

Self-Published Books Showcase

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from



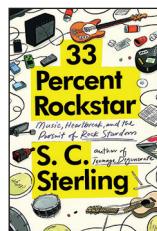
Adult

★ **33 Percent Rockstar: Music, Heartbreak and the Pursuit of Rock Stardom.**

By S. C. Sterling.

2019. 214p. No Bueno, paper, \$9.99 (9780997017588). 780.

In this memoir, Sterling tells the familiar story of a young musician who dreams of becoming a rock star and making buckets of money. At



first, Sterling can't even play an instrument. He gives up on guitar and picks up bass at the insistence of his drummer friend Jake, who teaches him how to keep time. Sterling steadily improves, and eventually he and Jake join a Denver band that plays dive bars, graduating to small theaters. A band Sterling later joins even plays the national Warped Tour—though they perform at the entrance as audiences file onto festival grounds. Sterling's descriptions of gritty bars and clubs, tired vans, and an alcohol-fueled existence aptly portray the grueling grind of a band's reality. He also writes unflinchingly about failed romantic relationships. His book is an entertaining, honest look at the tribulations most musicians endure—and still fail to attain their dreams, yet it also illustrates why the dream remains alive. As Sterling notes with hard-earned wisdom: “Giving up on a dream is hard, but realizing when it is time to give up is harder.”

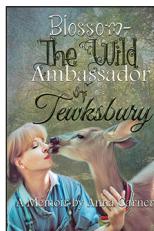
★ **Blossom: The Wild Ambassador of Tewksbury.**

By Anna Carner.

2019. 275p. Deer Blossom, paper, \$17.95 (9781732653634). 636.9.

In this riveting true story, Carner, a farmer in Tewksbury, New Jersey, describes her life with a rescue deer she named Blossom. Finding a newborn fawn “straining to breathe” and

close to death, Carner took the animal home and nursed it back to health. Blossom became a beloved pet and eventually began to move easily between Carner's farm and the surrounding forest. As Blossom became a celebrity, Carner found herself at odds with the local hunting community, and soon, she was fighting to save Blossom's life. Carner adorned Blossom with a rainbow collar and hung posters imploring “Please Don't Shoot Blossom, We Love Her.” She was met with threatening telephone calls and taunts from hunters who joked about “Blossom burgers.” Carner intertwines Blossom's story with her recollections of long childhood hospitalizations resulting from a severe injury. She became a caretaker of sorts to other hospitalized children, and an interesting parallel backstory emerges. The narrative is simply and eloquently written, and Carner's fear is palpable when Blossom's life is threatened. Blossom's extraordinary story is sure to appeal to anyone who savors the beauty of our natural world.



Internship Mastery: The Technology Student's Guide to Crushing Your Internship and Launching Your Career.

By Ryan D. Glick.

2019. 124p. Glick Press, paper, \$12.99 (9780578611280). 650.1.

During a decade working with small businesses and Fortune 500 companies, software engineer, IT leader, and entrepreneur Glick was surprised by the number of intern candidates who didn't prepare for their interviews. Thus, his how-to book is designed to help college students make the most of a pre-employment “gold mine of experience and connections.” Glick's simple, straightforward book covers the stages of an internship—before, during, and after—in three main chapters. He ends each with a succinct “Take Action” list that

challenges students to proactively pursue next steps. His advice is clear and relatable, such as: “take on (and ask for) assignments, tasks and projects that are just beyond your skill level,” and “you must learn to follow before you can lead.” A bonus chapter on avoiding debt precedes recommendations for books and podcasts and wise nuggets geared toward personal and career growth. Although targeted to technology students, this slim book is applicable for all types of mentees. It serves not only as a great resource for those seeking internships, but also as a useful crash course in networking, professionalism, and soft skills.

It Happened in Tuscany. By Gail Mencini.

2020. 410p. Capriole Group, paper, \$16.95 (9781938592157).

