



# HONEYBEE CAPITAL

## FOUNDATION

### WINTER BOOK LIST 2023

*In these darkest days of the year in New England, there is nothing like the comfort of curling up with a great book. I'm happy to share a few favorites here, a mix of new issues and old friends. Here's to the solstice, the return of the light!*

#### **BOOKS THAT HELP US TO CONNECT**

##### **THIRTY-TWO WORDS FOR FIELD: Lost Words of the Irish Landscape, by Manchán Magan**

I've become more and more attentive to the beauties of language, in this time when I am also benefiting from the efficient global monocropping of English. Even within English variants, the Pennsylvania Dutch of my childhood is fading, as is the fantastic variety of New England phrases and accents. Yet just as pockets of local biodiversity hold priceless wonders, so do pockets of localized language. It's no surprise, then, that I have become a terrific fan of Manchán Magan, whose work is devoted to honoring both the words of Ireland and the way of life that goes with them. Why in the world would we settle for a single generic descriptor like "field" when we can more accurately describe a field where cattle dwell at night, or a field with a fairy dwelling? Manchán shows us the links between naming and knowing.

**THE ECHOING GREEN, poetry collection.** As we tilt into the dark New England winter each year, I look for a poetry collection to keep at hand through the season. This one offers a way to keep the fleeting green of springtime always in sight. It's not all sunshine and sparrows, and this may be the most important part - the choice of Anna Akhmatova as the first entry convinced me that this was the volume I was seeking.

*And of everything early there remained  
Only your daily bread,  
A fellow man's kind word,  
And the pure voice of the field.*

##### **SAND TALK, Tyson Yunkaporta**

This is the kind of book that makes you want to race ahead to soak up the breadth of its wisdom, and also simultaneously to slow down so that you can appreciate the depth. Tyson is an academic and member of the Apalech clan in northern Queensland, and is more interested in bringing Indigenous perspective to the current state of the world than in putting it on a separate pedestal. I find that a short paragraph cannot effectively convey that this is one of the most important and impactful books I've read in years.

**REFLECTIONS OF PARADISE: The Gardens of Fernando Caruncho, by Gordon Taylor  
HILMA AF KLINT: Painting for the Future, by Tracey Bashkoff (ed) and Hilma af Klint  
SIMONE LEIGH, by Eva Respini (ed) and Simone Leigh Artist)**

Though these three artists are distant cousins, they have been keeping company on my coffee table for many months, much to my benefit. To me, each offers a different pathway to connection – through landscape, through spirit, through ethnography – all illuminating different layers and depths and portals through which we can marvel and learn. What gifts these artists offer, and these volumes add perspective and context, while also fully honoring those precious and un-analyzable gifts.

**THE MOTH PRESENTS: A GAME OF STORYTELLING**

Not a book, but cards with a series of story prompts – for anyone familiar with the Moth Story Hour on the radio, these themes will seem familiar. If the theme is Courage, the prompts might ask, *Tell about a time when you had to summon your own courage, Or Tell about a story that was changed by a courageous act.* I've had this box open for several gatherings of family and friends and it's amazing what the prompts, well, prompt. You can play as a competitive storytelling game, or just leave the cards around as a gentle ice-breaker for broader conversation.

**BOOKS THAT HELP US TO CONSIDER**

*I love how the first three entries here go together like courses in a wonderful meal, or a beautiful set of nesting dolls – Charlie's book reflects wisdom from an investment context, Shane's focuses on decision-making, and Brian's extends to all of life. The way I can tell these ideas are wise and not just clever is that I could swap the descriptors in that prior sentence, and they all still would be accurate!*

**POOR CHARLIE'S ALMANACK, Charlie Munger**

The world lost a titan of investing and a gem of a human in the recent passing of Charlie Munger. Fortunately Charlie's wisdom has been well documented and we can continue to turn to this timeless insight for counsel. This brand new and lovely edition of Munger's book, *Poor Charlie's Almanack*, is a fine production, and earlier versions can sometimes be found at your local reseller as well. This volume documents Charlie's insight in depth, but perhaps most touching of all is this tribute to Charlie from his longtime business partner Warren Buffett in the introduction, "Advice on the Choice of a Partner." *Look first for someone both smarter and wiser than you are. After locating him or her, ask him not to flaunt his superiority so that you may enjoy acclaim for the many accomplishments that sprang from his thoughts and advice. Seek a partner who will never second-guess you and not sulk when you make expensive mistakes. Look also for a generous soul who will put up his own money and work for peanuts. Finally, join with someone who will constantly add to the fun as you travel a long road together.* Luckily for us, Charlie did travel a long road, and we can all benefit from his experience.

