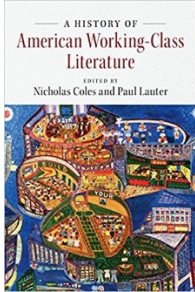
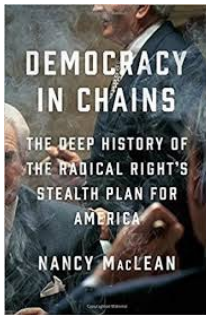


BOOK NOTES



***A History of American Working-Class Literature* (Cambridge U. Press), Nicholas Coles and Paul Lauter, editors.**

This collection of essays on fiction, poetry, memoir, journalism, film, drama, songs, and speeches illuminates “the lived experience [and] the enormously varied creativity of working-class people” across American history from plantations and prisons to farms and factories, and after. Nick Coles writes on love and labor in farm fiction from 1890 to the Dust Bowl; Michelle Tokarczyk, on proletarian women writers; Kathy Newman, on 100 years of class struggle in the movies; Sherry Linkon, on working-class literature after deindustrialization; and Sara Appel, on the place of class in intersectional analysis among the 24 essays arranged in chronological order. Charting a chronology of working-class experience as conditions of work changed over more than three centuries, the volume “shows how the practice of organizing, economic competition, place, and time shape opportunity and desire.” The publisher promises that the “variety, depth, and many provocations of this *History* are certain to enrich the study and teaching of American literature” as it reveals the dramatic changes and enduring continuities in working-class life itself.

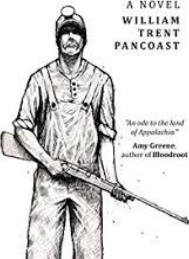


***Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America* (Viking), Nancy MacLean**

Immediate past president of the Labor and Working-Class History Association Nancy MacLean's new book has created quite a stir, with reviews from a variety of sources urging that it be read by everybody right away. *The New Republic* says it is a “remarkable new book which argues that the radical right revolution engineered by Charles [Koch] and his brother David is not just about accruing political and economic power, but about restricting democracy itself.” Alice Kessler-Harris calls it “mesmerizing,” and Greg Grandin says, “I can’t imagine a more timely or urgent book.” *Booklist* may have said it best: “For those who think the Tea Party, Freedom Caucus, and the alt-right are recent constructs, MacLean provides an extensive history lesson that traces the genesis of the right wing back to post-WWII doctrines. . . . MacLean’s intense and extensive examination of the right-wing’s rise to power is perhaps the best explanation to date of the roots of the political divide that threatens to irrevocably alter American government.”

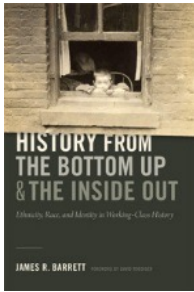
THE ROAD TO MATEWAN

A NOVEL
WILLIAM TRENT PANCOAST



***The Road to Matewan* (Blazing Flowers Press) William Trent Pancoast**

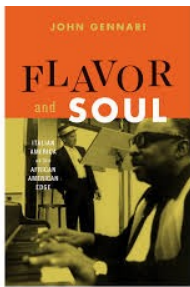
The Road to Matewan is William Trent Pancoast's second novel; in it he tells the story of the Greene family and particularly patriarch Thomas Greene. Thomas leaves his mountain farm for railroad work, and later works as a machinist in the West Virginia coal region. The novel traces the well-known story of Matewan, WV, and its coal mines, but focuses less on the mine-related violence and history and more on the effects the industry has on the region and its people geographically, physically, and spiritually. John Beck writes that the “active character study of all the Greenses and their neighbors is well-executed and rings true.”



***History from the Bottom Up and the Inside Out: Ethnicity, Race, and Identity in Working-Class History* (Duke U. Press), James R. Barrett**

James Barrett is one of the generation of historians who created “the new labor history” as part of the social movements of the 1960s that attempted a dramatic turn toward “power to the people.” This volume collects nine of his essays, beginning with “The Subjective Side of Working-Class History,” where he argues for the importance of examining “all aspects of individuals’ subjective experiences” so that working-class people’s lives cannot be objectified into “nameless cogs operating within social and political movements.” The last essay reflects on the accomplishments and failures of the new labor history, titled “Making and Unmaking the Working Class.” In between are essays on immigrant workers’ experience of race and class, “blue-collar cosmopolitans” and bohemian writers, and autobiography and personal narrative among

American Communists. One essay reflects on his own Chicago inner-city upbringing, titled “The Blessed Virgin Made Me a Socialist Historian: An Experiment in Catholic Autobiography and the Historical Understanding of Race and Class.”



