

U And I Nicholson Baker

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NATIONAL BESTSELLER *Vox* is a novel that remaps the territory of sex—sex solitary and telephonic, lyrical and profane, comfortable and dangerous. It is an erotic classic that places Nicholson Baker firmly in the first rank of major American writers.

In John Updike's second collection of assorted prose he comes into his own as a book reviewer; most of the pieces picked up here were first published in *The New Yorker* in the 1960s and early '70s. If one word could sum up the young critic's approach to books and their authors it would be "generosity": "Better to praise and share," he says in his Foreword, "than to blame and ban." And so he follows his enthusiasms, which prove both deserving and infectious: Kierkegaard, Proust, Joyce, Dostoevsky, and Hamsun among the classics; Borges, Nabokov, Grass, Bellow, Cheever, and Jong among the contemporaries. Here too are meditations on Satan and cemeteries, travel essays on London and Anguilla, three very early "golf dreams," and one big interview. *Picked-Up Pieces* is a glittering treasury for every reader who likes life, books, wit—and John Updike.

Winner of the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction A harvest and not a winnowing, this volume collects 103 stories, almost all of the short fiction that John Updike wrote between 1953 and 1975. "How rarely it can be said of any of our great American writers that they have been equally gifted in both long and short forms," reads the citation composed for John Updike upon his winning the 2006 Rea Award for the Short Story. "Contemplating John Updike's monumental achievement in the short story, one is moved to think of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James, Ernest Hemingway, and perhaps William Faulkner—writers whose reputations would be as considerable, or nearly, if short stories had been all that they had written. From [his] remarkable early short story collections . . . through his beautifully nuanced stories of family life [and] the bittersweet humors of middle age and beyond . . . John Updike has created a body of work in the notoriously difficult form of the short story to set beside those of these distinguished American predecessors. Congratulations and heartfelt thanks are due to John Updike for having brought such pleasure and such illumination to so many readers for so many years."

An obsessive word lover provides an account of the year he spent reading the Oxford English Dictionary cover to cover, offering a selection of obscure and offbeat vocabulary gems he discovered along the way.

Crudo
The Anthologist

Reading the OED

The Size of Thoughts

Essays and Other Lumber

Travelling Sprinkler

The Size of Thoughts, a collection of essays that have appeared in the *New Yorker* and other publications, includes one never-before-published piece on the world of electronics. The essays celebrate the joy—and exquisite details—of everything from library card catalogs and reading aloud to the significance of wine stains on a tablecloth. Baker turns any subject, from feeding a child to phone sex, into literature with a style that is sparkingly original, frequently beautiful, and always thought-provoking. *The Size of Thoughts*, through its varied forays into the realms of the overlooked, the underfunded, and the wrongfully scrapped, is a funny book by one of the most distinctive stylists and thinkers of our time.

In this book, novelist Colm Tóibín offers a deeply personal introduction to the work and life of one of his most important literary influences—the American poet Elizabeth Bishop. Ranging across her poetry, prose, letters, and biography, Tóibín creates a vivid picture of Bishop while also revealing how her work has helped shape his sensibility as a novelist and how her experiences of loss and exile resonate with his own. What emerges is a compelling double portrait that will intrigue readers interested in both Bishop and Tóibín. For Tóibín, the secret of Bishop's emotional power is in what she leaves unsaid. Exploring Bishop's famous attention to detail, Tóibín describes how Bishop is able to convey great emotion indirectly, through precise descriptions of particular settings, objects, and events. He examines how Bishop's attachment to the Nova Scotia of her childhood, despite her later life in Key West and Brazil, is related to her early loss of her parents—and how this connection finds echoes in Tóibín's life as an Irish writer who has lived in Barcelona, New York, and elsewhere. Beautifully written and skillfully blending biography, literary appreciation, and descriptions of Tóibín's travels to Bishop's Nova Scotia, Key West, and Brazil, *On Elizabeth Bishop* provides a fresh and memorable look at a beloved poet even as it gives us a window into the mind of one of today's most acclaimed novelists.

