

New & Noteworthy

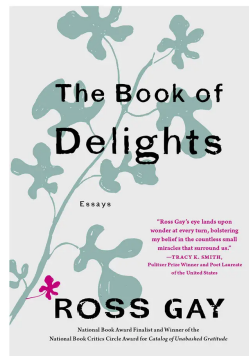
Feb. 26, 2019

Recent poetry collections

GLOSS By Rebecca Hazelton. (University of Wisconsin, paper, \$14.95.) Hazelton’s poems cast a teasing light over the surface sheen of social norms, the playacting in every relationship: “Let’s pretend to be with other people,” one ends, “until we’re with other people.” But beneath their own witty surfaces, the poems also brim with loss and serious moral inquiry. **WHEN I WALK THROUGH THAT DOOR, I AM** By Jimmy Santiago Baca. (Beacon, paper, \$10.95.) Subtitled “An Immigrant Mother’s Quest,” this book-length poem follows a woman battling obstacles from El Salvador to the United States to secure a better life for her son. **WHAT’S IN A NAME** By Ana Luísa Amaral, translated by Margaret Jull Costa. (New Directions, paper, \$16.95.) This bilingual volume, pairing Costa’s translations with Amaral’s Portuguese originals, relies on humble imagery and plain language to plumb complicated truths, as in a poem about the brother of the prodigal son: “It must be a strange thing / loyalty / and how difficult the task / of loving.” **TAP OUT** By Edgar Kunz. (Mariner, paper, \$14.99.) In his debut collection, Kunz charts the gritty, physical terrain of blue-collar masculinity: a workbench made from scrap wood, a night job in an engine shop, a father’s hands with “knuckles more scar / than skin.” **STILL LIFE WITH MOTHER AND KNIFE** By Chelsea Rathburn. (Louisiana State University, paper, \$18.95.) Rathburn’s third book opens with a series of “introductions” — to statistics, to home economics, to sex ed — each illuminating an aspect of modern womanhood, often passed from mother to daughter.

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In which we ask colleagues at The Times what they’re reading now.



“It’s easy to fall into the habit of classifying literature as either plot-based or character-based — as if those things are mutually exclusive, and the full extent of what books have to offer. But in certain moods, what I really crave is neither plot nor character per se; it’s the sense of a sensibility shaping the work, a palpable consciousness at play. The *author* as character, I guess. Lately I’ve been turning to **THE BOOK OF DELIGHTS**, a new collection of very short essays by the poet Ross Gay in which he sets himself, over the course of a year, the task of almost-daily appreciations of the world. On the one hand, that’s unsurprising from a writer whose previous book was called ‘Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude.’ On the other hand, Gay has no illusions about the world he’s appreciating: The delights he extols here (music, laughter, generosity, poetry, lots of nature) are bulwarks against casual cruelties. As such they feel purposeful and imperative as well as contagious in their joy.”

— Gregory Cowles, Senior Editor, Books

A correction was made on March 25, 2019: An earlier version of this article referred incorrectly to Ross Gay’s poetry collection “Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude.” It is his third book, not his first.

When we learn of a mistake, we acknowledge it with a correction. If you spot an error, please let us know at nytnews@nytimes.com. [Learn more](#)

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