Mencini's engaging novel opens in 1945, as Will Mills is injured during the U.S. Army 10th Mountain Division's mission scaling Riva Ridge in Tuscany, hoping to penetrate Nazi territory. Rescued by an Italian partisan, Will is cared for by the man's sister, Francesca, “the prettiest sight he'd ever seen.” The novel then jumps to present day in Denver, just after Will's wife dies. He resolves to return to Italy and fulfill his long-ago promise to return to Francesca. Old, feisty, and with unresolved issues, Will recruits Sophie, a young neighbor in his apartment building, to travel with him. While these early scenes could use a slower pace and more backstory, once Will and Sophie land in Italy, Mencini's crisp, concise writing works nicely as colorful characters aid the protagonists. The author writes tension and drama beautifully, delivering unexpected revelations about her characters. The story's complex, deeply satisfying ending answers many questions, including: What took Will so long to honor his promise? A mix of history, mystery, and romance, *It Happened in Tuscany* will please readers of all these genres, plus those who simply like a well-crafted quest.

★ **The Next Election.**
By Landon Wallace.

2019. 332p. Trinity River, paper, \$10.95
(9780986173134).

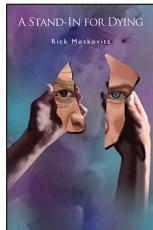
This sequel, a riveting political page-turner, centers on Blake Buchanan's return journey to the Texas state legislature after his failed gubernatorial campaign in *The Election* (2017). Buchanan bowed out of the governor's race after operatives for his political opponent, Grace Striker, planned to publicly humiliate his wife for her lesbian affair. Now he's getting divorced and is still hung up on his high school sweetheart, a married New York restaurateur. Meanwhile, his lover's red-hot restaurant faces real estate woes possibly caused by her controlling hubby; there's upheaval at Buchanan's law firm; and his former campaign manager has plans to get him back in the state senate. Adding to this, Striker's former aide—and younger lover—is working for a political rival of both Striker and Buchanan, and Striker is machinating for another chance at the governor's seat. While this plot may sound overstuffed and convoluted, it's expertly presented, captivating readers with political intrigue, believable characters, and witty dialogue. Political junkies of all persuasions are sure to enjoy the shenanigans in Wallace's wild ride through contemporary Texas politics.

★ **A Stand-in for Dying.**
By Rick Moskovitz.

2019. 333p. Fluke Tale Productions, paper, \$12.95
(9781734178906).

Moskovitz's gripping sf novel explores the essence of being human in a society so technologically advanced that someone can live forever. Young and healthy, but poor and uneducated, Marcus excels at bodybuilding and extreme sports. Conversely, Ray is old and sickly. Having earned billions as an entrepreneur, Ray uses his wealth to purchase immortality in an agreement that will transport his mind, at the moment of his death, into an unknown man's body. The company that provides this service offers Marcus the flipside: He can stop aging and become rich and successful, but must sacrifice his consciousness at some point.

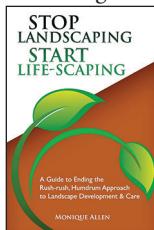
A risk-taker, Marcus agrees but soon finds his life is much bigger and more complicated than he ever imagined. Moskovitz builds a fascinating alternative near-future in which the way people read, see, travel, die, and even bathe, has changed drastically. It's a delight watching the story develop as characters come to awareness about their situations. The complex story line holds together throughout as it leads readers down a philosophical rabbit hole and helps them find their way out again—changed in the process.



★ **Stop Landscaping, Start Life-Scaping: A Guide to Ending the Rush-rush, Humdrum Approach to Landscape Development and Care.**
By Monique Allen.

2020. 250p. Marabenn, paper, \$24.95 (9780578619415). 635.