In this delightfully witty, provocative book, literature professor and psychoanalyst Pierre Bayard argues that not having read a book need not be an impediment to having an interesting conversation about it. (In fact, he says, in certain situations reading the book is the worst thing you could do.) Using examples from such writers as Graham Greene, Oscar Wilde, Montaigne, and Umberto Eco, he describes the varieties of "non-reading"—from books that you've never heard of to books that you've read and forgotten—and offers advice on how to turn a sticky social situation into an occasion for creative brilliance. Practical, funny, and thought-provoking, *How to Talk About Books You Haven't Read*—which became a favorite of readers everywhere in the hardcover edition—is in the end a love letter to books, offering a whole new perspective on how we read and absorb them.

Obsessed with one of his pupils, teacher Edward Manners becomes embroiled in affairs with two other men, but only after discovering the life and work of Symbolist painter Edgard Orst does he come to understand the implications of obsession. Reprint.

A novel

Baseless

A True Story

Reading My Father

The Beginnings of World War II, the End of Civilization

A Memoir

A National Book Critics Circle Award-winner elevates the ordinary events that occur to a man on his lunch hour into "a constant delight" of a novel (The Boston Globe). In this startling, witty, and inexhaustibly inventive novel, New York Times–bestselling author Nicholson Baker uses a one-story escalator ride as the occasion for a dazzling reappraisal of everyday objects and rituals. From the humble milk carton to the act of tying one's shoes, *The Mezzanine* at once defamiliarizes the familiar world and endows it with loopy and euphoric poetry. Baker's accounts of the ordinary become extraordinary through his sharp storytelling and his unconventional, conversational style. At first glance, *The Mezzanine* appears to be a book about nothing. In reality, it is a brilliant celebration of things, simultaneously demonstrating the value of reflection and the importance of everyday human experiences. "A very funny book . . . Its 135 pages probably contain more insight into life as we live it today than anything currently on the best-seller list." –The New York Times "Captures the spirit of American corporate life and invests it with a passion and sympathy that is entirely unexpected." –The Seattle Times "Among the year's best." –The Boston Globe "Baker writes with appealing charm . . . [He] clowns and shows off . . . rambles and pounces hard; he says acute things, extravagant things, terribly funny things." –Los Angeles Times Book Review "Wonderfully readable, in fact gripping, with surprising bursts of recognition, humor and wonder." –The Washington Post Book World

From Nicholson Baker, best-selling author of *Vox* and the most original writer of his generation, his most controversial novel yet. From the New York Times bestselling author of *Girl in Pieces* comes a stunning novel that *Vanity Fair* calls "impossibly moving" and "suffused with light". In this raw, deeply personal story, a teenaged girl struggles to find herself amidst the fallout of her brother's addiction in a town ravaged by the opioid crisis. For all of Emory's life she's been told who she is. In town she's the rich one--the great-great-granddaughter of the mill's founder. At school she's hot Maddie Ward's younger sister. And at home, she's the good one, her stoner older brother Joey's babysitter. Everything was turned on its head, though, when she and Joey were in the car accident that killed Candy MontClaire. The car accident that revealed just how bad Joey's drug habit was. Four months later, Emory's junior year is starting, Joey is home from rehab, and the entire town of Mill Haven is still reeling from the accident. Everyone's telling Emory who she is, but so much has changed, how can she be the same person? Or was she ever that person at

all? Mill Haven wants everyone to live one story, but Emory's beginning to see that people are more than they appear. Her brother, who might not be "cured," the popular guy who lives next door, and most of all, many "ghostie" addicts who haunt the edges of the town. People spend so much time telling her who she is--it might be time to decide for herself. A journey of one sister, one brother, one family, to finally recognize and love each other for who they are, not who they are supposed to be, *You'd Be Home Now* is Kathleen Glasgow's glorious and heartbreaking story about the opioid crisis, and how it touches all of us.

