

## Trying to get his son, 13, put in prison

A Palestinian father, awaiting return of one child, hopes the other too might be freed in a hostage exchange.

BY NABIH BULOS

JERUSALEM — As he waited for word on whether his 14-year-old son, Ahmad, would be released in the prisoner-for-hostage exchanges between Israel and Hamas, Nawaf Salaymah entered an East Jerusalem courtroom last week and tried to put another son, Ayham, 13, behind bars.

"I don't want another postponement," Salaymah said. "If Ayham goes in now, he'll come out in the swap between Israel and Hamas, like his brother."

Although both youths were charged with rock throwing in May, only Ahmad was being held in pre-trial detention, making him the youngest Palestinian behind Israeli bars and eligible for the exchanges during the weeklong cease-fire in Gaza that ended Friday. Ayham — too young to be jailed, according to Israeli law — has been under strict house arrest, barred even from going to school.

In this somewhat surreal moment of the Israel-Hamas war, Salaymah's best chance for having both sons at home was to convince the judge to imprison Ayham immediately. Otherwise, the boy faced months, if not years, under house arrest and then detention as his case unfolded in court.

But 20 minutes later the session was over, Ayham's trial was postponed once [See [Palestinians](#), A4]

### GOLDEN STATE

## A long and healthy life in a 'Blue Zone'

STEVE LOPEZ

In Loma Linda the other day, 85-year-old Loida Medina played a couple of hours of take-no-prisoners pickleball (she's got a wicked backhand), while Glenn and Jodee Nichols, 94 and 78, went to the gym for a workout.

These sorts of activities are the norm in this region of San Bernardino County, particularly among the several thousand Seventh-day Adventists who constitute about a third of the population. And researchers say their lifestyles, centered on faith, community and a sense of purpose, lead to lower rates of chronic disease and greater longevity.

The phenomenon isn't new, and the reporting goes back many years. But I've been meaning to go have a [See [Lopez](#), A18]



### A TIMES INVESTIGATION



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

IN LANCASTER, shelter dogs are facing worse odds of survival despite the promise of the nearby Palmdale center, for various reasons.

# They set out to save dogs. Instead, more are being killed

The county's Palmdale shelter was created to ease overcrowding and reduce euthanasia in Lancaster. But that's not how it's turned out.

BY ALENE TCHEKMEZYAN AND ALEXANDRA E. PETRI

When she met a jagged-eared German shepherd puppy named Pickles at the Palmdale Animal Care Center, rescuer Alyssa Benavidez thought the former stray was being overlooked by adopters and wanted to find him a home.

To draw attention to the playful 10-month-old, Benavidez recorded videos of Pickles to post online — in a red bandanna with heart designs, rolling on his back for belly rubs, a red rose rope toy in his mouth.

The shelter, though, did not give her a deadline when she emailed to ask how much time she'd have to work on his exit plan before he would be put down.

A day after her inquiry, on Valentine's Day, Pickles was euthanized.

The Palmdale shelter, the newest of seven run by Los Angeles County, was touted when it opened in 2016 as a state-of-the-art facility that would relieve overcrowding and reduce the number of dogs being euthanized at the nearby Lancaster shelter.

But the two shelters now euthanize more dogs — and at a higher rate — than other county facilities, as well as those operated by Los Angeles, Long Beach and other municipalities, a Times investigation found.

Together, the Palmdale and Lancaster shelters' dog euthanasia rates [See [Euthanasia](#), A10]

## FOR REAL WITH AMY KAUFMAN

Who are the people shaping our culture? In her column, Amy Kaufman examines the lives of icons, underdogs and rising stars to find out — "For Real."

## Sarah Silverman's moment of reckoning

In the days after the Oct. 7 attack in Israel, Sarah Silverman posted on Instagram dozens of times. Like millions around the world, she was devastated by the reports of more than 1,200 civilians killed by Hamas militants, and took to social media to express her distress. She shared videos of the festival-goers who were taken hostage, words from activists about antisemitism, a note acknowledging the war had prompted her to start praying.

Then, on the night of Oct. 18, after Israel had announced that the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip would not receive water and electricity until the hostages were freed, Silverman shared a post from an Israeli food vlogger she did not know that said Israel did not need to provide Gaza with those resources. After which she put down her phone and took her two dogs out for a walk.

