FALL FORECAST

Sunshine Breaks Through

By Nina King

THERE ARE CLOUDS on the publishing horizon as we move into the fall season, traditionally the busiest of the year. Newspapers and trade journals sound the alarms: Employee layoffs and book cancellations. The burgeoning power of the superstore chains. The decline of the midlist author and that of the independent bookseller. The drop in sales. The competition of CD-Roms and the Web. The greed of corporate owners.

And yet...and yet. No one has spent most of the past week as I have—going through stacks of publishers' catalogues and proof copies of forthcoming books—can fail to be perkéd up. Not only are there thousands of new titles coming out in the next few months, but many of them are very appealing. And a few are the occasion for rejoicing.

Here are some highlights, as well as a few trends and fancies. (Unless otherwise noted, all books are tentatively scheduled for September publication.) At the top of the heap:

• Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-1964, Volume II of Taylor Branch's trilogy about Martin Luther King and his time (Simon & Schuster, October). The late author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1956-1963, takes on the Kennedy mystique.

• The Dark Side of Camelot (Little, Brown, November), by John F. Kennedy's brother Robert Kennedy. The first of two volumes (the second, Maltbie: A Memoir, to be published in November), edited by Robert F. Kennedy and Philip D. Zelikow. The late author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1956-1963

• Contempt: Lyndon Johnson's Fateful Year (Harper, October), by Mary Lee Settle (Warner). The publisher is counting on a first printing of 1 million copies that Kelly's revelations will shake the House of Windsor to its foundations—or, at least, make a headline or two.

• My Kingdom for a Horse (Harper, October), by Grayston L Lynch (Harcourt, October). The Kennedy tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis (Harvard, October), edited by Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow. The Kennedy tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis (Harvard, October), edited by Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow.


• Parting the Waters, Vol. II of Taylor Branch's trilogy about Martin Luther King and his time (Simon & Schuster, October). The late author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1956-1963

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ESSAY

Weathering the Storms

By Mary Lee Settle

I AM. God help me, what is called a "good" writer. A "good" writer can be defined financially as one with a steady, slow growth of readership, mostly by word of mouth, sometimes, conveniently for the publisher, by a jump in sales due to laudatory obituaries.

There was a time, in the early 1960's, when it seemed possible for serious writers to be lifted up into the happy land of bestsellersdom where they could earn, often at the cost of head-turning celebrity, huge profits from their work. Today that possibility is almost certainly cut off by too short a shelf life for books. With a few exceptions, the happy few are getting old.

I suggest that we serious writers are deeply responsible for some of this. The convenient split between the good and the popular is the product of literary snobbery, academic laziness, and publication practice using the tax on the back-list as an excuse.

There are good books, as well as the telephone book, as long, and as correct. There are fine popular books, in which I delight and hope are guides for me. Think of the tight plotting of classic detective stories. Both James Lee Burke and Patricia Cornwell retain that finer Dickensian indignation with the ways of the world that has been neglected by the mail Landscapes of much so-called serious writing.

The Father Brown stories of Chesterton inspired Borges, and the long-forgotten stories of the 20s writer Stacy O'Moynihan were models for Angus Wilson, who gave me one of the greatest pieces of advice I know, "Learn from good technicians." he said. "You can't learn from genius. You can only imitate."

Many of the books that...Continued on page 15
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A Good Scorn From a Strange Mountain. Al- 
ao Gargan's Plays With Others (Knopf, Novem-
ber) tells the story of one 
Manhattan circle of artists and the impact on 
it of the AIDS epidemic. In Two 
Tentacles, by Kurt Vonnegut, a "millenium 
space" forces everyone to relive the '50s (Put-
mam). Larry's Party (Viking) is the new novel from 
Carol Shields, author of The Stone Diaries. Cele-
brations by Harry Crews (Knopf, January) is 
about senior citizens living in a Florida trailer-
park.

From Mexico comes The Crystal Fremont by 
Carlos Fuentes (Farrar Straus Giroux, October). 
This is a "novel in nine stories," all 
connected in some way with the border 
that both separates and links the United 
States and Mexico. From Israel, look for 
David Grossman's The Zizag Kid (Farrar Straus 
Giroux), a picnic tale of a young boy 
and his engaging kidnapper, The House Guest 
by South Africa's Nadine Gordimer (Farrar Straus 
Giroux). This is the story of an upper-mid-
lle class couple who must deal with the fact 
that their son is a murderer.

Noteworthy commercial fiction: Just 
in time for the millennium comes Ina Leev's 
Sea of Rosemary (Dutton), a sequel to Rose-
mary's Baby. The new novel begins with 
Rosemary waking from a 27-year coma to find 
that her研究成果 is about to take over the 
world. Visit, by Anne Rice (Knopf, Oct-
ober). A ghost plays a violin in this 
guilt-and-grief-driven novel, which contains many 
tribalistic details, according to Publish-
er's Weekly. In The Wonder Worker (Knopf, 
November), Susan Howatch follows her 
series of "Starched Cathedral" novels with 
story about a clergyman who heads a min-
nistry of healing in a small London church. 
Wizard and Glass (G. P. Putnam, No-
Vember) is the fourth book in Stephen 
King's "Dark Tower" fantasy series about 
Roland the Gunslinger. Carl Hiaasen's Us-
er's Fox is another satirical tale from the Flori-
da master. This one is about a woman who 
wins a multimillion dollar lottery jackpot, 
only to be pursued by villagers from the 
"White Clarion Auras" (Knopf, November).