Nicholson Baker, who "writes like no one else in America" (Newsweek), here assembles his best short pieces from the last fifteen years. *The Way the World Works*, Baker's second nonfiction collection, ranges over the map of life to examine what troubles us, what eases our pain, and what brings us joy. Baker moves from political controversy to the intimacy of his own life, from forgotten heroes of pacifism to airplane wings, telephones, paper mills, David Remnick, Joseph Pulitzer, the OED, and the manufacture of the Venetian gondola. He writes about kite string and about the moment he met his wife, and he surveys our fascination with video games while attempting to beat his teenage son at *Modern Warfare 2*. In a celebrated essay on Wikipedia, Baker describes his efforts to stem the tide of encyclopedic deletionism; in another, he charts the rise of e-readers; in a third he chronicles his Freedom of Information lawsuit against the San Francisco Public Library. Through all these pieces, many written for *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, and *The American Scholar*, Baker shines the light of an inexpugnable curiosity. *The Way the World Works* is a keen-minded, generous-spirited compendium by a modern American master.

Room Temperature

1953-1975

Understanding Nicholson Baker

The Early Stories

Vox

Double Fold

Is there anything that Martin Amis can't write about? In this virtuosic, career-spanning collection he takes on James Joyce and Elvis Presley, Nabokov and English football, Jane Austen and *Penthouse Forum*, William Burroughs and Hillary Clinton. But above all, Amis is concerned with literature, and with the deadly clichés – not only of the pen, but of the mind and the heart. In *The War Against Cliché*, Amis serves up fresh assessments of the classics and plucks neglected masterpieces off their dusty shelves. He tilts with Cervantes, Dickens and Milton, celebrates Bellow, Updike and Elmore Leonard, and deflates some of the most bloated reputations of the past three decades. On every page Amis writes with jaw-dropping felicity, wit, and a subversive brilliance that sheds new light on everything he touches.

Emmett has a wife and two children, a cat, and a duck, and he wants to know what life is about. Every day he gets up before dawn, makes a cup of coffee in the dark, lights a fire with one wooden match, and thinks. What Emmett thinks about is the subject of this wise and closely observed novel, which covers vast

distances while moving no further than Emmett ' s hearth and home. Nicholson Baker ' s extraordinary ability to describe and celebrate life in all its rich ordinariness has never been so beautifully achieved.

An electrifying and hilarious novel about the mundanity of office life, reissued for Granta Editions.

Having turned phone sex into the subject of an astonishing national bestseller in *Vox*, Baker now outdoes himself with an outrageously arousing, acrobatically stylish "X-rated sci-fi fantasy that leaves *Vox* seeming more like mere fiber-optic foreplay" (*Seattle Times*). "Sparkling."--*San Francisco Chronicle*.

The Mezzanine

Dear Committee Members

Insignificance

My Search for Secrets in the Ruins of the Freedom of Information Act

A Novel

Substitute

A study of the decades leading up to World War II profiles the world leaders, politicians, business people, and others whose personal politics and ideologies provided an inevitable barrier to the peace process and whose actions led to the outbreak of war.

"A love letter to the book as a physical object, a source of intellectual ardor, and a form of emotional salvation" (*Salon*)—and a nod to *U and I*, Nicholson Baker's classic memoir about John Updike—from an award-winning author called "wonderfully bright" by *The New York Times Book Review*. Nearly twenty-five years ago, Nicholson Baker wrote *U and I*, the fretful and handwringing—but also groundbreaking—tale of his literary relationship with John Updike. *U and I* inspired a whole sub-genre of engaging writing about reading, but what no story of this type has ever done is tell its tale from the moment of conception, that moment when you realize that there is writer out there in the world that you must read. *B & Me* is that story, the story of J.C. Hallman discovering and reading Nicholson Baker...and discovering himself in the process. Our relationship to books in the digital age, the role of art in an increasingly commodified world, the power great writing has to change us, these are at the core of Hallman's investigation of Baker—questions he's grappled with, values he's come to doubt. But in reading Baker's work, Hallman discovers the key to overcoming the malaise that had been plaguing him, through the books themselves and what he finds and contemplates in his attempts to understand them and their enigmatic author. *B & Me* is literary self-archaeology: an irreverent, incisive story of one reader's desperate quest to restore passion to literature, and all the things he learns along the way. "A wide-ranging and idiosyncratic career survey for Nicholson Baker's work, a love letter to the act of reading, and a commentary on the modern novel, this is a book that readers will absolutely adore" (*Publishers Weekly*, starred review).

