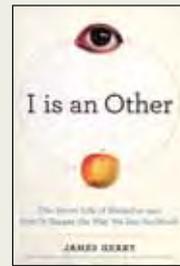


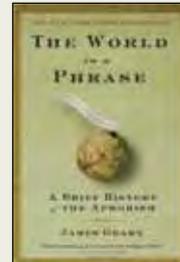
# James Geary Reviews



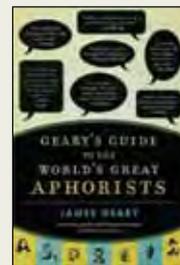
James Geary is the author of the *New York Times* best-selling *The World in a Phrase: A Brief History of the Aphorism* and *Geary's Guide to the World's Great Aphorists*, both of which celebrate the lively, witty, and provocative art of the short, philosophical sayings known as aphorisms. His latest book is *I Is an Other: The Secret Life of Metaphor and How It Shapes the Way We See the World*, a fascinating look at metaphors and their influence on every aspect of our lives, from economics and advertising, to politics and business, to science and psychology.  
www.jamesgeary.com



**I Is an Other:**  
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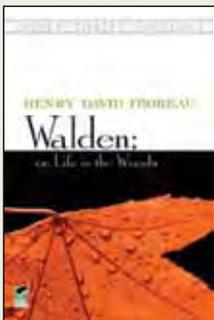


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*"It happens to us once or twice in a lifetime to be drunk with some book which probably has some extraordinary relative power to intoxicate us and none other," Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "and having exhausted that cup of enchantment we go groping in libraries all our years afterwards in the hope of being in Paradise again." The following 12 books have proven inexhaustible and intoxicating sources of enchantment for me.*



## Walden Henry David Thoreau

I first read *Walden* when I was 15. I was assigned a few chapters as part of a high school literature class. But I read the books four times consecutively; once I finished a reading, I turned right back to the beginning and started all over again. *Walden* is the ultimate statement of personal and intellectual independence, a paean to the quest to live a meaningful life. Thoreau's line "Morning is when I am awake and there is dawn in me" is one of my all-time favorite aphorisms

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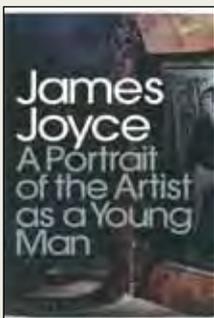


## The Complete Poems of Hart Crane

### Hart Crane

Hart Crane is one of the great American poets of the 20th century, though few people read him anymore. His poetry isn't easy—he deliberately eschewed conventional grammar and meanings—but it is lyrically gorgeous and intensely rewarding. His ideas about "the logic of metaphor" are featured in my book about metaphor, *I is an Other*.

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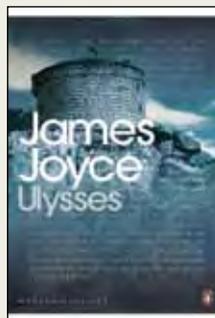


## A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

**James Joyce**  
*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is another declaration of intellectual independence, a masterly spiritual coming-of-age story. At the Catholic high

school I attended, the priest who taught our religion course suggested that we, the students, design our own liturgy. A friend and I chose the readings; he chose something from the New Testament and I chose Stephen Daedalus' "I will not serve in that which I no longer believe..." speech from *A Portrait*.

Paperback 384 pages £8.99 516950



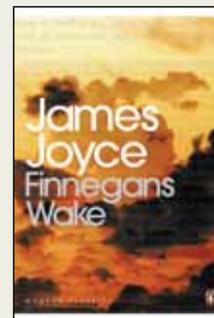
## Ulysses

### James Joyce

I still remember the moment I finally started to understand *Ulysses*. I had tried to read the book many times over a period of a few years. But I would get about 100 pages into it, realize I didn't understand a word I was reading, and put

the book aside. I was in Germany waiting for a train, reading the passage in which Leopold Bloom flees a pub because one drunk in particular is taunting him. Joyce describes Bloom's flight in mock Biblical language, which made me laugh at loud. Then I understood: *Ulysses* is incredibly funny. Once I got Joyce's sense of humor, and stopped trying to figure the book out, everything fell into place.

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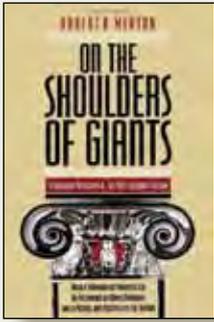
## Finnegans Wake

### James Joyce

Joyce has had a huge impact on me, both as a reader and a writer. His linguistic inventiveness, on full display in *Finnegans Wake*, is astounding. For all its density and allusiveness, *Finnegans Wake* is an incredibly moving and

deeply emotional book. It is best read aloud; this is the only way to hear the musicality of the text. The many overlapping meanings also become much clearer when you hear the words spoken. There is a recording of Joyce reading a passage from *Finnegans Wake*; it is a real delight to hear the book in the master's voice. Joyce was a gifted singer, so he makes the words sing—literally.

Paperback 688 pages £12.99 516947



## On the Shoulders of Giants: A Shandean Postscript

Robert K. Merton

Published in 1965, *On the Shoulders of Giants* is a profound, provocative peregrination along the trail of the aphorism, "If I have seen farther it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." Merton demonstrates—through a series of astonishingly erudite, scholarly and witty digressions—that this saying, commonly attributed to Isaac Newton, was actually first coined by Bernard of Chartres, in the 12th century. OTSOG, as the book was

dubbed by Merton, is one of the few texts in which the words "gnomology" and "gnomologist" both appear. If you like aphorisms, and love learning about wildly different domains and ideas, this book is a masterpiece. It is also, unfortunately, hard to find.