By the time she returned, her cell was flooded with text messages from friends asking versions of the same question: "What the f— did you just post?"

The comedian says now that she hadn't read the screed in full before putting it on Instagram, something she insists she never does. She has "no explanation" for why she did it that night. [See [Silverman](#), A8]



ELIZABETH WEINBERG For The Times

## Suspect is arrested in three L.A. homeless killings

BY JAMES QUEALLY AND RUBEN VIVES

Less than 24 hours after news broke that a serial predator might be targeting some of Los Angeles' most vulnerable residents, police on Saturday announced the arrest of a suspect linked to the homicides of three homeless men across the city in the last week.

Jerrid Joseph Powell, 33, is accused of walking up to men in three different Los Angeles neighborhoods over a four-day span, killing each for no apparent reason, Police Chief Michel Moore said Saturday.

Moore described the killings as "senseless" and said footage of at least one homicide shows Powell acting borderline indifferent as he takes a man's life.

"It was chilling and I've been in this work for four-plus decades," Moore said of the Monday killing of Mark Diggs. "The cold-blooded [See [Killings](#), A12]

### 'There is no place to go'

Israel pounds targets in crowded southern half of the Gaza Strip, driving up Palestinian death toll. **WORLD, A3**

### Homeless for the holidays

After a massive fire destroys their homes, displaced residents search for answers. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

### Smokey Bear's dated message

Amid climate change, "Only you can prevent wildfires" needs to be updated, Sammy Roth writes. **BUSINESS, A13**

### Weather

Mostly sunny. L.A. Basin: 70/52. **B10**



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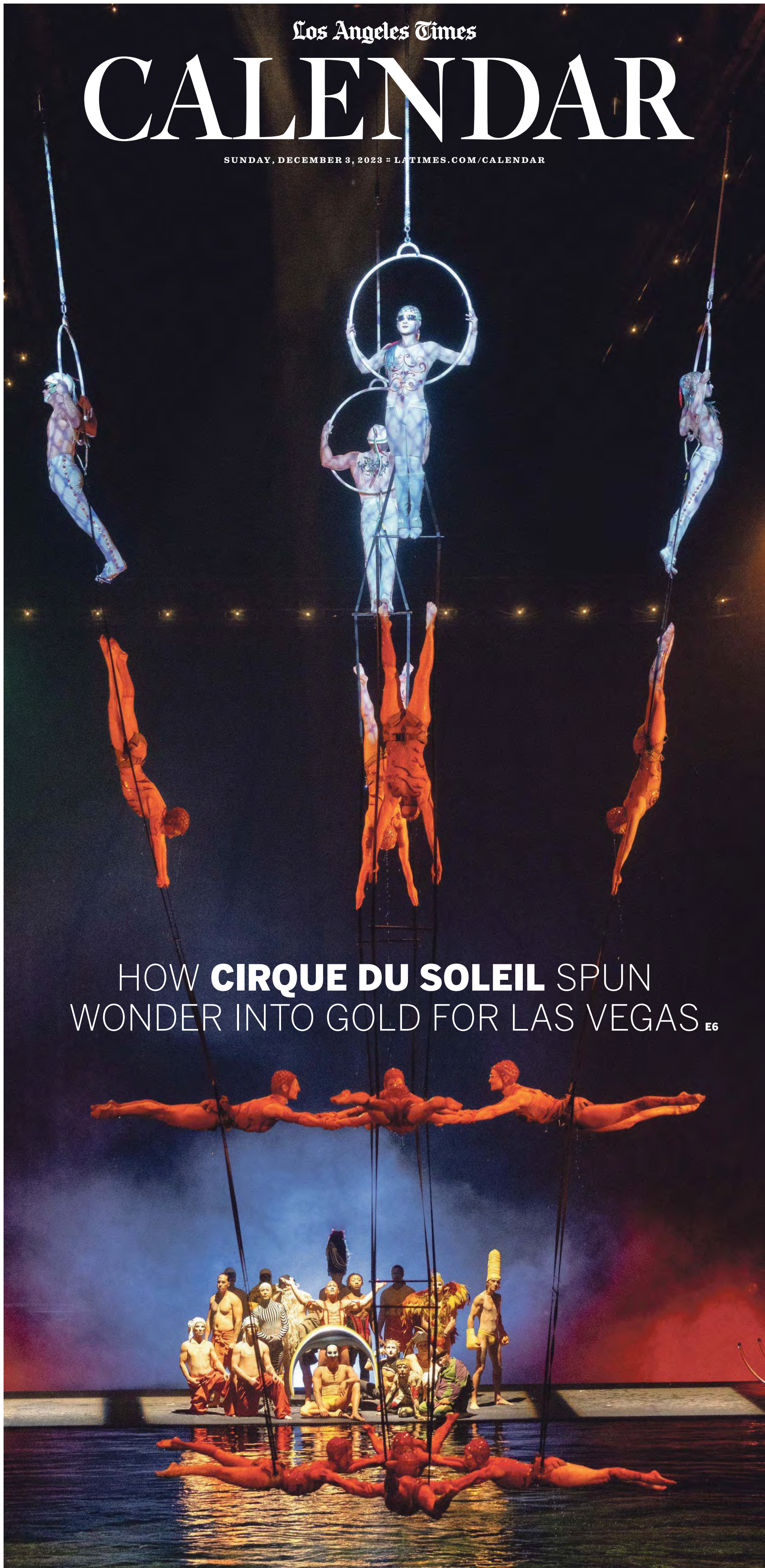