**CLEAR THINKING, Shane Parrish**

Some of you might be familiar with Shane Parrish's Farnam Street blog (and podcast and more), where he explores the great mental models of the world and how to apply them to our own settings). This book is a distillation of that insight, and the organization alone is worthwhile – recognizing the enemies of clear thinking, building strength, managing weakness, acting, and most of all, recognizing what matters. Farnam Street's *Mental Models* series is a great complement to Shane's book.

### **ARETÉ, Brian Johnson.**

Brian has spent years diving deep into exploring the world's greatest philosophers (especially the Stoics), and his life's work revolves around bringing those insights to our current times. In a world full of pithy "life hacking" concepts, this foundation of more ancient wisdom shines forth. Areté contains a series of tiny essays that translate these concepts into practice - I like to choose one or two each day to help focus my attention and root it in purpose.

### **THE PRICE OF TIME: THE REAL STORY OF INTEREST, by Edward Chancellor**

This is the most useful and interesting finance-related book I've read this year, full of timely and relevant insights for our current economic times. For most of us investing these days, it is still a brand-new thing to have interest rates above zero, and though we might be exhausted by endless speculation on the next Fed move, we have probably not fully recognized how our current environment sits within the backdrop of history. I knew nothing, for example, about John Law and how his fractional reserve system and its consequences rival any modern-day form of scandalous speculation. This book has received wildly enthusiastic response from some of the greatest investors around (Druckenmiller, Bessent, Sokoloff), and very muted response elsewhere, which makes me think it should probably be required reading.

## **BOOKS THAT HELP US TO REFLECT**

### **ENCHANTMENT, Katherine May**

#### **WINTERING**

Katherine May's *Enchantment* is the perfect companion to her prior *Wintering*. She captivated me from the first pages, where she describes being unable to read more than a page at a time during the pandemic – a condition I shared, helping me to recognize something was deeply amiss in my inner world, as well as the world beyond. She guides us through the natural elements of her own life – earth, water, fire, and air - as a way to rekindle wonder and enchantment, inviting parallel reflections and actions for all.

In *Wintering*, May reminds us that we are not required to rush through or reject the winters, the fallow times in our own lives. Seasonal cycles of all sorts offer different ways to recover, restore, and grow, and are not just interruptions in a linear life path.

These volumes together form a great duo, and I have needed each – both – in these last few years. "To everything there is a season."

### **MONEYZEN, Manisha Thakor**

You might be wondering why this volume is under the "Reflection" heading, and that is because it is not a stereotypical finance book. Rather than bowing to the "more more more" cries that personal finance usually embraces, Manisha asks a more essential question, "What is enough?" We are not so great at this question, in money or in life, and yet it lies at the heart of contentment and fulfillment and yes, success. This book can help us to gather the courage to consider this braver, more essential inquiry.

### **THE HALF KNOWN LIFE: In Search of Paradise, by Pico Iyer**

What could be better than accompanying an observant and soulful friend around the world, exploring ideas of paradise and peace in a time of polarization and pain? Pico Iyer offers us this invitation in this book that is part reflective travelogue, part guided meditation. What might we learn from the paradises of other people, other times, and other places? What might we observe right here and now, if only we were able?

