

A Summer Reading Sampler

Summer approaches, and it may be time for a break from the usual style guides and writing manuals. Each of the following titles features good writing and good ideas—the perfect summer-reading combination. Most are available in paperback, making them convenient to carry for those lucky enough to be able to get away. Enjoy!

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time. (Mark Haddon. New York: Doubleday; 2003. 226 pages. ISBN 0-385-50945-6.)

This witty novel, narrated by a 15-year-old boy who has autism or a related disorder, has much to attract those who enjoy both literature and the sciences. There's a mystery. There's an endearing, if sometimes exasperating, protagonist. There are difficult interpersonal dynamics. There are mathematics, physical science, biology, and psychology. There are literary references. There are humor and pathos and reconciliation. It all comes together to make a fine read. And the paperback version, from Vintage Books, can fit in a pocket or small tote to carry on a plane or to the beach.—*Barbara Gastel*

Prodigal Summer. (Barbara Kingsolver. New York: HarperCollins; 2000. 444 pages. ISBN 0-06-019965-2.)

In title and otherwise, this novel is a quintessential summer read, long and lush and seeping with hormones. Biologists and biology figure prominently in the book, which features three intertwined tales of romance: “Predators”, “Moth Love”, and “Old Chestnuts”. In keeping with her education as a biologist, author Kingsolver explores biologic issues and themes within the context of her story. The book's endpapers, bearing illustrations of moths, likewise integrate the scientific and the sensual. Although *Prodigal Summer* may appeal especially to biology editors, many science editors and others may find it well worth including on their summer reading lists.—*BG*

The Founding Fish. (John McPhee. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux; 2002. 352 pages. ISBN 0-374-10444-1.)

The American shad is a near obsession for author—and angler—John McPhee. Anyone who has experienced the frustration of an empty fishhook will empathize with some of the fishing descriptions in *The Founding Fish*. The book guides the reader through the breadth of what there is to know about the American shad and delves into management of waterways and fisheries. McPhee's use of humor has developed with time, and *The Founding Fish* shows him poking fun at his fishing abilities and drawing rich laughs from the contrasts he finds in the natural world.—*Edith Paal*

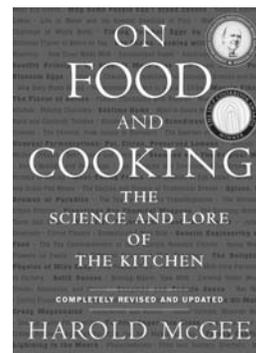
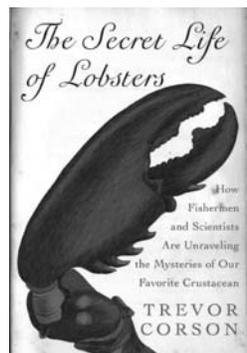
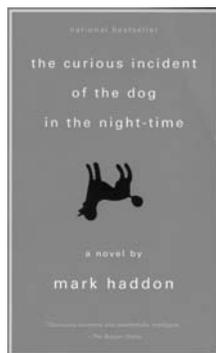
The Secret Life of Lobsters. (Trevor Corson. New York: HarperCollins; 2004. 289 pages. ISBN 0-06-055558-0.)

To some, a lobster is more than a gastronomic delight to be enjoyed on a special occasion. The livelihoods of at least two types of people—the scientists who study lobsters and the lobstermen who fish for them—depend on this crustacean. Trevor Corson introduces us to both groups in *The Secret Life of Lobsters*, as well as to the creature itself. Both scientists and lobstermen are interested in the well-being of lobster populations, and the people Corson encounters have had an interest in lobsters since childhood. Their interactions, with the descriptions of lobster behavior, make for engaging beach reading.—*EP*

On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen. Revised edition. (Harold McGee. New York: Scribner; 2004. 884 pages. ISBN 0-684-80001-2.)

This updated and greatly expanded edition offers a wealth of reading for those interested in the science—and more—of food. Included—in addition to extensive biologic, chemical, and physical information—are historical perspectives and etymologic insights. Illustrations, tables, and sidebars enliven the pages and enhance

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understanding. The design of the book, with many short sections, makes for easy browsing. Perhaps especially suited for summer reading are the survey of common fruits, the section on ice cream, and the paragraph on iced tea. If you like the kitchen but want to avoid its heat in the summer, try this book.—BG

Moosewood Restaurant Simple Suppers: Fresh Ideas for the Weeknight Table. (The Moosewood Collective. New York: Clarkson Potter; 2005. 302 pages. ISBN 0-609-60912-2.)