Los Angeles Times

# CALENDAR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2023 # LATIMES.COM/CALENDAR



HOW **CIRQUE DU SOLEIL** SPUN WONDER INTO GOLD FOR LAS VEGAS **E6**

ROGER KISBY For The Times



# John Thomas Qua

# Qua

If you like poetry with universal themes (time, justice, death) that speak to you personally about life, love, and God, you will love *Poetic Beauty: An Abstract Encounter in Black* by John Thomas Qua.

—Tammy Ruggles, *Readers' Favorite*

*Poetic Beauty* is a collection that will enthrall poetry lovers and readers who love books that provide introspective insights into various aspects of life.

—Pikasho Deka, *Readers' Favorite*

*Poetic Beauty* is available for readers to enjoy, so in addition to private bookcases, it should be displayed on the shelves of libraries.

—Courtnee Turner Hoyle, *Readers' Favorite*

I recommend *Poetic Beauty* for those who wish to meditate on sound values and nourish their soul through poetry.

—Diana Lopez, *Readers' Favorite*



# Poetic Beauty

An Abstract Encounter in Black

*Poetic Beauty: An Abstract Encounter in Black* is one of the published books of John Thomas Qua. The lines in the collection of prose poems included in this book are a reflection of his twenty-seven-year experience as an educator and his time in several military divisions. The book contains more than a hundred prose poems that are in different formats and lengths. They are also rich in symbolism and metaphors that readers will also fascinatingly decipher. Many of his poems also read like a journal entry or reflection.

The themes of his poems include spirituality, passion, relationships, and more subjects that resonate with his readers. The book also references the author's faith and beliefs in Christianity. Although addressing an array of emotions, close physical encounters, and everyday issues, he takes a light and humorous tone in the poems and describes his style as expressive poetry. A Clarion Book Review published on September 15, 2023, also describes the book as having a conversational, everyday tone.

John Thomas Qua resides in his birth state, California. He enjoys traveling, music, and writing. He also has several more poetry books in the works.

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GEORGE ROSE Los Angeles Times

# ZOETROPE DREAMS

SAM WASSON PLACES FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA'S FAILED UTOPIA AT THE HEART OF A FILMMAKING REVOLUTION. **BY CHRIS VOGNAR**

**U**TOPIA IS in the eye of the beholder. For Sir Thomas More, who coined the word for his 1516 book of the same name, it meant a fictional island society carved out in a satirical image of perfection. For various back-to-nature communities it has meant an embrace of agrarian life and a decision to leave industrial society behind. And for Francis Ford Coppola, the subject of Sam Wasson's new book, "The Path to Paradise," utopia meant changing the rules of how movies are made: multitaskers, freed from the regimentation of studios, constantly reinventing with an eye toward the future. ¶ And for a while, it actually worked. As Wasson writes, Coppola's career has been "a colossal, lifelong project of experimental self-creation few filmmakers can afford — emotionally, financially — and none but he has undertaken." As he was churning out his remarkable run of '70s movies — "The Godfather" (1972), "The Conversation" (1974) and "The Godfather Part II" (1974) — he also was creating a sort of communal filmmaking fantasia, with ideas and technical innovations (and ideas for technical innovations) flowing forth faster than anyone could register (including, at times, Coppola himself).

