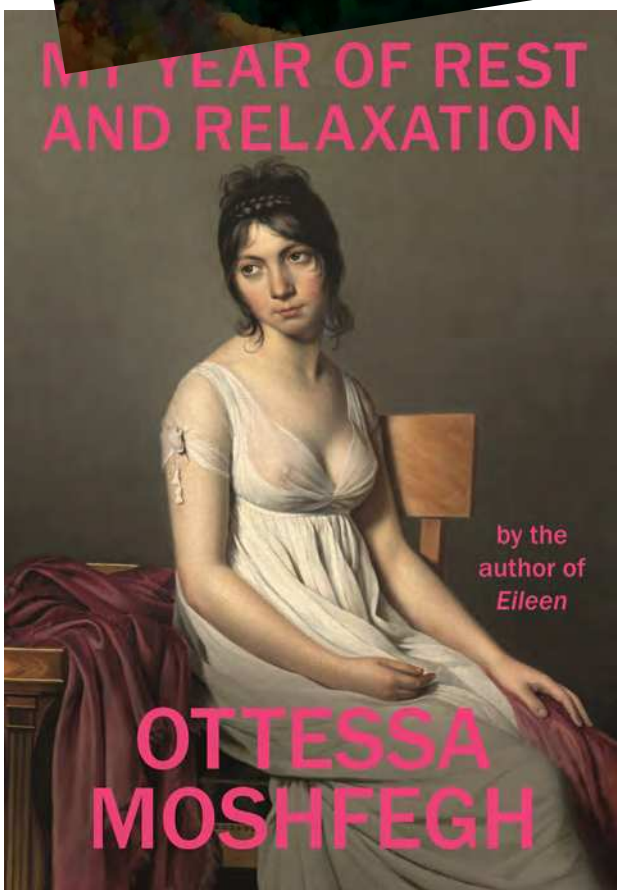
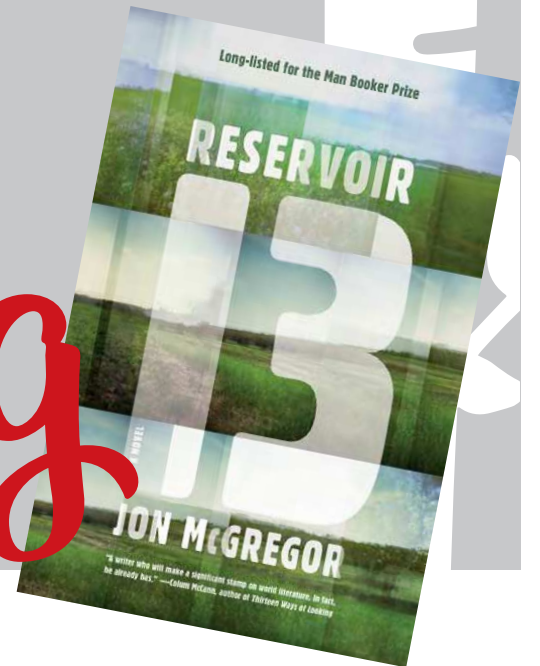


Winter Reading



fiction

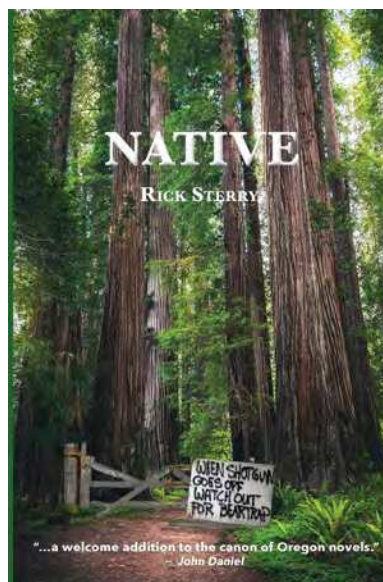
■ **All Coyote's Children** by Bette Lynch Husted. Oregon State University Press, \$18.95.

