We would like to think this epithet names something too paradoxical to exist. But there have always been hard men who thrive on violence and do the dirty work of the nation-state or the revolution, just as there have always been people willing to deny or minimize their crimes, to glorify their strength, and to honor them in death. Stalin and Mao are perhaps the most famous on a long list. Zeljko Raznatovic, better known as “Arkan,” is the most recent addition to this club. During the conflicts following the breakup of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, Arkan led a paramilitary outfit consisting of as many as 10,000 Serbian nationalist thugs, crooks, and soccer fans who raged through Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina murdering, robbing, raping, and “ethnically cleansing” Muslims and Croats. He was also, toward the end of his life, Serbia’s most famous, powerful, and admired man. Christopher S. Stewart (GAL ’96), goes in pursuit of Arkan in Hunting the Tiger: The Fast Life and Violent Death of the Balkans’ Most Dangerous Man (Thomas Dunne Books), following him from his delinquent youth in Josip Broz Tito’s communist Yugoslavia to his 2000 assassination in a Belgrade hotel lobby. The book is a vivid mixture of investigative journalism, historical survey, and the journalist’s encounters with some unsmiling men he spent three years tracking down. “Getting people to talk about [Arkan] is a risky endeavor,” Stewart says. “If they talk at all, they want to do it anonymously. And if you ask about him, they become immediately suspicious of you and monitor the rest of your time in Serbia.” Maintaining a judicious take on Arkan’s career and the complicated politics of the region, Stewart traces his evolution from petty thief to hit man for Tito’s secret police and partner in President Slobodan Milosevic’s bid to secure a Greater Serbia. Throughout, Arkan operated with impunity, protected from domestic arrest, and aided in crossing borders—and breaking out of international prisons—by the UDBA, a KGB-like state spy agency. Stewart quotes Arkan’s former UDBA handler: “[He] was pathological and prone to do things most other humans wouldn’t think of. He would hurt you or kill you without thinking twice. That was important to the agency.” As the country broke into ethically defined states, Arkan began his transition from mob boss to warlord, fueled by his private army. In Bosnia and Croatia, Milosevic’s national army would surround a
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Brian Vaughan creates a fantasy world run entirely by women

by Carly Berwick

I men suddenly disappeared from Earth, would the women left in charge put a moratorium on war? Lay down arms and spontaneously form socialist cooperatives with high-quality child care? That’s not exactly how it plays out in the comic book series, Y: The Last Man (Vertigo), by Brian K. Vaughan (TSOA ’98). When a mysterious plague wipes out every living thing with a Y chromosome except the one-year-old, wheezing amateuree magician and escape artist Yorick, the sole survivor is left to roam the globe—along with his pet monkey, Enid, and his girlfriend, Beth. Rejected and driven to the streets, they are only exposed with a beguiling literary lightness of touch. —N.P.

OTHER

The Siege of Mecca: The Forgotten Uprising in Islam’s Holiest Shrine (DOUBLEDAY)

YAROSLAV TROFIMOV

by the shore, Now 14, May’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are

GALAXY CRAZE

TIGER, TIGER

By the Shore

narrator of her much praised 1999 debut, By the Shore, Now 14, May is as troubled as ever by her bohemian mother, Lucy, who is disinterested in her emotionally absent husband. Once more overtaken by an urge to flee conventional and London’s city limits, Lucy takes May and her younger brother, Eden, on holiday to a California ashram. Amid stark sunshine and communal life, Lucy shirks her motherly duties and tends instead to her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, May’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurities are suspended when she is captivated by her bejeweled guru. Meanwhile, Lucy’s own insecurity...
it merges old-fashioned story-telling with a classic “what-if” sci-fi scenario, the death of men. It has earned critical raves from Entertainment Weekly and Publishers Weekly, which wrote that Vaughan and series illustrator Pia Guerra’s “vision of the surprise and horror to come is so beautifully, fully ordinary; it’s entirely constituting—and addictive.” The books have been translated into numerous languages, including Spanish, French, and German, and have sold, Vaughan estimates, in the hundreds of thousands. Vertigo, an imprint of DC Comics, does not release sales figures, but independent comics stores confirm that Vaughan has been a top seller since it debuted in 2002.