For some of us, summer means more time to browse through cookbooks and try new recipes. Yet long hours in a hot kitchen hardly appeal at this time of year. One solution: *Moosewood Restaurant Simple Suppers*, the latest cookbook from the Moosewood Collective. Like other Moosewood cookbooks, this one is largely vegetarian (some fish recipes are included), and it emphasizes produce, making it a good summer pick. Recipes suiting the season include Summer Panzanella (a main-dish bread salad), Greek Antipasto Pita, Chipotle Potato Salad, and Cherry Shortbread Crumble. Despite the book's subtitle, many dishes seem special enough for weekend fare.—BG

Hot Lights, Cold Steel: Life, Death and Sleepless Nights in a Surgeon's First Years. (Michael J. Collins. New York: St Martin's Press; 2005. 308 pages. ISBN 0-312-33778-7.)

This tale of orthopedic residency at Mayo

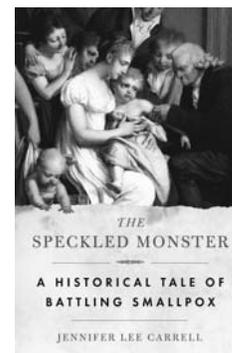
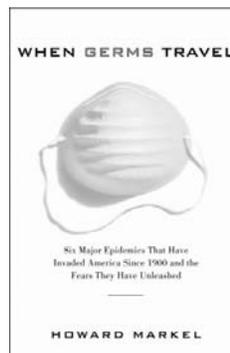
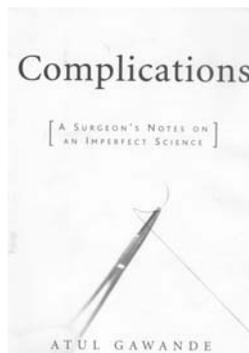
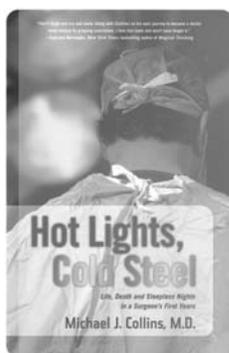
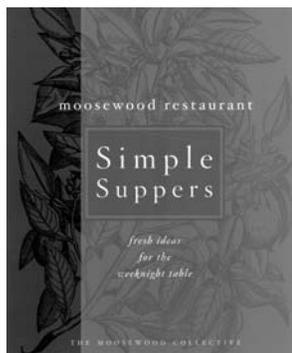
Clinic ranks high in the genre of medical-training memoir. The storytelling is lively, with effective use of literary techniques; the author is engaging; tragedy and humor are balanced well; and the pacing keeps one turning the pages. Both residency and orthopedics have changed somewhat in the 20-plus years since the author completed his training, but much remains the same, and the book provides insight as well as entertainment. And the accounts of contending with the Minnesota winter might prove refreshing on hot summer days.—BG

Complications. (Atul Gawande. New York: Henry Holt and Company; 2002. 269 pages. ISBN 0-8050-6319-6.)

We'd like to think that medicine is based on science, that medical outcomes are predictable, and that all the hands that work on us are practiced. In *Complications*, Atul Gawande, a staff writer at *The New Yorker* who is also a doctor, discusses the human, and therefore unpredictable, aspect of medicine. The author describes the challenges that doctors face each day, such as a condition that is not easily diagnosed or a procedure that does not go as expected. Gawande's candor and rich prose make the practice of medicine engaging for anyone who has ever visited a doctor.—EP

When Germs Travel. (Howard Markel. New York: Pantheon Books; 2004. 263 pages. ISBN 0-375-42095-9.)

Seeing new sights, meeting new people, and possibly encountering new microor-



ganisms—all are potentially part of the travel experience. Howard Markel looks at the public-health response to six diseases that have historically been known to cross international borders in *When Germs Travel*. The early 1900s plague epidemic in San Francisco's Chinatown, for example, led to a rather porous quarantine of the neighborhood—white, native-born Americans could come and go freely while the movements of residents of Chinese descent were restricted. Markel's overview of this and other cases provides a fascinating look at the history of international public health.—EP

The Speckled Monster. (Jennifer Lee Carrell. New York: Penguin Group; 2003. 475 pages. ISBN 0-525-94736-1.)

Edward Jenner, with his inoculation of 8-year-old James Phipps against smallpox in 1796, is the person most often thought

of in connection with early efforts to fight the dreaded disease. However, others preceded him by decades in fighting smallpox's spread. In *The Speckled Monster*, Jennifer Lee Carrell introduces us to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Dr Zabdiel Boylston. Those two, both smallpox survivors, encouraged early forms of inoculation, Montague working in London and Boylston in Boston. This is no dry history text. The inclusion of lively historical detail makes for a dramatic depiction of the times and places where these people worked.—EP

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