## **BOOKS THAT HELP US TO IMAGINE**

### **THE EYES AND THE IMPOSSIBLE, by Dave Eggers**

**(Also available in a deluxe wood-bound edition)**

I think there should be a specific genre for books that might be for kids but also might be the most profound things you've ever read. *Fox 8* by George Saunders, *The Unfinished Angel* by Sharon Creech, *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse* by Charlie Mackesy, and *The Tale of Little Tree* by Honeybee's own Shalon Ironroad all would be stars in this category. In Eggers' *The Eyes and the Impossible*, we are swept wholeheartedly into the world of a dog who lives inside a city park, surrounded by a range of other park-bound animal friends who are gradually discovering the depths of their friendships, while at the same time learning that there might be a world beyond. This would be a perfect book to read aloud for a group of all ages.

### **SO LATE IN THE DAY, by Claire Keegan**

**SMALL THINGS LIKE THESE**

**FOSTER**

Claire Keegan's writing is full of quiet brilliance – you'll be reading a descriptive passage that seems matter-of-fact and then there's a phrase like, "...so much of life carrying smoothly on, despite the tangle of human upsets and the knowledge of how everything must end." (Deep breath, whooo.) Keegan's stories are multi-layered and sharply refined. They leave you wanting to go back to the start to catch the details you know you skimmed over the first time. What was the book that woman was reading on the bus? What was that mean way he critiqued her again, was it that she "wanted to do a good half of things her own way"? I started with *Foster* and before I knew it had raced through every story I could find. Luckily for U.S.- based readers, several of Keegan's works are now available in beautifully produced editions, each a gem both inside and out.

### **TOM LAKE, Ann Patchett**

**THE MAKING OF ANOTHER MAJOR MOTION PICTURE MASTERPIECE, Tom Hanks**

I'm listing these two together partly because I read them in close succession, and partly because they both involve settings of theatre and film production, so somehow in my mind they have become intertwined. Also, I happened to listen to the audio versions of these, a rare choice for me and one that I highly recommend for each of these – *Tom Lake* is read by Meryl Streep, and *The Making of...* has a full-blown audio cast, like an old-fashioned radio play. Each story is human and charming and a little bit complicated - perfect holiday reads, and also much more.

### **TOMORROW AND TOMORROW AND TOMORROW, by Gabrielle Zevin**

Oh, how pitch perfect this novel is! Set during the first video game era in Cambridge, Massachusetts (and beyond), the story follows a friendship that spans decades, full of creation and conflict and confusion and the kind of deep devotion that can only develop over a lifetime. I am not a gamer but if I were, I might love this story even more.

### **THE ROAD, Cormac McCarthy**

When the great Cormac McCarthy passed away earlier this year, I was drawn back to some of his works, and to my great surprise *The Road* had transformed for me, from something harrowing to a deep and earnest love story. It's both, of course, and I wonder what more it will be to me in the next reading. How glad I am to be able to stay in conversation with dear writers and teachers, across the bounds of time and space and life itself.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **A NOTE ON BOOKSELLERS**

Alert readers may have noticed that many of our links connect you with a Very Large Online Retailer, and indeed, we appreciate that this retailer provides terrific customer service and helpful product detail. We are also loyal patrons of local booksellers, of course. In fact, one of my favorite ways to get to know a place is to seek out its bookstore. The IndieBound organization can help you find these local booksellers wherever you may be (including my personal favorite, Brookline Booksmith) – and if you are an e-loving person, they have handy online functions too.

<http://Brooklinebooksmith.com>

<http://www.indiebound.org>

In addition to these great local sources, over time I have loved building a small collection of artisanal publications from Arion Press, of beautifully bound and curated sets from Juniper Books, and of nearly-forgotten volumes from Persephone Books.

<https://www.arionpress.com>

<https://www.juniperbooks.com>

<https://persephonebooks.co.uk>

### **STAYING IN TOUCH**

If you'd like to stay in touch, we publish our short Sunday Best reflections every week. Just go to HoneybeeCapital.org and look for “subscribe” - it's a grey arrow on the right side of the screen for larger devices, and an orange banner at the bottom of the screen for smaller devices. And of course, please always feel free to share our content with friends, family, and colleagues.

<https://honeybeecapital.org/blog/>

***And now we welcome the new year,  
full of things that have never been.***

**- Rainer Maria Rilke**