A writer and producer for the ABC television show Last Man Initially fooled by the bumbling last man—full of hang-ups about sex before marriage and prone to woosh-cracks from bad 1980s movies—when he was a new graduate of the Tisch School of the Arts’ and Burton Goldberg Department of Dramatic Writing. At that point he was already a published author on numerous languages, including Spanish, French, and German, and has contributed in 2002. "The experience of walking through the hallways and the stares you would get," he says, "you would feel like such an invader in a safe space." Though the final issue appeared earlier this year, Vaughan isn’t sitting around popping champagne or mourning his characters. He’s hard at work in Los Angeles, on another book he has completed several screenplays, including an adaptation of Y. But don’t expect all of his new stories to imagine fantastic worlds. Vaughan’s still a fan of such local heroes as Spider-Man and Batman. “I like mainstream, I’m not a fundamentalist." I

Yorick's experiences are, they mirror, in some ways, Vaughan's youth at a Catholic boys school in Cleveland, which had a sister school he sometimes visited. “The experience of walking through the hallways and the stares you would get," he says, "you would feel like such an invader in a safe space." Though the final issue appeared earlier this year, Vaughan isn’t sitting around popping champagne or mourning his characters. He’s hard at work in Los Angeles, on another book he has completed several screenplays, including an adaptation of Y. But don’t expect all of his new stories to imagine fantastic worlds. Vaughan’s still a fan of such local heroes as Spider-Man and Batman. “I like mainstream, I’m not a fundamentalist." I

In her second novel, Galaxy Craze (the actress-turned-author’s real name) revisits May, the adolescent narrator of her much praised 1999 debut, By the Shore. Now 54, May is as troubled as ever by her bohemian mother, Lucy, who is disinclined to remain the emotionally absent husband. Once more over- taken by an urge to flee convention and London’s city limits, Lucy takes May and her younger brother, Ed, on holiday to a California ashram. Amid stark sunshine and communal living, Lucy shrugs off her motherly duties and tends instead to her bewitched guru. Meanwhile, May’s own insecurities are sus- pended when she is captivated by a sensual young believer. Neither the mother’s disinterest nor the daughter’s angst find salve; they are only exposed with a beguiling literary lightness of touch.

The Siege of Mecca: The Forgotten Uprising in Islam’s Holiest Shrine and the Birth of Al Qaeda (Doubleday) by Yaroslav Trofimov (GSAS ’93) is a sensual young believer. Neither the mother’s disinterest nor the daughter’s angst find salve; they are only exposed with a beguiling literary lightness of touch.

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DONNA GRANT MAKES UP ONE-HALF OF A SUCCESSFUL (AND INSEPARABLE) WRITING DUO
by Anna Weinberg

When Donna Grant decided to write a novel, she knew there was only one way she would do it—with her best friend, Virginia DeBerry. The pair had already made it in modeling, launched and sunk a magazine, and spent enough time together that the DeBerry family considered Grant a relative. As it turned out, their literary voices combine to make crowd-pleasing novels that Publisher’s Weekly says are “guaranteed to tug at readers’ heartstrings.” Since penning their debut book in 1989, Grant and DeBerry have followed up with five more—including 1997’s Tryin’ to Sleep in the Bed You Made, an Essence best-seller and winner of the Monti Award for fiction from the Black Caucus of the American Library Association.

Their latest book, Getta Keep on Tryin’, is a long-awaited sequel to Tryin’ to Sleep and, like the others, the stories are rich with the sexual and emotional trysts, misadventures, and confessions of female friendships. It centers on Gayle and Patricia, a pair of polar opposites who’ve been friends since kindergarten.

Like their heroines, the authors are in many ways opposites—one all light and optimism, the other more dark and brooding. “My husband calls us Pollyanna and Darth Vader,” Grant says. “I would be the Darth.” But both insist that the friendship between their characters is not modeled after them. In the 25 years they’ve been friends, Grant says, “We have never had an argument that caused us to stop speaking.”