The road less traveled is one of forgiveness and acceptance. It is hard work and a lonely walk, but Bette Lynch Husted's intimate story of characters who choose this path makes her debut novel spiritually uplifting and well worth a winter's read. Husted touches all the bases. There are the characters (Annie, Riley, Leona, Alex, Mattie and others), ordinary people on the mend after horrific setbacks. There are the Native Americans in the area, children and adults, who must navigate the institutional racism that was generations in the making and seemingly never-ending. There is, too, the rugged and unforgiving (yet beautiful) landscape of Oregon's Umatilla County, a place that absorbs the characters and forges the road of forgiveness and acceptance where the characters walk. This is a touching novel full of reconciliation and hope at the end. — Dan Buckwalter

■ **My Year of Rest and Relaxation** by Ottessa Moshfegh. Penguin Press, \$26.

Otessa Moshfegh's latest book is a deliciously rancid tale about the emptiness of modern life. If you read Moshfegh's acclaimed *Elaine*, you know her style: Moshfegh lets her greasy prose drip down her chin. She chews on all the things we dare not say — those things we think in the darkest recesses of our brains. And somehow she manages to make it funny (sort of). Funny like a guillotine. Funny like a noose. In the book, set in the year 2000, only just pre-9/11, Moshfegh's main character remains unnamed. She's beautiful, living in the middle of the New York art world. She has hot sex with her ex-boyfriend. She seems to have it all. That is, until she dupes her absurd New York therapist into giving her just enough imaginatively named, and completely made up, prescription medication to stay (mostly) asleep for the better part of a year. And that's just what she does. She watches movies on VHS, but only on the rare occasion when she emerges from her drug-induced stupor — times when she also manages to tolerate her vapid best friend with an eating disorder. If this all sounds like the making for some kind of high-concept

art piece, you already have a sense of how the book ends. While the end doesn't exactly end with a twist, the conclusion does force you to go back through what you've just read and reconsider it all in a new color. With *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*, Moshfegh asks one of life's most profound questions: Is it possible to be well-adjusted to a profoundly sick society? And now more than ever, checking out never sounded so good. — Will Kennedy



■ **Native** by Rick Sterry. Bearpaw Press, \$12.

Native is one of those books that once you pick up, you cannot put it back down. I ravaged this novel page by page one rainy night, refusing to sleep until I came to the end. The story covers several characters, whose lives collide over a spring and summer due to a merciless murder in a sleepy Oregon coast town. Rick Sterry's main characters shine, each having their own unique voice and authentic identity. The story is masterfully presented with surprising twists and turns along the way. As each page unfolds, the depth of the story increases and one will find themselves getting further lost in the lives of a teenage runaway, a struggling waitress, an ambitious local

deputy and the town renegade. This novel is an artfully written tale of finding oneself, vengeance, and of love and loss — that will leave you begging for more. — Elisha Young

■ **Reservoir 13** by Jon McGregor. Catapult, \$16.95.

British novelist Jon McGregor has invented a new species of literature with *Reservoir 13*. On its surface, the novel is a missing-person thriller about a teenage girl who mysteriously disappears while her family is visiting an English village. This rather hackneyed conceit, however, becomes a cosmic fillip in McGregor's expert hands, as he telescopes out over the course of 13 years, keeping a god-like but intimate eye on a village haunted by the receding echo of the girl's disappearance. The book zooms in and out on the various tangled lives of the villagers, treating their dramas with the same curious detachment by which it peruses the seasons of nature and the mating of woodland animals. It's as though McGregor wraps the high modernism of Virginia Woolf into a ball of yarn that he then drops it into the middle of the vastest ocean. The results are dizzying, in a way that is at once deeply human and cosmically humbling. *Reservoir 13* is breathtaking, hallucinatory stuff, a haunting of ghosts living and dead. — Rick Levin