***Flavor and Soul: Italian America at Its African American Edge* (U. of Chicago Press), John Gennari**

John Gennari argues that there is an affinity between Italian-American and African-American cultures, “a space of mutual emulation and suspicion, a joyous cultural meeting sometimes darkened by violent collision.” He calls it an “edge – now smooth, sometimes serrated.” According to the publisher: “Through studies of music and sound, film and media, sports and foodways, Gennari shows how an Afro-Italian sensibility has nourished and vitalized American culture writ large, even as Italian Americans and African Americans have fought each other for urban space, recognition of overlapping histories of suffering and exclusion, and political and personal *rispetto*. *Flavor and Soul* is a cultural contact zone—a piazza where people express deep feelings of joy and pleasure,

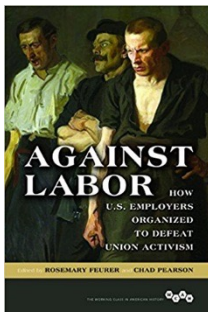
wariness and distrust, amity and enmity. And it is only at such cultural edges, Gennari argues, that America can come to truly understand its racial and ethnic dynamics.”

MARGE PIERCY
MADE IN DETROIT



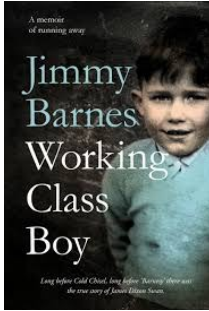
***Made in Detroit: Poems* (Knopf), Marge Piercy**

The paperback reissue of Piercy’s nineteenth volume of poetry is wide-ranging in subject matter, but a good portion of the collection stems from and references her childhood and early life in Detroit. Donna Seaman, of *Booklist*, writes: “A working-class gal who grew up in Detroit in the wake of the Great Depression, Piercy begins her nineteenth poetry collection with an autobiographical sequence of electrifying braggadocio and deep pain. She declares that she was saved by books. ‘Libraries were my cathedrals. Librarians / my priests promising salvation.’ Piercy also experienced transcendence in nature, eventually finding her true home on Cape Cod. Piercy writes sensitively of the glory of the sea, storms, the seasons, but always with a divining sense of the living world’s hard lessons [...] Writing poignantly of social injustice, Jewish holidays, marriage, and age, Piercy, frank, caustically witty, and caring, generates suspense, drama, and arresting images, such as when she envisions her many selves, embodied in all the clothes she’s ever worn, ‘strung on a blocklong clothesline.’”



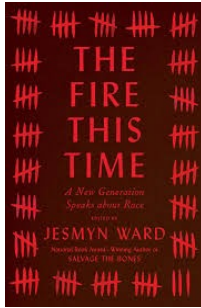
***Against Labor: How U.S. Employers Organized to Defeat Union Activism* (U. of Illinois Press), Rosemary Feuer and Chad Pearson, editors**

Through a collection of essays, this volume traces the long history of employer resistance to labor unions and any other form of worker organization in the U.S. – from Pinkerton guards and brutal repression to fancy lawyering and purchased or rented politicians. By exploring different anti-union approaches across two centuries, these essays show employers using different tactics and strategies for different economic sectors and in different circumstances, but almost always using racial, ethnic and religious differences to combat union organization. Though written mostly by labor historians, the volume is focused on employers and the politicians who support them, but there are also plenty of insights into how organized workers adjusted and fought back.



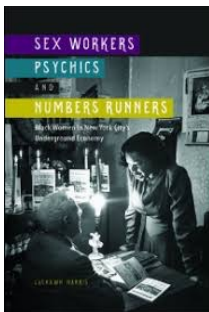
Working Class Boy (Harper Collins), Jimmy Barnes

Working Class Boy is rock and roller Barnes's memoir of his early life. Lead vocalist of the band Cold Chisel, Barnes was born in Glasgow, and later emigrated to Australia with his family, where he spent his childhood and teenage years in Adelaide. From the publisher: "Raw, gritty, compassionate, surprising and darkly funny - Jimmy Barnes's childhood memoir is at once the story of migrant dreams fulfilled and dashed. Arriving in Australia in the Summer of 1962, things went from bad to worse for the Swan family - Dot, Jim and their six kids. The scramble to manage in the tough northern suburbs of Adelaide in the 60s would take its toll on the Swans as dwindling money, too much alcohol, and fraying tempers gave way to violence and despair. This is the story a family's collapse, but also a young boy's dream to escape the misery of the suburbs with a once-in-a-lifetime chance to join a rock 'n' roll band and get out of town for good."