Their relationship, however, did not seem destined for close-ness. They met while working as plus-size models, when Grant was taking what she calls a “rather circuitous” route to college. A friendship blossomed even as they competed for the same few jobs. “It was clear that both of us were not going to get the same assignment, which could have caused a lot of friction, except that somehow it didn’t,” Grant says. Modeling led to the chance to work on the editorial side of magazines and in 1986 they launched the plus-size fashion magazine Magazone. When it fold- ed, the two brainstormed other magazine options but kept com-ing back to the idea of writing a novel together. They pitched one agent, who found a publisher with a hole in its schedule, and Grant and DeBerry landed a con-tract, with just one hitch. They had four months to complete the book. “Writing night and day, it was their first test.”

Published under the pen name Marie Joyce, Exhale tells the story of a white, wealthy, glam- ourous photographer working in the heyday of 1980s fashion. At the time, Grant explains, “it seemed like it wouldn’t even be around. There was this black ‘serious’ fiction, but it really wasn’t until Waiting to Exhale was published in 1992 that publishers took note of the large readership that was doing for contemporary stories about African-Americans.” After the success of their first book, the pair rethought their goals and decided to write under their own names and feature black heroines.

When the co-authors finish a novel, they know it’s time to stop speaking.”

“I had studied literature in the past and always felt the arts, because of their associative meth- ods, had access to truths about the human experience—per-haps where truths were layered, and so the use of metaphors and images made possible a deeper exploration into human experience. That’s always what interests me, whether in psychology or literature.”

While political and social cartoons sometimes spark controversy in the nation’s newspapers, editor David Wallis offers evidence that the public uses any tamest material. Featuring car- toons recently nixed by editors in an ever-shrinking and more-care- ful branch of media, Killed Cartoons unveils too-risky-for-print works by Pulitzer Prize winners Gary Trudeau, Doog Marotta, and Herbert Bloch, as well as uncensored material by Norman Rockwell and Anita Huns, among others. The illustrations range from stabs at the usual American pressure points of sex, race, religion, and war. With anecdotes for each killed cartoon—some likely to dis- turb any reader who values a free press—Wallis puts back the curtain to reveal some of journal- ists’ most provocative and hilar- ious lost commentary.

—Jason Hollander
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TRYIN’ IT ALL, TOGETHER

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FMK

When a rebel commander overthrows the government, those who resist are killed or captured—the deposed president’s unwavering portraitist, chef, and barber. These background players serve as narrators, offering a peek into the corruption, secrets, and deception that lie behind power. Without revealing the characters’ proper names or the time and place in which the story is set, Ceridwen Dovey’s deep, dark debut novel, which is being published in 11 countries, reads like a fable. But the sea, betrayal, and murder in what Vogue calls “part thriller, part political allegory” keep the reader mesmerized until the final elegant twist.

—Renée Alfus

WHY START WRITING NOVELS NOW?

I had studied literature in the past and always felt the arts, because of their associative methods, had access to truths about the human experience—particularly where truths were layered, and so the use of metaphors and images made possible a deeper exploration into human experience. That’s always been what interests me, whether in psychology or literature.

HOW DID THE CHARACTER OF KYRA COME TO YOU?

The novel rose very specifically focused certain questions to me about love—what love is, and what a risk love is—and what happens when a man, Andrea, does something without knowing how his actions will register on Kyra, the woman he loves. And it shakes her whole sense of reality. I didn’t want to do research on that question; what I wanted was to enter it more deeply.

HOW WAS WRITING IT DIFFERENT FROM YOUR NONFICTION WORK?

It felt very rooky. You turn on your computer and it’s a blank screen, and there’s no data to look at. A painter friend says every new picture is like jumping off a cliff, so to take that first step over the edge was like “Ugh!” But I loved that process. In a strange way it felt easier to me. If I look at my academic writing, it’s so much about voices—listening, hearing, providing resonance for people’s voices. So, in some sense, the shift to fiction was just that the people whose voices I was listening to didn’t exist.

—Jason Hollander