He dreamed of what he called an "electronic cinema," by which a film could be edited as quickly as it was shot, with the director calling the shots from a mobile production facility. He welcomed aspiring filmmakers off the streets of San Francisco and into his American Zoetrope headquarters, a hive of chaos and creativity. It would all come crashing down after his famous flop of a musical, "One From the Heart" (1981). But even this production, undertaken after Coppola created his own Zoetrope studio in Hollywood, is described by many participants as a whirlwind of collaborative excitement, the likes of which can't be repeated.

In a recent video interview from his Los Angeles home, Wasson, whose previous books include the "Chinatown" study "The Big Goodbye" and, with his mentor Jeanine Basinger, "Hollywood: The Oral History," recalled how he pitched the project to Coppola: "This is the closest Icarus has come to the sun. No one else has come closer. So rather than frame this as a story about failure, which is how I think

Hollywood sees it, let's position this as a story of success with an asterisk."

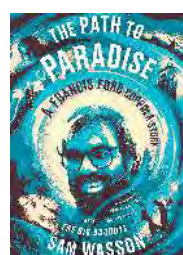
Growing up in L.A., Wasson heard stories about Coppola's grand Zoetrope experiment. "It sounded like a fairy tale," he says. Indeed, you could find all manner of visitors and participants roaming Zoetrope's Hollywood shop: Gene Kelly (helping with musical numbers), David Lynch and Jean-Luc Godard (working on personal projects that never came to fruition), Warren Beatty (just there for the parties) and George Burns (whose old office was on the same lot).

As Burns' cigar smoke blended with the aroma of Coppola's pot, "One From the Heart" production designer Dean Tavoularis and an army of construction workers were hard at work building the movie's dreamlike Las Vegas sets and cinematographer Vittorio Storaro sat and bathed in his ornate lighting design. Coppola's young daughter, Sofia, had free run of the lot.

"The Path to Paradise" puts you there, and shows how Coppola got so close to the sun. Growing up in New



GARY COPELAND



Harper

**AUTHOR** Sam Wasson takes on the excesses and failures — as well as the masterpieces — of Francis Ford Coppola, top in 1981.



# Stark beauty marks a memoir of a wife's suicide

BY JESSICA FERRI

Warning: This story involves extensive discussion of suicide.

**W**HEN A WRITER took her own life on March 8, 2020, at age 39, her husband tweeted into the void: "My partner Molly Brodak passed away yesterday. I don't know how else to tell it."

Three years later, Blake Butler is telling the story of Molly's death and the 10 years they spent together in a terrifyingly intense and eerily spiritual book.

There is a curiosity over every death — we are ashamed to ask "how did it happen?" and yet we need to know. This is doubly true of someone young and promising. And on the most superficial level, Molly's story is an interesting one. But Butler's talent as a writer makes this book into more than grisly fascination. "Molly" forces its reader to look deeply into the well of intergenerational trauma, neglect and, most of all, responsibility — the artist's responsibility to art and themselves, our responsibility to one another as human beings.

"Molly was troubled — that was clear," Butler writes of their first days together. At their earliest meeting, she flashes her MRI results (she had suffered from a brain tumor) and tells Butler about her criminal father, whom she wrote about in her memoir, "Bandit." Butler is troubled too. Using alcohol to cope, resulting in blackouts and dangerous behavior, he writes at the end of a work-in-progress, "The only way for me to complete this book is to kill myself."

Molly makes it clear she wants to be with him. "Even if you want to be dead inside," she writes to him, "I would still kiss your dead eyes." But "much like

love," Butler reflects, "death always seemed to be on Molly's mind. At times I sensed a part of her long locked up without a key, its entombed voice egging her on with grim ideas."

The book begins with an account of Molly's suicide. After reading that

terrible morning of Molly's choice, the reader is compelled to race through the rest of Butler's memoir at the same brisk, bracing and brutal pace. The structure of the book mimics the experience of grief: shock, devastation, seething anger and — not acceptance, exactly, but perhaps grace.

Butler's experience recalls that of Ted Hughes in the wake of Sylvia Plath's death. But unlike Hughes, who destroyed Plath's last journals and set down the iron

curtain on her last days, Butler rather bravely and obsessively goes through Molly's final journals, poems, emails and social posts, sharing them not only with the lunacy of the bereaved lover but, thankfully, the brilliance and drive of a writer.

