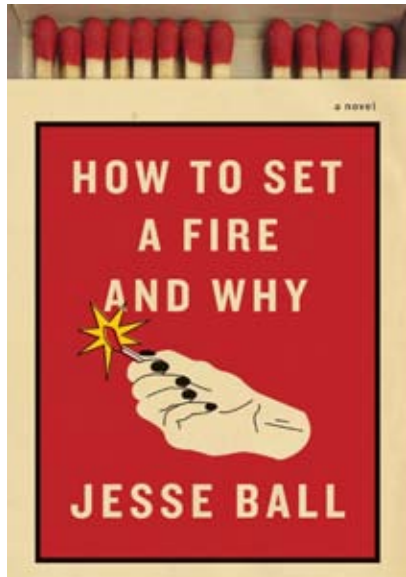


kids, teens & tweens

Little Mouse and the Big Tree: A Tale of Friendship by Kate Crockett Juliana, illustrated by Holly Sweet. Esmerelda Press, \$20.

Nature lovers will be overjoyed to read this book to their kiddos. Little Mouse ventures out of the nest and into the wide world. Invited up into the tall branches of a Douglas fir by the tree itself, Little Mouse grows up as she climbs the tree, encountering bullies and friends. *Little Mouse and the Big Tree* is indeed a tale of friendship, but at its core is a lovenote for the forest and a call for children to love and preserve it as well. — *Camilla Mortensen*



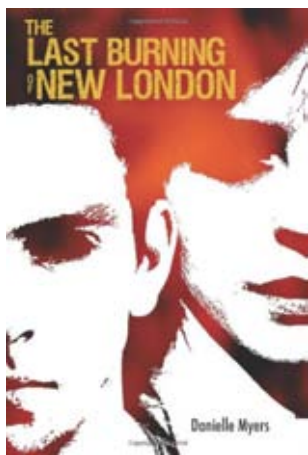
How to Set a Fire and Why by Jesse Ball. Pantheon, \$24.95.

My inner teenager is officially swooning for Lucia, the main character of Jesse Ball's latest novel *How to Set a Fire and Why*. She's a youthful gal who gives zero fucks about acceptable social conduct and her mindset lingers between genius and sociopath.

Lucia's parents are dead and she's a ball of teenage angst who has been kicked out of several high schools. At first glance, I thought Ball was setting up an overdone, manic-pixie dream-girl romance story, but he (thankfully) didn't go there. Instead, Lucia's main concerns are having intellectual chats with her aunt, making it through a test that could get her into a prestigious writing school and, you guessed it, setting something on fire.

There's an anarchist arson group at Lucia's latest high school that's caught her eye. She knows she'll be accepted into the underground cohort since she can accurately calculate predictions, which she notes in her trusty journal with a language well beyond her years. While she gets to know more about arson, Lucia writes a glorious zine about how to set a fire (and why) that's oddly applicable to life even for the less pyromaniacal audience.

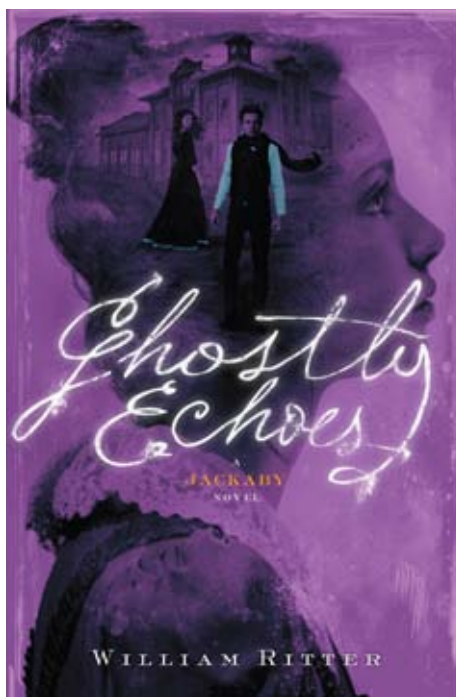
Somewhere in between ditching class and making friends with people who finally get her, Lucia is faced with devastating obstacles any person would freak out about. Her challenges could be an awesome opportunity for some multi-layered character development, but alas, Ball falls short in this arena. Either way, Lucia is a lovable weirdo whose story keeps readers turning the pages. — *Kelsey Anne Rankin*



The Last Burning of New London by Danielle Myers. RainTown Press, \$17.95.

I admit it; I'm a sucker for dystopian teen novels. *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent* I read them all. Author Danielle Myers started writing *The Last Burning of New London* when she was 17 and finished it her freshman year at Seattle Pacific University, so the teen

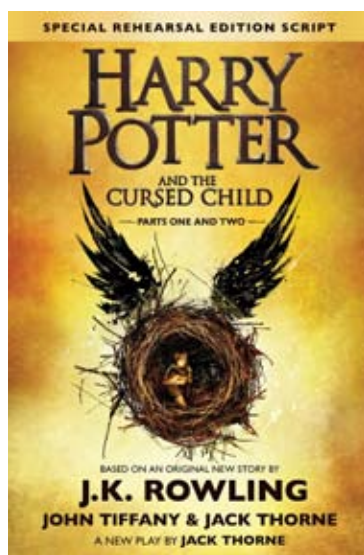
perspective isn't forced, it's real. The leaping about in perspective from heroine pickpocket Jacks to the members of The Flames, the resistance group Jacks finds herself part of, is disorienting at first, but soon individual characters begin to take shape and the multiple perspectives allow the narrative to build and clever twists to unfold. My only complaint really is that reading about a devastated country ruled by an evil emperor felt a little too real during the recent presidential election. — *Camilla Mortensen*



Ghostly Echoes: A Jackaby Novel

by William Ritter. Algonquin Young Readers, \$17.95.

