part natural history, Estella Leopold offers readers insight into the life of the man, the family, and the land that significantly influenced America's conservation movement.

In 1934, Aldo Leopold and his wife, also named Estella, purchased an abandoned farm near Bara-