We peer into Molly's childhood diaries, her lists of subjects she'd like to write about, of jobs she'd held, brainstorming for what to do next in her career. She gives Butler a gift, a little blue Avon soap box that she's carried around for years. "It felt," he writes, "like being let into a dim gray room with many doors, behind most of which I still had no idea besides the smallest sounds that might leak through — a hum of bees, maybe; the silent glint of sunlight against some sea; the low, slow beating of a heart; a little signal sent from somewhere secret laced inside her, just a girl." Butler's prose, coupled with the disturbing but necessary questions he raises, makes it the best book I've read this year.

Molly's last journal entries are as beautiful as they are horrifying: "Took a bath, said goodbye to my body. We ate grilled halloumi and made love

York, he spent a year in bed with polio, becoming a dreamer. He came out of his shell as a theater student at Hofstra University, studied film at UCLA, befriended a quiet young man named George Lucas (he produced Lucas' first two films) and grew determined to work outside of what he saw as an inefficient and superficial Hollywood system. He gambled everything making "Apocalypse Now" in the Philippines, and won; then he gambled everything making "One From the Heart" in Hollywood and lost. Deep in debt, he oversaw the dissolution of Zoetrope as he knew it.

He has spent much of his subsequent career as a director for hire, though still capable of gems ("Rumble Fish," "Bram Stoker's Dracula"). More recently Coppola threw himself into the modern indie scene he helped create, with "Youth Without Youth" (2007), "Tetro" (2009) and "Twixt" (2011). And still he dreams: He sank a reported \$140 million of his own money into the long-gestating "Megalopolis," an epic about an urban designer played by Adam Driver, now in postproduction after another allegedly chaotic process.

Wasson captures the extreme ups and downs with a combination of precision and imagination, often bringing an appropriately gonzo tone to the story. He imagined the book as a sort of biography of a dream, fueled, as he says, by questions: "How long do we have to sustain utopia before we can call it a success? If it lasts a second, does that mean it's not a success? Francis' might've only lasted a second, but no one can beat that record. I also wanted to ask: What is a studio now? Paramount is right down the street from me. They make five, 10 s — movies a year, and they sit on all that real estate. They're just banks."

The portrait of Coppola painted in "The Path to Paradise" can be ugly; Wasson doesn't look away from his subject's warts. He frequently cheated on his wife, Eleanor (whose first-person book about the making of "Apocalypse Now," "Notes," and the subsequent documentary, "Hearts of Darkness," are masterpieces in their own right). He often comes across as the world's most disorganized boss. And he has endured grief far beyond the movie failures, losing his oldest son and creative confidante, Gio, in a 1986 boating accident.

Wasson credits Coppola for sharing his notes, sitting for countless interviews, reading drafts and insisting the author tell the full story. "It's not always flattering, but it finally is admiring," Wasson says. "The human errors are all of ours, but none of us, or very few of us, lay claim to this kind of talent or ambition."

When Wasson recently visited Coppola on the "Megalopolis" set, he found a man at peace. "He would sit there and he would say, 'There's no rush. There's no rush.' That's a beautiful thing to see. For all he's given the world and all he's suffered, as a man who built and lost an empire, at 84 he can sit there and be exactly where he wants to be."

Vognar is a freelance writer based in Houston.

## BESTSELLERS

**Fiction** weeks on list

- 1. Tom Lake** by Ann Patchett (Harper: \$30) At a Michigan orchard, a woman tells her three daughters about a long-ago romance. **17**
- 2. Resurrection Walk** by Michael Connelly (Little, Brown: \$30) Connelly heroes and half-brothers Micky Haller and Harry Bosch team up to re-investigate a conviction. **3**
- 3. The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store** by James McBride (Riverhead: \$28) The discovery of a skeleton in Pottstown, Pa., opens out to a story of integration. **16**
- 4. Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow** by Gabrielle Charbonnet Zevin (Knopf: \$28) Lifelong BFFs collaborate on a wildly successful video game. **73**
- 5. Day** by Michael Cunningham (Random House: \$28) Snapshots of a family over three years. **2**
- 6. Fourth Wing** by Rebecca Yarros (Entangled: Red Tower Books: \$30) A young woman reluctantly enters a brutal dragon-riding war college in this YA fantasy. **18**
- 7. The Narrow Road Between Desires** by Patrick Rothfuss (DAW: \$26) An illustrated, expanded reimagining of the fantasy novella "The Lightning Tree." **2**
- 8. Lessons in Chemistry** by Bonnie Garmus (Doubleday: \$29) In the 1960s, a female chemist goes on to be a single parent, then a celebrity chef. **83**
- 9. Iron Flame** by Rebecca Yarros (Entangled: Red Tower Books: \$30) In the sequel to the bestselling "Fourth Wing," the dragon-rider faces even greater tests. **3**
- 10. So Late in the Day** by Claire Keegan (Grove: \$20) Three stories about men and women from the celebrated Irish writer. **2**