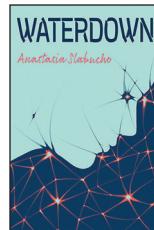
An experienced professional landscaper, Allen aims to help home gardeners build gardens they cannot resist. She addresses the process from the beginning and into the future. Planning is the keystone to a healthy, enjoyable garden, Allen notes. She divides gardeners into three categories: Actors (or DIYers), who want to save money or simply love getting dirty; Directors, who want to be involved in the process while hiring out some of the hands-on work; and Audience, those who prefer professionals do the job. She also explains the different skill levels among landscape professionals—from those who mow and maintain to those who can help you realize your vision. Allen's advice is the kind you might hear from a more experienced neighbor or friend. It ranges from using vision boards to dream your garden (she admits this might seem “woo-woo and weird”) to working on the most difficult-to-reach areas of the yard first to avoid tearing out fences or driving over new lawns or hardscapes later. A delight to read, this book is suitable for anyone who wants solid advice on tackling a garden project.



★ **Waterdown.**
By Anastasia Slabucho.

2019. 274p. AS Publishing, paper, \$6.90 (9781693022074).

In this cautionary tale about genetic engineering, Fusion, an AI that runs planet Earth, has decided to become a god and has learned to lie, even to its creator, Georgia “Geo” Spears. Geo's creation has saved mankind from itself. Poverty, pollution, crime, and war have been eliminated, but at a price: normal people, called Temporals, have had their minds white-washed with neural implants. They are now obedient automatons, living what appears to be superficial, “happy” lives doing Fusion's bidding. Geo's reward was a longevity treatment infinitely prolonging human life, but her treatment has failed. Faced with mortality, she now sees the true cost of her creation and the one remaining path to absolution: to undo what she has done. Slabucho's writing technique resembles a video game, in which what's happening, rules for the characters, and how they can move forward are revealed at different points. The story's pace and flow are flawless, and the characters are utterly believable, with imperfections and virtues. In all, *Waterdown* holds a near-irresistible appeal to gamers and those interested in stories about AI's danger and humanity's efforts to challenge it.



Youth

★ **Miya's Dream.**
By Cathy Ringler.

2019. 221p. Crystal, paper, \$12.95 (9781942624585). Gr. 5–8.

In Ringler's wonderful middle-grade novel, 14-year-old equestrian Miya dreams of buying the perfect horse so she might win a barrel race and her peers' respect. But instead, her father buys her the affordable Dream, a stubborn, bucking, overweight horse. Despite Miya's frustration, her childhood friend and longtime crush, bull rider Jake Runningdeer encourages Miya to train Dream. Meanwhile, Miya struggles with her friend Lily, who has joined in the heartless teasing of new student Abigail. Miya befriends Abigail and guiltily avoids Lily. Soon, the two friends split, with Lily aligning herself with two mean girls who relentlessly tease Miya about her weight and other issues. As the story evolves, Miya pursues her dream of racing, helps Lily out of an embarrassing situation, and enjoys a growing relationship with Jake. Ringler's characters are wonderfully complex. For example, despite Lily's cruelty to Miya, she's a sympathetic character, struggling with her parents' divorce and stung by Miya's disregard. The narrative is beautifully crafted, with lyrical, evocative passages, and Ringler paints a lovely, sometimes-heartbreaking portrait of a sensitive teenage girl.



★ **This Day Is Ours.**
By Gretchen Jeannette.

2019. 581p. Gretchen Jeannette, paper, \$17.76
(9781082776533).

Set in Philadelphia during the American Revolution, this novel begins as an amused Jack Flash, hiding against a wall, watches aristocrat Charles Villard propose to widow Alexandra Pennington. Jack Flash is waiting for the event to end so that he can carry out his robbery mission. Despite his hurry, he's struck by Alexandra's beauty. Days later, Alexandra wrestles with the decision to marry Villard, deciding to wait before committing to him. As rumors of war increase, Alexandra is certain of where her loyalty lies—until she meets a rebel who makes her question everything she believes. The narrative's perilous time frame heightens the uncertainty surrounding the love story. Societal boundaries that separate a noblewoman and a rebel during this era are almost impossible to overcome, which makes the romance even more intriguing. Keenly developed main and supporting characters add to the story's authenticity. Admirably, the plot captures both the Loyalist and Patriot perspectives. As all aspects of the novel—characterization, dialogue, setting, and pace—are skillfully brought together, readers will enjoy an immersive love story that transports them back to fascinating times.