Our supreme fabulist of the ordinary now turns his attention on a 9-year-old American girl and produces a novel as enchantingly idiosyncratic as any he has written. Nory Winslow wants to be a dentist or a designer of pop-up books. She likes telling stories and inventing dolls. She has nightmares about teeth, which may explain her career choice. She is going to school in England, where she is mocked for her accent and her friendship with an unpopular

girl, and she has made it through the year without crying. Nicholson Baker follows Nory as she interacts with her parents and peers, thinks about God and death-watch beetles, and dreams of cows with pointed teeth. In this precocious child he gives us a heroine as canny and as whimsical as Lewis Carroll's Alice and evokes childhood in all its luminous weirdness.

Short-listed for the Man Booker Prize From the author of *Remainder* and *C* (short-listed for the Man Booker Prize), and a winner of the Windham-Campbell Literature Prize, comes *Satin Island*, an unnerving novel that promises to give us the first and last word on the world—modern, postmodern, whatever world you think you are living in. U., a "corporate anthropologist," is tasked with writing the Great Report, an all-encompassing ethnographic document that would sum up our era. Yet at every turn, he feels himself overwhelmed by the ubiquity of data, lost in buffer zones, wandering through crowds of apparitions, willing them to coalesce into symbols that can be translated into some kind of account that makes sense. As he begins to wonder if the Great Report might remain a shapeless, oozing plasma, his senses are startled awake by a dream of an apocalyptic cityscape. In *Satin Island*, Tom McCarthy captures—as only he can—the way we experience our world, our efforts to find meaning (or just to stay awake) and discern the narratives we think of as our lives.

On Elizabeth Bishop

The Poorhouse Fair

The Fermata

Human Smoke

Picked-Up Pieces

You'd Be Home Now

While writing an introduction to a new poetry anthology, Paul Chowder struggles with the end of a relationship, his own stunted career, and the suffering of poets as varied as Tennyson and Roethke.

Shortlisted for the Goldsmith's Prize, the Gordon Burn Prize and the James Tait Black Award. Dive in to a tale of love and loathing with the beach read of the summer. Kathy is a writer. Kathy is getting married. It's the summer of 2017 and the whole world is falling apart. From a Tuscan hotel for the super-rich to a Brexit-paralysed UK, Kathy spends the first summer of her forties trying to adjust to making a lifelong commitment just as Trump is tweeting the world into nuclear war. But it's not only Kathy who's changing. Political, social and natural landscapes are all in peril. Fascism is on the rise, truth is dead, the planet is hotting up. Is it really worth learning to love when the end of the world is nigh? And how do you make art, let alone a life, when one rogue tweet could end it all. Olivia Laing radically rewires the novel in a brilliant, funny and emphatically raw account of love in the apocalypse. A Goodbye to Berlin for the 21st century, *Crudo* charts in real time what it was like to live and love in the horrifying summer of 2017, from the perspective of a commitment-phobic artist who may or may not be Kathy Acker . . .