**Nonfiction** weeks on list

- 1. The Creative Act** by Rick Rubin (Penguin: \$32) The music producer's guidance on how to be a creative person. **45**
- 2. My Name Is Barbra** by Barbra Streisand (Viking: \$47) The multi-hyphenate icon dishes on her career in music and Hollywood. **3**
- 3. Prequel** by Rachel Maddow (Crown: \$32) The MSNBC anchor chronicles the fight against a pro-Nazi American group during World War II. **6**
- 4. The Woman in Me** by Britney Spears (Gallery: \$33) The pop star, long confined in a conservatorship, finally tells her full story. **5**
- 5. The Wager** by David Grann (Doubleday: \$30) The story of the shipwreck of an 18th-century British warship and a mutiny among the survivors. **30**
- 6. How to Know a Person** by David Brooks (Random House: \$30) The New York Times columnist explores the power of seeing and being seen. **5**
- 7. The Art Thief** by Michael Finkel (Knopf: \$28) The true-crime tale of a genius art thief who kept all the spoils for himself. **17**
- 8. Friends, Lovers, and the Big Terrible Thing** by Matthew Perry (Flatiron: \$30) The 2022 memoir from the actor known for TV's "Friends," who died in late October. **6**
- 9. Being Henry** by Henry Winkler (Celadon: \$30) The legendary actor's memoir on playing the Fonzy and so much more. **3**
- 10. Doppelgänger** by Naomi Klein (Farrar, Straus & Giroux: \$30) An exploration of the spread of conspiracy theories in the modern U.S. **6**

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Ferri is the owner of Womb House Books and the author, most recently, of "Silent Cities San Francisco."



# Delicious plots with a side of existentialism

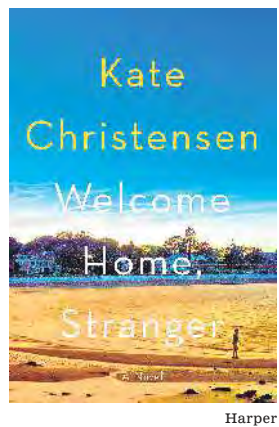
BY BETHANNE PATRICK

**T**HERE ARE a few reasons the novelist Kate Christensen, speaking via video chat from her home in Taos, N.M., is discussing the best lobster rolls in Maine.

The first is that the buttery sandwich figures in her new novel, her eighth, "Welcome Home, Stranger." Rachel, a science journalist in Washington, D.C., has made a pilgrimage back to Portland, where her mother has died and left her a two-bedroom condominium. In the course of a plot woven out of multiple meals — pizza scarfed down while painting cabinets, "spring carrot and golden lentil" soup at a bougie restaurant, lard-fried corned beef and onions up in the North Woods — there is the moment Rachel convinces her ornery sister Celeste to drive to Two Lights State Park for a lobster roll worth the trip.

For the record, "Two Lights isn't my favorite lobster roll in Maine," says Christensen. "That would be Bite Into Maine, a food truck in Fort Williams Park." (Also, try the haddock sandwich at Young's Lobster Pound in Belfast.)

Food is essential to Christensen's writing —



Harper

**FOOD** plays a key role in the works of Kate Christensen.

always has been.

The first memoir of her itinerant and complicated life is titled "Blue Plate Special: An Autobiography of My Appetites," followed by a memoir-cookbook called "How to Cook a Moose," a clear homage to M.F.K. Fisher's classic "How to Cook a Wolf." Two of her most memorable novels-as-character-studies are "In the Drink" and "The Epicure's Lament."

"I don't know a character until I know how they eat in public, what they cook, what they would serve a guest, and what they eat when they're alone," Christensen says. "It's all part of who we are. And I feel really unpretentious about food. Every single food moment in this novel says something about Rachel as a character, and her very real homecoming."