The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks about Race (Scribner), edited by Jesmyn Ward

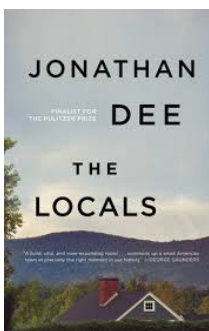
Novelist Jesmyn Ward (author of *Where the Line Bleeds* and *Salvage the Bones*) has gathered a younger generation of African-American thinkers, writers, and poets together to reflect on the past, present and future of race in America since James Baldwin's classic 1963 essay collection. Nikki Giovanni says of it: "The generation of segregation gave us *The Fire Next Time*. We broke down those walls. The generation after segregation gives us the water to mix with the ashes to build. . . . This is a book to pick up and tuck under our hearts to see what we can build." In addition to Ward, the authors include Carol Anderson, Jericho Brown, Edwidge Danticat, Kevin Young, Claudia Rankine, and Honoree Jeffers.



Sex Workers, Psychics, and Numbers Runners: Black Women in New York City's Underground Economy (U. of Illinois Press), LaShawn Harris

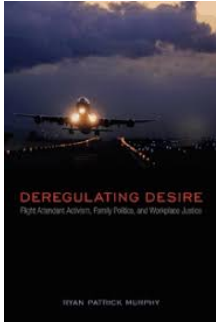
Investigating what economists call "the informal economy," LaShawn Harris surveys the variety and extent of that cash-only economy in racially segregated New York in the first three decades of the 20th century before focusing on the lives of specific sex workers, numbers runners, and "supernatural consultants." Using police and prison records as well as newspaper accounts and period literature, Harris provides a series of portraits of working-class black women for whom "the burgeoning underground economy served as a catalyst in [their] creation of the employment opportunities, occupational identities, and survival strategies that provided them with financial stability and a sense of labor autonomy and mobility." It is a rare look at the entrepreneurial ingenuity of working-class women who created their own spaces for autonomy underneath a world of severe racial and class injustice and the "conspicuous and hidden dangers" they braved

to sustain themselves.



The Locals: A Novel (Random House), Jonathan Dee

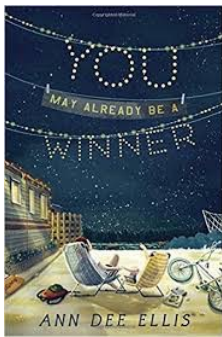
In *The Locals*, after 9/11, millionaire hedge-fund manager Phillip Hadi flees New York for Howland, Massachusetts; Hadi hires contractor Mark Firth to turn his Berkshires vacation home into a base from which he can continue to manage his clients' money. Firth, in turn, seeks to capitalize on the real estate market, buying up property with cheap, easy-access loans. At the center of the narrative are the oppositions of rural vs. urban, working class vs. wealth. Sarah Harrison Smith, of Amazon Book Review, writes: "After 9/11, a wealthy New York financier moves in, and in short order becomes the town's First Selectman, eschewing a salary, repealing taxes, and behaving, in both popular and unpopular ways, like the prince of a blue-collar fiefdom. Dee, an extraordinary mimic, inhabits the quirky voice of one character, and then another. Those shifts of perspective give a polyphonic, democratic feel to this novel. Social isolation, real-estate speculation and the promise of love: it's America in a microcosm, but it's to Dee's credit that his readers are never entirely sure how he thinks any of us could do better."



***Deregulating Desire: Flight Attendant Activism and the Family Values Economy* (Temple U. Press), Ryan Patrick Murphy**

Taking off from the 1970s union activism of flight attendants, Ryan Patrick Murphy traces the way both the women’s and LGBTQ movements have interacted with the “family values economy” of the airlines up to the present – first forcing the airlines to drop requirements that all “stewardesses” be young, single, childless white women, and then moving on to “deeper grievances” as much about workplace dignity and autonomy as about wages and benefits. A former flight attendant himself, Murphy sees this workplace struggle as an effort “to win political power and material resources for people who live beyond the boundary of the traditional family.” Situated in the history of debates about family and work, each chapter “offers an economic and cultural analysis to show how the workplace has been the primary venue to enact feminist and LGBTQ politics.” Dorothy Sue Cobble calls it a “pioneering study” that embraces “the diverse desires and intimate relations of all workers,” thereby modeling “a new affective labor history, as

attentive to feelings as to economic self-interest.”