In Always Convalescent, Always Overspent 
(Norton, November), Walter Mosley intro-
duces a new protagonist, Secretos, 
and The Missing Kid (Farrar Straus 
Giroux, October), a sequel to his 
big-shot con with a philosophical best.

AS MANY critics have remarked, this 
is an age of the personal memoir. For 
years, it's been a Golden Age; for others it's 
A cultural nightmare in which everybody 
seems intent on sharing his happiest little se-
crets with the indifferent critic. As usual, the 
truth lies somewhere in between: There are 
too many mediocre memoirs but also a good 
million wonderful ones. Here's a sampling of 
this season's many variations on a theme of 
reminiscence.

In Wait Till Next Year: Summer After-
weeks with My Father and Baseball (Simon & 
Schuster), historian Doris Kearns Goodwin 
writes of growing up a Dodgers fan in 
Rockville Centre, Long Island, in the '50s. 
"From something so simple as the small red 
scorcher in which I inscribed the narrative 
of a ball game, I saw the inception of what 
has become my life's work as a historian," in 
My Life and My Country (Bantam, October), 
Ge. Alexander Lebed, a possible successor 
to Tschitsch in Russia, tells his 
rowdy, combative life story. In Clashing 
the Mountains: My Search for Meaning (Simon & 
Schuster), actor Kirk Douglas tells 
about his life as he was and 
interest in word derivations, but he can tell 
you plain and simple what a labyrinth is. 
A labyrinth is a complex path. That's it. 
It's not necessarily something complicat-
ed or even logical, as you might think. 
the openus out on Highway 2 is a kind of 
labyrinth, so Larry will be happy to 
you. So is the lan-and-genre trajectory 
he stumped into the backswing as a 
child in Winnipeg's West End. He sees 
that now. So's a modern golf course. Take 
St. George's Country Club out in the St. 
James area of the city, for instance, the 
way it nudges you along gently from hole to 
hole, each step plotted in a forward di-
rection so that you wouldn't dream of at-
tacking the whole thing backwards or 
tucking in any way the ongoing, surori-
ally predetermined scheme.

A maze, though, is different from a 
labyrinth, at least in the opinion of some. 
A maze is more likely to baffle and mis-
tead those who tread in paths. A maze is 
a puzzle. A man is designed to deceiv-
the travelers who seek a promised goal. 
It's possible that a labyrinth can be 
a maze, but strictly speaking the two words 
call to different.

"If he had not married Dorris Shaw, if 
he had never visited Hampton Court, his 
life would have swerved on an unordered 
course, and the word labyrinth would 
have floated by him like one of those 
sparks in the field of his eye."

From Carol Shields' Larry's Party.

The extent to which the memoir has be 
come fodder for the writer's darlings 
talk shows is suggested by the following titles 
The Last Time I Wore a Dress: I Was So 
Small, No One Cared. My Adventures 
In Bodybuilding; and Tales of a Run-Hating 
Veteran.

Conventional biographies of uncover-
red-skin people include: East to the Dawn: 
The Life of Amelia.
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Barbara, by Susan Butler (Addison-Wesley, October), which marks the 100th anniversary of the author's birth; Albert Camus: A Life, by Oliver Todd (Spieg., December), a biographer in Europe; 2000 AD: A Biography (Kap., October), by Arnold Rampersad, acclaimed biographer of poet Langston Hughes; Man on the Flying Trapeze: The Life and Times of W.C. Fields by Simon Louvish (Norton), Aphetique Life: The Biography of India's Child, the woman who taught America French cooking, by Noel Riley Fitch (Douglas); and Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life, by James H. Jones (Norton, November), the story of our national sex educator.

Two forthcoming books will fan the flames of "the lima man," the revived fascination with the leader of the Cuban revolution who died trying to export it to Bolivia. They are Camoens: The Life and Death of Joao Guimaraes, by Jorge G. Camoens (Knopf, November); and Cuban Heroes, by Alto Easum at, by Pablo Ignacio Tallo II (St. Martin's, October). More political than biographical in intent is The Secret Life of Bill Clinton by British journalist Andrew Evans-Frith (Reganery), which seeks to prove that the Clinton presidency is the most corrupt in history.

Books of special Washington interest include The President: Inside the House Class of 1994 (Knopf, October), another failed DC institution, The Party (as in cocktail or dinner, not political), is the subject of a candid book on party by Sandy Quinn (Simon & Schuster, October). Race relations, a perennial issue for Americans, are explored this year, by eschscholciograhors Patterson in Apartheid: Plagued of the Poor, viewed as a holiday the Leflore County, Mississippi, whites fled amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the crescendo, beautiful in windows, and rooftops. They look like fire-flies amid the cresce