How Baseball Happened

Interest and attendance were dropping, and football was ascending. Stuck in a rut, baseball was dying. Then Steinbrenner bought the Yankees, a second-division club with wife-swapping pitchers, leaving the House That Ruth Built not with a slam but a simper. He vowed not to interfere—before soon changing his mind. Across town, Tom Seaver led the Mets’ stellar pitching line-up, and iconic outfielder Willie Mays was preparing to say goodbye. For months, the Mets, under Yogi Berra, couldn’t get it right. Meanwhile, the A’s were breaking a ban on facial hair while maverick owner Charlie Finley was fighting to keep them underpaid. But beneath the muttonchops and mayhem, lay another world. Elvis commanded a larger audience than the Apollo landings. A Dodge Dart cost $2,800, gas was a quarter per gallon. A fiscal crisis loomed; Vietnam had ended, the vice president resigned, and Watergate had taken over. It was one of the most exciting years in the game’s history, the first with the designated hitter and the last before arbitration and free agency. The two World Series opponents went head-to-head above the baby steps of a dynasty that soon dwarfed both league champions. It was a turbulent time for the country and the game, neither of which would ever be the same again.

American National Pastimes - A History
The Presidents and the Pastime draws on Curt Smith's extensive background as a former White House presidential speechwriter to chronicle the historic relationship between baseball, the "most American" sport, and the U.S. presidency. Smith, who USA TODAY calls "America's voice of authority on baseball broadcasting," starts before America's birth, when would-be presidents played baseball antecedents. He charts how baseball cemented its reputation as America's pastime in the nineteenth century, such presidents as Lincoln and Johnson playing town ball or giving employees time off to watch. Smith tracks every U.S. president from Theodore Roosevelt to Donald Trump, each chapter filled with anecdotes: Wilson buoyed by baseball after suffering disability; a heroic FDR saving baseball in World War II; Carter, taught the game by his mother, Lillian; Reagan, airing baseball on radio that he never saw--by "re-creation." George H. W. Bush, for whom Smith wrote, explains, "Baseball has everything." Smith, having interviewed a majority of presidents since Richard Nixon, shares personal stories on each. Throughout, The Presidents and the Pastime provides a riveting narrative of how America's leaders have treated baseball. From Taft as the first president to throw the "first pitch" on Opening Day in 1910 to Obama's "Go Sox!" scrawled in the guest register at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 2014, our presidents have deemed it the quintessentially American sport, enriching both their office and the nation.

National Pastime

At Westish College, a small school on the shore of Lake Michigan, baseball star Henry Skrimeshander seems destined for big league stardom. But when a routine throw goes disastrously off course, the fates of five people are upended. Henry's fight against self-doubt threatens to ruin his future. College president Guert Affenlight, a longtime bachelor, has fallen unexpectedly and helplessly in love. Owen Dunne, Henry's gay roommate and teammate, becomes caught up in a dangerous affair. Mike Schwartz, the Harpooners' team captain and Henry's best friend, realizes he has guided Henry's career at the expense of his own. And Pella Affenlight, Guert's daughter, returns to Westish after escaping an ill-fated marriage, determined to start a new life. As the season counts down to its climactic final game, these five are forced to confront their deepest hopes, anxieties, and secrets. In the process they forge new bonds, and help one another find their true paths. Written with boundless intelligence and filled with the tenderness of youth, The Art of Fielding is an expansive, warmhearted novel about ambition and its limits, about family and friendship and love, and about commitment--to oneself and to others.
Baseball Beyond Our Borders

This exquisite, resonant novel by PEN/Faulkner winner James Salter is a brilliant portrait of a marriage by a contemporary American master. It is the story of Nedra and Viri, whose favored life is centered around dinners, ingenious games with their children, enviable friends, and near-perfect days passed skating on a frozen river or sunning on the beach. But even as he lingers over the surface of their marriage, Salter lets us see the fine cracks that are spreading through it, flaws that will eventually mar the lovely picture beyond repair. Seductive, witty, and elegantly nuanced, Light Years is a classic novel of an entire generation that discovered the limits of its own happiness—and then felt compelled to destroy it.

Solo Faces

Baseball started out as a marginal urban sport associated with drinking and gambling.

Strokes of Genius

From the award-winning author James Salter and his wife, Kay - amateur chefs and terrific hosts - here is a lively, beautifully illustrated food lover's companion. With an entry for each day of the year, Life Is Meals takes us from a Twelfth Night cake in January to a champagne dinner on New Year's Eve. This is a book rich with culinary wisdom, history, recipes, literary pleasures, and the authors' own stories of their triumphs - and catastrophes - in the kitchen. Entries include: The menu on the Titanic on the fatal night The seductiveness of a velvety Brie or the perfect martini How to decide whom to invite to a dinner party - and whom not to The greatest dinner ever given at the White House Where in Paris Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter had French onion soup at 4:00 a.m. How to cope with acts of god and man-made disasters in the kitchen Sophisticated, practical, opinionated and indispensable, Life Is Meals is a tribute to the glory of food and drink, and the joy of sharing them with others.