A New Yorker writer revisits the seminal book of her youth--*Middlemarch*--and fashions a singular, involving story of how a passionate attachment to a great work of literature can shape our lives and help us to read our own histories. Rebecca Mead was a young woman in an English coastal town when she first read George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, regarded by many as the greatest English novel. After gaining admission to Oxford, and moving to the United States to become a journalist, through several love affairs, then marriage and family, Mead read and

reread *Middlemarch*. The novel, which Virginia Woolf famously described as "one of the few English novels written for grown-up people," offered Mead something that modern life and literature did not. In this wise and revealing work of biography, reporting, and memoir, Rebecca Mead leads us into the life that the book made for her, as well as the many lives the novel has led since it was written. Employing a structure that deftly mirrors that of the novel, *My Life in Middlemarch* takes the themes of Eliot's masterpiece--the complexity of love, the meaning of marriage, the foundations of morality, and the drama of aspiration and failure--and brings them into our world. Offering both a fascinating reading of Eliot's biography and an exploration of the way aspects of Mead's life uncannily echo that of Eliot herself, *My Life in Middlemarch* is for every ardent lover of literature who cares about why we read books, and how they read us.

Paul Chowder is a poet, but he's fallen out of love with writing poems. He hasn't fallen out of love with his ex-girlfriend Roz, though. In fact he misses her desperately. As he struggles to come to terms with Roz's new relationship with a doctor, Paul turns to his acoustic guitar for comfort and inspiration, and fills his days writing protest songs, going to Quaker meetings, struggling through Planet Fitness workouts, wondering if he could become a techno DJ, and experimenting with becoming a cigar smoker. Written in Baker's beautifully unconventional prose, and scored with musical influences from Debussy to Tracy Chapman to Paul himself, *Travelling Sprinkler* is an enchanting, hilarious, and deeply necessary novel. 'I think the job of the novelist is to write about interesting things, including things that might not seem all that interesting at first glance, and to offer evidence that life is worth living' Nicholson Baker

How to Talk About Books You Haven't Read

One Man, One Year, 21,730 Pages

B & Me

The Escape Artist

J.D. Salinger

Satin Island

"Staggeringly good." —Counterpunch A major new work, a hybrid of history, journalism, and memoir, about the modern Freedom of Information Act—FOIA—and the horrifying, decades-old government misdeeds that it is unable to demystify, from one of America's most celebrated writers Eight years ago, while investigating the possibility that the United States had used biological weapons in the Korean War, Nicholson Baker requested a series of Air Force documents from the early 1950s under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. Years went by, and he got no response. Rather than wait forever, Baker set out to keep a personal journal of what it feels like to try to write about major historical events in a world of pervasive redactions, withheld records, and glacially slow governmental responses. The result is one of the most original and daring works of nonfiction in recent memory, a singular and mesmerizing narrative that tunnels into the history of some of the darkest and most shameful plans and projects of the CIA, the Air Force, and the presidencies of Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower. In his lucid and unassuming style, Baker assembles what he learns, piece by piece, about Project Baseless, a crash Pentagon program begun in the early fifties that aimed to achieve "an Air Force-wide combat capability in biological and chemical warfare at the earliest possible date." Along the way, he unearths stories of balloons carrying crop disease, leaflet bombs filled with feathers, suicidal scientists, leaky centrifuges, paranoid political-warfare tacticians, insane experiments on animals and humans, weaponized ticks, ferocious propaganda battles with China, and cover and deception plans meant to trick the Kremlin into ramping up its germ-warfare program. At the same time, Baker tells the stories of the heroic journalists and lawyers who have devoted their

energies to wresting documentary evidence from government repositories, and he shares anecdotes from his daily life in Maine feeding his dogs and watching the morning light gather on the horizon. The result is an astonishing and utterly disarming story about waiting, bureaucracy, the horrors of war, and, above all, the cruel secrets that the United States government seems determined to keep forever from its citizens.

Shandee finds a friendly arm at a granite quarry. Ned drops down a hole in a golf course. Luna meets a man made of light bulbs at a tanning parlor. So begins Nicholson Baker's fuse-blowing, sex-positive escapade, *House of Holes*. Baker, the bestselling author of *The Mezzanine*, *Vox*, and *The Fermata*, who 'writes like no one else in America' (*Newsweek*), returns to erotic territory with a gleefully over-the-top novel set in a pleasure resort, where normal rules don't apply. Visitors, pulled in via their drinking straws or the dryers in laundromats, can undergo crotchal transfers . . . make love to trees . . . visit the Groanrooms and the twelve-screen Porndecadhedron . . . or pussy-surf the White Lake. It's very expensive, of course, but there are work-study programs. In charge of day-to-day operations is Lila, a former hospital administrator whose breast milk has unusual regenerative properties. Brimful of good-nature, wit, and surreal sexual vocabulary, *House of Holes* is a modern-day Hieronymous Boschian bacchanal that is sure to surprise, amuse, and arouse.