**Paperback 348 pages £30.00 5169553**



## The Nag Hammadi Library: The Gospel of Thomas

*The Nag Hammadi Library* is a trove of manuscripts from the early days of Christianity, around the 4th century. Discovered by some shepherds in Egypt just after World War II, they consist of fascinating variations on what we have come to know as the canonical gospels as well as esoteric scriptures from the Gnostic movement and the Essenes, communities of ascetics and mystics of which some suggest Jesus was a part. The Gospel of Thomas is a collection of the sayings of Jesus and is probably as close to his actual words as we are ever likely to come—no miracles, no healings, no raising of the dead; just what the man himself is said to have said. My favorite: "Become as passersby." The shepherds who discovered the manuscripts used some of them as kindling before selling them to antiquities dealers

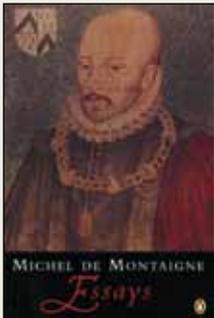
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## Essays

Michel de Montaigne

Speaking of autobiography, Montaigne's *Essays* are unparalleled. Reading these reflections on everything from the afterlife to the satisfactions of scratching an itch is like being inside Montaigne's mind. His style is so easy, so intimate and his interests and insights so far reaching that, in the end, the book becomes an encyclopedia of one person's life and, in many ways, of all our lives.

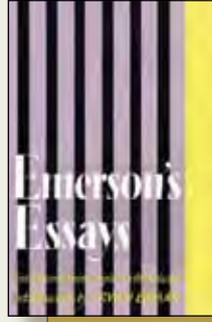
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## The Book of Chuang Tzu

The sole historical fact about Chuang Tzu that can be verified with any certainty is that a book of fables and anecdotes bears his name. Together with Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu is credited as a founder of the Taoist school of Chinese philosophy, though it is impossible to determine if either man ever really existed. What is indisputable, however, is that the book of Chuang Tzu is one of the most amazing and amusing collections of stories, parables and aphorisms ever written. The work attributed to Chuang Tzu takes the form of a series of dialogues, strange encounters and tall tales populated by bewildered acolytes, mythical heroes and a menagerie of talking beasts. Chuang Tzu sometimes narrates these stories and sometimes appears in them as one of the characters.

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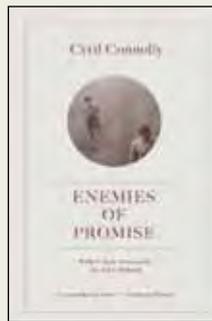
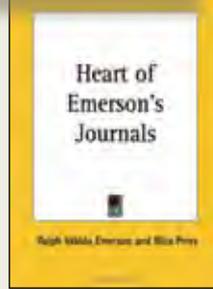
## Essays and The Heart of Emerson's Journals

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Emerson was passionate about reading and writing, about being a reader and being a writer, both of which he believed were equally creative acts. His insights on and struggles with writing are inspirational. His *Essays* are classics of rhetoric and practical philosophy; his journals are an intimate look at his creative process. No one got at the heart of writing better than Emerson did, to wit: "The way to write is to throw your entire body at the target after all your arrows are spent"; "Words are signs of natural facts. Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts. Nature is the symbol of spirit ... The whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind"; "Life is our dictionary"; "You shall not tell me that your house is of importance in the commercial world. You shall not tell me that you have learned to know men. You shall make me feel that. Else your saying so unsays it."

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**Heart of Emerson's Journals: Paperback 368 pages £20.95 516945**



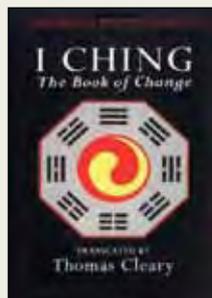
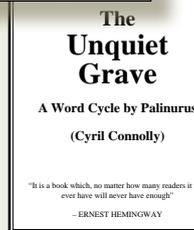
## The Unquiet Grave and Enemies of Promise

Cyril Connolly

Cyril Connolly was the archetypal man of letters: astute, astonishingly well read and brilliantly argumentative. He wrote eloquently on the art of writing and the compulsion, even the duty, to produce masterpieces. *The Unquiet Grave*, published just after World War II, is a lively stimulating mix of his own ruminations on writing and extracts by and about his favorite French aphorists. His autobiography, *Enemies of Promise*, provides an engaging insight into this complicated, ornery, incredibly gifted man.

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## I Ching

According to Chinese legend, the mythical folk hero Fu Hsi compiled the *I Ching*, or Book of Changes, some 5,000 years ago. Originally intended as a method of divination, the Book of Changes embodies the essence of ancient Chinese philosophy: all is flux and everything is in the process of becoming something else. These transformations are chronicled in a cycle of 64 scenarios that cover the full spectrum of human life. Each scenario represents a primal experience, a situation everyone has faced or will face in the future. And since change is inevitable, each situation is shadowed by its opposite. Each of the 64 scenarios is made up of six brief, aphoristic lines of text that both narrate and comment on the experience through a mix of blunt judgments and bewildering but often beautiful imagery.

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