***You May Already Be a Winner* (Dial Books), Ann Dee Ellis**

A young adult novel, *You May Already Be a Winner* tells the story of Olivia Hales, a 12-year old girl saddled with too much responsibility as her family struggles to make it. With their mother unable to afford reliable daycare, Olivia cares for her younger sister while devising a plan to win a million dollars and save her family. Newbery Honor winner Kathi Appelt writes of the book that “When I closed the last page I wanted to jump on Olivia’s tramp, just to celebrate her resounding resilience. This book is a love story for all those kids who have had to grow up way too soon, but who also face life with commitment, fortitude and above all, dedication.”



***Margarito's Forest* (Hardball Press) by Andy Carter. Illustrated by Allison Havens**

From the publisher, about this award-winning children’s book: “*Margarito’s Forest* is a story of Mayan culture and wisdom passed from one generation to the next. This beautifully illustrated bilingual book in English and Spanish, with excerpts in K’iche’, is based on María Guadalupe’s memories of her father, Don Margarito Esteban Álvarez Velázquez. It follows Don Margarito’s lifelong work of planting and nurturing trees after his village in Guatemala is chased from their ancestral land by a right-wing military. The Maya carry their love for the forest with them, creating a beautiful forest in the mountains.”



***Jimmy's Carwash Adventure* (Hardball Press) by Victor Narro. Illustrated by Yana Murashko**

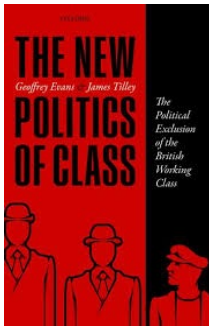
The main character in this children’s book, Jimmy, befriends a man who works at the carwash and who helps Jimmy send his pedal car through the carwash. Later, Jimmy and his father come across the striking carwash workers—and Jimmy’s actions remind his father of the importance of action, community, and social justice. The author, Victor Narro, is a long-time labor activist and is currently Project Director for the UCLA Labor Center.



Good Guy Jake (Hardball Press) by Mark Torres. Illustrated by Yana Murashko

From the publisher: "Imagine young children reading a book about a union that wins back the job of a sanitation worker who is unfairly fired. For years at Christmas, Jake has given the children in a local shelter broken toys he pulled from the trash on his rounds and repaired and painted. But when an angry motorist turns Jake in to the sanitation company, Jake is fired for breaking city regulations. His union takes the case to arbitration. Will Jake win his job back?"

Find out in this sweet Christmas classic for labor!" The book will be released October 15, 2017.



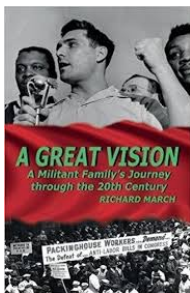
The New Politics of Class: The Political Exclusion of the British Working Class (Oxford U. Press), Geoffrey Evans and James Tilley

Like many others, Evans and Tilley interpret the 2016 Brexit vote in the United Kingdom as an exercise in direct democracy that "exposed the continuing divisions between classes" in the UK. They argue that far from "the death of class in Britain," there has been a "huge social continuity in class divisions over the past fifty years." What changed during that time was the social composition of political parties and politicians' rhetoric, which converged around a "middle class consensus" that drove working-class voters away from the Labour Party or from voting altogether. Though written before this year's promising electoral showing of a renewed Labour Party, the book is full of facts, figures, and historical explanation that illuminate the politics of class on a new terrain.



Beyond \$15: Immigrant Workers, Faith Activists, and the Revival of the Labor Movement (Beacon Press), Jonathan Rosenblum

Labor organizer Jonathan Rosenblum was a lead organizer in the first successful fight for a \$15 minimum wage at the Sea-Tac Airport just outside Seattle. In *Beyond \$15*, he tells the story of how that victory was achieved, and then takes a broader look at the prospects for reviving the American labor movement based on an alliance of union, community, and faith activists like the one at Sea-Tac. Bill Fletcher Jr. praises the result: "Part memoir, part industry analysis, part campaign summation...*Beyond \$15* is exciting, thought-provoking, and moving as it looks not only at the big picture but also at the struggles of the workers themselves to alter the terms of their working lives and their places in the community."



A Great Vision: A Militant Family's Journey through the 20th Century (Hard Ball Press), Richard March

Richard March, an anti-war and civil rights activist from the 1960s, writes a family history of the Left, beginning with his mother's parents opposing black-shirt fascists in war-torn Croatia after World War I. In the 1930s Rick's mother, Jane, and father, Herb March, were key organizers of the United Packinghouse Workers, a multi-racial and extraordinarily democratic CIO union that conquered the Chicago stockyards for a generation. The publisher promises: "As the U.S. is driven toward a new Gilded Age, crushing unions, immigrants and civil rights, the March family fighting the good fight for three generations inspires us to carry on...and win."