A Best Book of the Year: NPR and Boston Globe Finally a novel that puts the "pissed" back into "epistolary." Jason Fitger is a beleaguered professor of creative writing and literature at Payne University, a small and not very distinguished liberal arts college in the midwest. His department is facing draconian cuts and squalid quarters, while one floor above them the Economics Department is getting lavishly remodeled offices. His once-promising writing career is in the doldrums, as is his romantic life, in part as the result of his unwise use of his private affairs for his novels. His star (he thinks) student can't catch a break with his brilliant (he thinks) work *Accountant in a Bordello*, based on Melville's *Bartleby*. In short, his life is a tale of woe, and the vehicle this droll and inventive novel uses to tell that tale is a series of hilarious letters of recommendation that Fitger is endlessly called upon by his students and colleagues to produce, each one of which is a small masterpiece of high dudgeon, low spirits, and passive-aggressive strategies. We recommend Dear Committee Members to you in the strongest possible terms. The ostensible purpose of a library is to preserve the printed word. But for fifty years our country's libraries—including the Library of Congress—have been doing just the opposite, destroying hundreds of thousands of historic newspapers and replacing them with microfilm copies that are difficult to read, lack all the color and quality of the original paper and illustrations, and deteriorate with age. With meticulous detective work and Baker's well-known explanatory power, *Double Fold* reveals a secret history of microfilm lobbyists, former CIA agents, and warehouses where priceless archives are destroyed with a machine called a guillotine. Baker argues passionately for preservation, even cashing in his own retirement account to save one important archive—all twenty tons of it. Written the brilliant narrative style that Nicholson Baker fans have come to expect, *Double Fold* is a persuasive and often devastating book that may turn out to be *The Jungle* of the American library system.

The Way the World Works

Wrestling with D. H. Lawrence

Vintage Baker

The War Against Cliche

Out of Sheer Rage

My Life in Middlemarch

For fans of *Ducks*, *Newburyport* and Rivka Galchen's

Atmospheric Disturbances, a day-in-the-life of a plumber

whose troubles are all coming to a head. In an addictive, interior-monologue lyric novel, we meet Joseph. Back on the job after a long leave, he's not at all sure he'll make it through the day. Bad thoughts keep creeping in. He believes that his son, suffering from a condition in which he believes someone close to him has been replaced by an imposter, has tried to kill his wife. And that he'll try again. And that his wife is planning to leave him. Meanwhile, he's fixing a sink for his wife's friend. Insignificance unfurls over the course of a single day. Placing the reader inside the head of the struggling Joseph, it works double time, as a portrait of the uncertainty and awkwardness of one vulnerable man and his relationship with the world, and also as a tense, emotional, and gripping drama. In this deeply human and highly inventive story, we have a novel that portrays the thoughts of one working man on his own terms, without artifice or condescension. James Clammer pries open the head of a plumber to reveal the portrait of a fracturing mind taking us closer and closer to the edge. "Hands down the best novel about a plumber changing a water tank – and, incidentally, dealing with matters of grave and threatening existential weight – I have ever read." —Stephen Sparks, Point Reyes Books "In this short and powerful novel author James Clammer places readers inside the mind of Joe Forbes, a delightfully perceptive, middle-aged plumber who is trying to recover from a mental breakdown precipitated by his son's criminal conviction. Joe is very much an 'everyman,' yet his way of looking at the world and his circumstances is far from ordinary. With writing full of wit and sensitivity, Clammer's blue-collar hero goes back to work, longing to once again be strong, healthy, and confident – fully engaged within a society that stigmatizes weakness and mental illness. Insignificance is an absolute marvel, and one of the best books that I've read in quite some time." —Lori Feathers, Interabang Books "A brilliant look at family, mental health, and mid-life, Insignificance is a marvel. Tender, moving, and written with subtle humour, Clammer's novel takes the reader through a single day in the life of Joe Forbes, reluctant plumber and anguished father. A superb novel that hits all the right notes. I couldn't put it down." —Mark Haber, bookseller at Brazos Bookstore and author of Reinhardt's Garden

Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award, Nicholson Baker has established himself as one of our most brilliant observers of everyday experience. With his keen perception, flawless prose, and endless wit, he has composed both fiction and nonfiction that has become an essential part of our literature. Vintage Baker contains generous selections from the novels *Vox*, *The Fermata*, *The Mezzanine*, and *A Box of Matches*; essays from *The Size of Thoughts*; and portions of the NBCC award winner *Doublefold*. Vintage Readers are a perfect introduction to some of the great modern writers, presented in attractive, affordable paperback editions.

Baker muses on the creative process via his obsession with John Updike.

****A New York Times Bestseller**** "May be the most revealing depiction of the American contemporary classroom that we have to date." —Garret Keizer, *The New York Times Book Review* Bestselling author Nicholson Baker, in pursuit of the realities of American public education, signed up as a substitute teacher in a Maine

public school district. In 2014, after a brief orientation course and a few fingerprinting sessions, Nicholson Baker became an on-call substitute teacher in a Maine public school district. He awoke to the dispatcher's five-forty a.m. phone call and headed to one of several nearby schools; when he got there, he did his best to follow lesson plans and help his students get something done. What emerges from Baker's experience is a complex, often touching deconstruction of public schooling in America: children swamped with overdue assignments, overwhelmed by the marvels and distractions of social media and educational technology, and staff who weary themselves trying to teach in step with an often outmoded or overly ambitious standard curriculum. In Baker's hands, the inner life of the classroom is examined anew—mundane worksheets, recess time-outs, surprise nosebleeds, rebellions, griefs, jealousies, minor triumphs, kindergarten show-and-tell, daily lessons on everything from geology to metal tech to the Holocaust—as he and his pupils struggle to find ways to get through the day. Baker is one of the most inventive and remarkable writers of our time, and *Substitute*, filled with humor, honesty, and empathy, may be his most impressive work of nonfiction yet.

My Ear at His Heart

Essays and Reviews 1971-2000

The Everlasting Story of Nory

Libraries and the Assault on Paper

U and I

New Grub Street

Described in a recent *New York Times Magazine* profile as a "postcolonial Philip Roth," Hanif Kureishi first captured the attention of audiences and critics in the 1980s with the award-winning novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* and the films *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*. In three decades of acclaimed work, Kureishi has written fiction and films exploring a series of interconnected themes about identity and desire—from Islamic radicalism to kinky sex, and from psychoanalysis to the relationships of fathers and sons. After discovering an abandoned manuscript of his father's, hidden for years, Kureishi was compelled to turn his "unflinching perspective" (*Time Out*) onto his own history. Like Roth, Martin Amis and Geoffrey Wolfe, who also have written books about their fathers, Kureishi wanted to understand and perhaps to reconcile. *My Ear at His Heart* offers remarkable insight into the birth of a writer, chronicling how Kureishi's own literary calling emerged from the ashes of his father's aspirations. And so begins a journey that takes Kureishi through his father's privileged childhood by the sea in Bombay, through the turbulent birth of Pakistan and to his modest adult life in England—his days spent as a civil servant, his nights writing prose, hopeful of one day receiving literary recognition. "A beguiling and complex tale of fact, fiction and family tensions" (*The Guardian*), *My Ear at His Heart* was published to great acclaim in the United Kingdom in 2004 and went on to win the prestigious *Prix France Culture Etranger*. Now, this profound work from one of the most compelling artists of our time is at last available in a Scribner edition.