For example, Rachel can't eat what Celeste makes, supposedly because of the toxins, but after the sisters travel to a camp in the woods where her mother's siblings live, and their Aunt Jean Gautreau cooks up a feast full of saturated fat, Rachel digs in with aban-

don. "I did that very deliberately," Christensen says, "so that whatever she's eating or cooking or thinking about in terms of food is right where she is in changing."

Those dishes reflect the worlds Rachel is moving through as well. "Food is class," says Christensen. "What people eat says so much about their socioeconomic status, in addition to their tastes. ... For me, food is always a way into character."

Another reason for that lobster-roll digression: Christensen's nostalgia for Maine, and her habit of infusing her work with a deep knowledge of place even as she herself has lived a wandering life: Born in Berkeley, raised in Arizona, college in Oregon and graduate school in Iowa followed by New York City, New Hampshire, Maine and, finally, hippie-chic and sun-soaked Taos.

In Christensen's work, those wanderings translate to settings that dig deep beneath postcard surfaces — including the family campground presided over by Aunt Jean. "Maine has hard-scrabble communities, many of them in the almost oppressive woodland of the interior," the author says. "It's not all open vistas of the seas and shingled cottages of the rich. It's cold, hard, long winters, people having bean suppers at church, traditions that go back to the 1600s."

From early novels like "Jeremy Thrane" to her PEN/Faulkner Award-winning "The Great Man," Christensen's inspirations all come out of her own struggles, including a divorce and a fraught relationship with alcohol. Five years sober, Christensen now mixes up pitchers of mocktails: "I call them 'foxtails,' and it's wonderful." Rachel, too, is trying to stay away from the drink, with less success.

"There's always a question at the center of a novel that is one I'm grappling with, and my first-person narrators are often avatars in a way, or alter egos," she says. "They have qualities in myself that are latent, that I haven't actually realized. It's a way of living in another person's life that I invent, hypothetically casting myself into various situations that address stuff I'm engaged with in my own life."

In the case of "Welcome Home, Stranger," there is grief and homecoming, of course, but the most personal element is that Rachel, at 53, is going through menopause — something Christensen has experienced and that women, including novelists, rarely discuss.

"I feel like nobody talks about the upside of menopause!" Christensen exclaims. "It was like going through adolescence in reverse, when I sort of had no control over my body, my unpredictable moods, my brain fog. But I came out at the other end of this wind-tunnel roller-coaster ride with my brain clear. My memory came back. I could sleep again. It was a pleasant shock."

Rachel — despite her challenges with Celeste, her old lover David, her



CHERYL NICHOLS

ailing ex-husband and her enervating work life — also discovers good things about her new life as her body changes. "She realizes she's become invisible," says Christensen. "Women in menopause ... what we're really about to become are elders. There's a lot of loss, and a lot of reckoning."

Fans of Christensen might notice a change of

tone as well. "A lot of my first-person narrators have been people who make their own trouble and shoot themselves in the foot, and there's comic energy generated from all that," she says. "But this is, to me, a more serious novel. It's an existential novel ultimately about the Trump years, written in lockdown and finished during the early part of the Bid-

en administration. I wanted to show a woman dealing with a lot more stuff than I was. She's alone in the world. She's losing her ex-husband to ALS. Her sister is a bitch. What will come next for her?"

Christensen has already moved on to what's next: She and her husband moved to the Southwest to be closer to aging family members. The couple had cherished their "old, beautiful, 1900s brick house" and "never wanted to leave Maine. I never wanted to sell that house. ... The community I found there, the feeling of home I had, well, I cried as we drove away behind the U-Haul — so hard that I could hardly see the road."

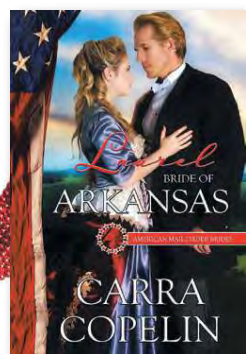
Ultimately, though, "I am adaptable, and I think learning to land on my feet is something I got from my mother. It's one

of the life skills she instilled in me and my sisters, that home isn't necessarily a permanent place."