Springfield resident William Ritter brings the 12-and-up set back to the strange world of the residents of 926 Augur Lane: Abigail Rook, the mysterious R.F. Jackaby and the ghostly Jenny Cavanaugh. Ritter mixes folklore with weird science in the third installment of the Jackaby series that brings Abigail from 19th-century New England to the underworld. Despite its faraway setting, Ritter dashes in characters clearly recognizable from Eugene, including my favorite, Hatun, a seer clearly modeled on Hatoon, an unhoused woman who used to live just outside the University of Oregon bookstore. Hatun let him weave in understanding of the mentally ill in previous books and in this one the character of Miss Lee, who is trans, reminds us that transgender people have always existed, even before many of us noticed. — *Camilla Mortensen*



Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, Parts One and Two by J.K. Rowling, John Tiffany and Jack Thorne. Arthur A. Levine Books, \$29.99.

When I saw *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* described online as "better-than-average fanfiction," I knew I had to read it. Turns out, that description

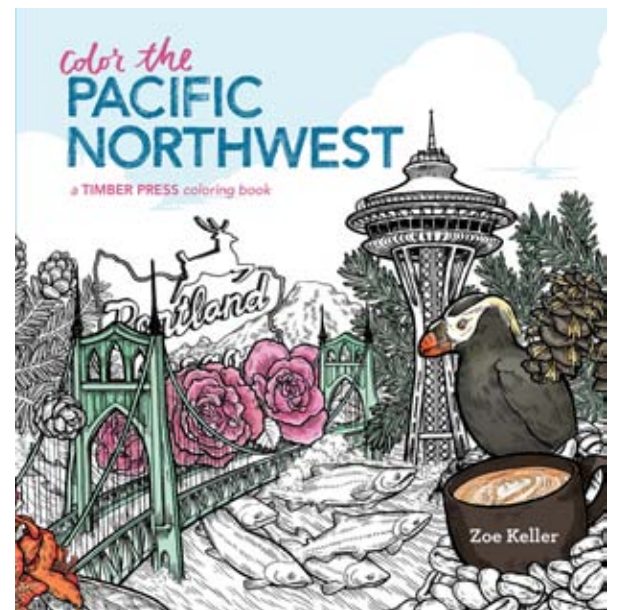
was a little too generous.

Written in script form, this book takes place 19 years after the events of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. It follows the adventures of Albus Severus Potter (yep, that's really his name), the misfit son of Harry Potter and Ginny Weasley, and Scorpius Malfoy who, weirdly, serves as the comic relief in this story, even though his dad reigned antagonistic terror on the Potter gang in the previous novels.

If that mismatch strikes a painful nerve in your Harry Potter-loving soul, you're not alone. The story abounds with off-kilter dialogue, unnerving personality departures and lazy plot devices. The joy of reading about the exploits of beloved characters like Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley quickly gives way to unease as the repetitive use of time travel becomes the core propellant of the story.

Events unfold in a *Butterfly Effect* manner, giving dead characters a chance to reappear and interact with the young protagonists. A particularly cringeworthy scene involves an uncharacteristically benevolent Severus Snape, grandiose and magnanimous, sending a kind message to his future namesake.

For true Snape fans, and fans of the Harry Potter books in general, it's a slap in the face. — *Amy Klarup*



art

Color the Pacific Northwest by Zoe Keller. Timber Press, \$12.95.

Portland-based artist Zoe Keller has a magic touch. Her illustrations mine the heart of this region so well that they may as well have sprung from the spongy earth itself, and that was long before she paired up with Timber Press to create a coloring book that is essentially a love letter to the Pacific Northwest. Enjoy 50-plus pages filled with all the critters, flora, fungi and historical and cultural landmarks that make this corner of the earth so special. What really sets this coloring book apart, however, is the educational aspect: Each species is identified, including those nearing extinction, and manmade wonders are put in context. Look for appearances by spotted owls, golden chanterelles, giant green anemones, Oregon ranching country, Pike Place Market, British Columbia totem poles and Bigfoot himself. To see more of Zeller's mesmerizing work, visit zoekeller.com. — *Alex V. Cipolle*

Artful Paper Clay: Techniques for Adding Dimension to Your Art by Rogene Mañas. North Light Books, \$24.99.



Art is not a practical matter, but thanks to Eugene artist and author Rogene Mañas, its creation can be divided into practical nuggets. With *Artful Paper Clay*, Mañas offers both seasoned and novice artists alike solid footing to start adding complexity to 2-D art projects. The focus is on paper clay (also known as fiberclay), or clay with cellulose fibers added, a material available at most art supply

stores. The book is divided into four parts — Working with Clay, Clay Work Projects, Finishing Techniques and Creative Projects — and filled with gorgeous images of Mañas' work, some of which has been on view in Eugene for past Mayor's Art Shows. — *Alex V. Cipolle*

poetry

Wish Meal: Poems by Tim Whitsel. Arlie Press, \$16.

David James Duncan writes of *Wish Meal*, "These poems ride out moments of bare survival, of hopefulness and beauty, and of complete brokenness with equally keen attention and articulation, often creating solace through an acuity of perception to events that would otherwise be without solace. I couldn't put *Wish Meal* down." If you, like me, are a fan of *The Brothers K* and *The River Why*, then you know this is high praise indeed. Tim Whitsel, who lives on a 100-year floodplain outside Springfield, writes his poetry with musical introspection, at times almost lyrical. No doubt my river-loving bias leads me to feel he is as his best when musing on Oregon's rivers and nature, from the allure of a mudflat to a metaphor of poet as driftboat, "I have faltered, I admit, against my anchor/certain nights in worship of stars." — *Camilla Mortensen*