Lauded by *Vanity Fair* as "the best writer of our generation," Nicholson Baker has earned a complex and controversial reputation among contemporary American authors. In addition to being celebrated as a prose miniaturist for such works as *The Mezzanine* and *Room Temperature*, Baker is known for highly erotic works such as *Vox* and *The Fermata*. In *Understanding Nicholson Baker*, Arthur Saltzman engages these provocative fictions as well as Baker's nonfiction to show how his seemingly disparate works derive from and demonstrate an unremitting

zeal for explicit detail, along with descriptive obsessiveness and linguistic virtuosity.

FINALIST FOR THE NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE

AWARD "In the spirit of Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* and Alain de Botton's *How Proust Can Change Your Life*, Mr. Dyer's *Out of Sheer Rage* keeps circling its subject in widening loops and then darting at it when you least expect it . . . a wild book."--Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, *The New York Times* Geoff Dyer was a talented young writer, full of energy and reverence for the craft, and determined to write a study of D. H. Lawrence. But he was also thinking about a novel, and about leaving Paris, and maybe moving in with his girlfriend in Rome, or perhaps traveling around for a while. *Out of Sheer Rage* is Dyer's account of his struggle to write the Lawrence book--a portrait of a man tormented, exhilarated, and exhausted. Dyer travels all over the world, grappling not only with his fascinating subject but with all the glorious distractions and needling anxieties that define the life of a writer.

From a *New York Times*–bestselling and National Book Critics Award–winning author comes a “small masterpiece” of fatherhood, childhood, and bottle-feeding (*Publishers Weekly*). In a novel *Entertainment Weekly* called “intensely funny and moving,” Nicholson Baker takes the reader on an intellectual odyssey over the course of the twenty minutes it takes a new father to give his baby daughter her bottle. Through inspired moments of mental flight, Mike’s thoughts on his newfound parenthood lead him back to his own childhood and to reflections on the objects of his youth. From glass peanut butter jars to French horns, from typography to courtship, Baker reveals “some of the tenderest, most delicate interaction between husband and wife, adult and infant, in modern fiction” (*Los Angeles Times*). “Sparkling . . . frequently hilarious . . . This is a big novel unfolding . . . so subtly that one is scarcely aware of its magnitude until the last page.” —*The Boston Globe* “A delightful book . . . Every page provokes the shock, or at least the smile, of recognition.” —*The Washington Post* “A major cosmic drama . . . It is a delightful book . . . a real charmer, a breath of fresh air, a show-stopping coloratura aria made of the quirks of memory and the quiddities of daily life.” —*The Sacramento Union* “[A] small masterpiece by an extraordinarily gifted . . . writer.” —*Publishers Weekly*

The Folding Star

Essays

Checkpoint

A Box of Matches

A True Story of Literary Arousal

House of Holes

A personal inquiry into the near-mythic life and canonical work of the late author of *The Catcher in the Rye* draws on in-depth interviews to discuss his Park Avenue childhood, work with the *New Yorker* and decision to live in isolation. 10,000 first printing. “Brilliant . . . Here is the conflict of real ideas; of real personalities; here is a work of intellectual imagination and great charity. *The Poorhouse Fair* is a work of art.”—*The New York Times Book Review* The hero of John Updike’s first novel, published when the author was twenty-six, is ninety-four-year-old John Hook, a dying man who yet refuses to be dominated. His world is a poorhouse—a county home for the aged and infirm—overseen by Stephen Conner, a righteous young man who considers it his duty to know what is best for others. The action of the novel unfolds over a single summer’s day, the day of the poorhouse’s annual fair, a day of escalating tensions between Conner and the rebellious Hook. Its climax is a contest between progress and tradition, benevolence and pride, reason and faith. Praise for *The Poorhouse Fair* “A first novel of rare precision and real merit . . . a rich poorhouse indeed.”—*Newsweek* “Turning on a narrow plot of ground, it

achieves the rarity of bounded, native truth, and comes forth as microcosm.”—*Commonweal*

Going to School with a Thousand Kids