Without giving anything away, Christensen notes the parallels with Rachel's plight. "This is a novel about stripping everything away from someone. It took draft after draft, because at first I didn't have the heart to put Rachel through what I knew I had to put her through for the book to work." If, for Christensen, all protagonists are alter egos, like her, they have the strength to endure the trials their creator has sent their way — along with very good taste in food.

Patrick is a freelance critic, podcaster and author of the memoir "Life B."

## FIND THE JOY OF THE SEASON



### Laurel: Bride of Arkansas

A Mail-Order Bride Series, Book 25

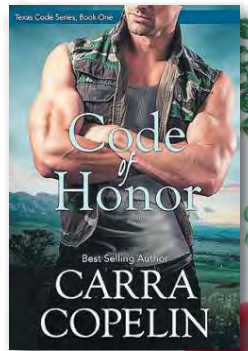
Carra Copelin

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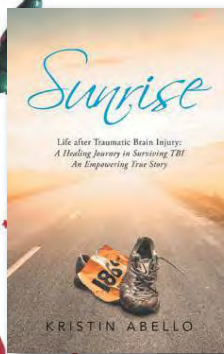
### Code of Honor

Texas Code Series Book

Carra Copelin



As Graeme and Maggie's paths collide, they must confront their shared history, painful secrets, and shattered trust. Can they overcome their past wounds to embrace the possibility of a new love?



### Sunrise

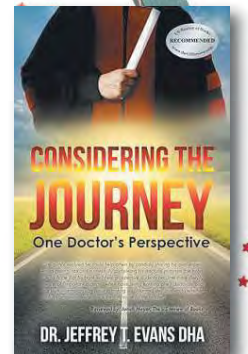
Kristin Abello

A haunting tale, a lyrical blend of faith, love, hope, and a miraculous fight for life. Revealing itself as a riddle wrapped in layers, Kristin's extraordinary journey to recovery is a melting pot of emotions, fueled by the radiant support and whispered prayers of her husband, family, and friends—an enigma kindling a remarkable strength to persevere.

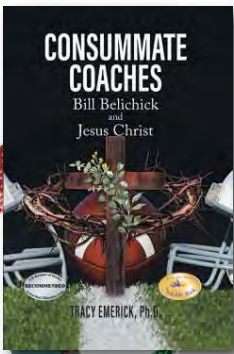
### Considering the Journey

One Doctor's Perspective

Dr. Jeffrey Evans



Traverse the enlightening narrative of this masterpiece, meticulously molded to magnify the dreams of budding doctoral and PhD scholars. Dr. Jeffrey Evans peels back the curtain on his own doctoral odyssey, providing an unfiltered glimpse into the world of academia to empower scholars with the vision and vigor needed for their doctorate journeys.



### Consummate Coaches: Bill Belichick and Jesus Christ

Tracy Emerick PhD

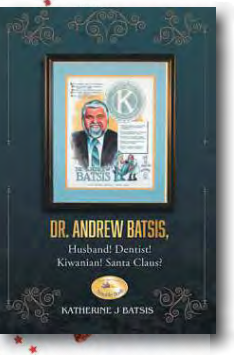
Using the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as a model, the book aims to dissect the core ideas of coaching greatness. By drawing comparisons between the worlds of sports and spirituality, the book offers a unique perspective for exploring the timeless principles that underlie success.

### Airplane Stories and Histories

Norman Currey



Explore aviation's rich history, tracing pioneers like Cayley, Wright Brothers, and Earhart, spanning two hundred years, including wars, technological advancements, and jet engine development.



### Dr. Andrew Batsis, Husband! Dentist! Kiwanian! Santa Claus?

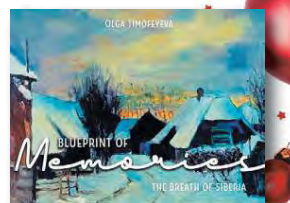
Katherine J Batsis

The book, lovingly and masterfully written by his wife, is an immersive and personal voyage through the enchanted life of Dr. Andrew Batsis, who is, as the title says, a loving spouse, a caring dentist, a faithful Kiwanian advocate, and a genuine incarnation of Santa Claus.

### Blueprint of Memories

The Breath of Siberia

Olga Timofeyeva



From Siberia's snowy landscapes, to idyllic villages, and amazing lakes, Olga's canvases unveil the ethereal allure and the whimsical secrets of Mother Nature, inviting all to explore a world of nostalgic wonder.



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