Bad Behavior
"As nearly perfect as any American fiction I know," is how Reynolds Price (The New York Times) described this classic that has been a favorite of readers, both here and in Europe, for almost forty years. Set in provincial France in the 1960s, James Salter’s A Sport and a Pastime is the intensely carnal story—part shocking reality, part feverish dream—of a love affair between a footloose Yale dropout and a young French girl. There is the seen and the unseen—and pages that burn with a rare intensity.

Swinging ’73

Mrs. Caliban

The untold story of baseball’s nineteenth-century origins: “a delightful look at a young nation creating a pastime that was love from the first crack of the bat” (Paul Dickson, The Wall Street Journal). You may have heard that Abner Doubleday or Alexander Cartwright invented baseball. Neither did. You may have been told that a club called the Knickerbockers played the first baseball game in 1846. They didn’t. Perhaps you’ve read that baseball’s color line was first crossed by Jackie Robinson in 1947. Nope. Baseball’s true founders don’t have plaques in Cooperstown. They were hundreds of uncredited, ordinary people who played without gloves, facemasks, or performance incentives. Unlike today’s pro athletes, they lived full lives outside of sports. They worked, built businesses, and fought against the South in the Civil War. In this myth-busting history, Thomas W. Gilbert reveals the true beginnings of baseball. Through newspaper accounts, diaries, and other accounts, he explains how it evolved through the mid-nineteenth century into a modern sport of championships, media coverage, and famous stars—all before the first professional league was formed in 1871. Winner of the Casey Award: Best Baseball Book of the Year

Last Night

“[A] well–edited collection . . . More than friends and less than lovers, Salter and Phelps were literary soul mates.” —Publishers Weekly It was James Salter’s third novel, A Sport and a Pastime—together with his film Three and a script he had written for Downhill Racer—that in 1969 prompted Robert Phelps to write a letter of admiration. Though the two writers didn’t know each other, their correspondence went on to span decades. The letters themselves are
exceptionally alive, uninhibited, gossipy, touching, and brilliant. The successes of Salter and the struggles of Phelps are fully explored by the writers themselves in the kind of honest exchange only letters can divulge. With an insightful foreword by Michael Dirda, this book gives voice to a nearly forgotten figure and his friendship with a man he admired.

Memorable Days

Last Night is a spellbinding collection of stories about passion—by turns fiery and subdued, destructive and redemptive, alluring and devastating. These ten powerful stories portray men and women in their most intimate moments. A lover of poetry is asked by his wife to give up what may be his most treasured relationship. A book dealer is forced to face the truth about his life. And in the title story, a translator assists his wife’s suicide, even as he performs a last act of betrayal. James Salter’s assured style and emotional insight make him one of our most essential writers. BONUS: This edition includes an excerpt from James Salter’s All That Is.

Collected Stories

First published nearly a quarter-century ago and one of the very few short-story collections to win the PEN/Faulkner Award, this is American fiction at its most vital—each narrative a masterpiece of sustained power and seemingly effortless literary grace. Two New York attorneys newly flush with wealth embark on a dissolute tour of Italy; an ambitious young screenwriter unexpectedly discovers the true meaning of art and glory; a rider, far off in the fields, is involved in a horrific accident—night is falling, and she must face her destiny alone. These stories confirm James Salter as one of the finest writers of our time. BONUS: This edition includes an excerpt from James Salter’s All That Is.

Selection Day

The most beguilingly seductive novel to date from the author of The Passion and Sexing the Cherry. Winterson chronicles the consuming affair between the narrator, who is given neither name nor gender, and the beloved, a complex and confused married woman. “At once a love story and a philosophical meditation.” —New York Times
Book Review.

The Resisters

A novel about a lonely mountain climber from the author of All That Is: “Beautifully composed . . . will remind readers of Camus and Saint-Exupéry” (The Washington Post). Vernon Rand is a charismatic figure whose great love—whose life, in fact—is climbing. He lives alone in California, where he combats the drudgery of a roofing job with the thrill of climbing in the nearby mountain ranges. Sure of only his talent and nerve, Rand decides to test himself in the French Alps, with their true mountaineering and famed, fearsome peaks. He soon learns that the most perilous moments are, for him, the moments when he feels truly alive. One of the great novels of the outdoors, Solo Faces is as thrilling, beautiful, and immediate as the Alpine peaks that have enthralled climbers for centuries. This ebook features an illustrated biography of James Salter including rare photos from the author’s personal collection.

The Presidents and the Pastime

An extraordinary literary event, a major new novel by the PEN/Faulkner winner and acclaimed master: a sweeping, seductive, deeply moving story set in the years after World War II. From his experiences as a young naval officer in battles off Okinawa, Philip Bowman returns to America and finds a position as a book editor. It is a time when publishing is still largely a private affair—a scattered family of small houses here and in Europe—a time of gatherings in fabled apartments and conversations that continue long into the night. In this world of dinners, deals, and literary careers, Bowman finds that he fits in perfectly. But despite his success, what eludes him is love. His first marriage goes bad, another fails to happen, and finally he meets a woman who enthralls him—before setting him on a course he could never have imagined for himself. Romantic and haunting, All That Is explores a life unfolding in a world on the brink of change. It is a dazzling, sometimes devastating labyrinth of love and ambition, a fiercely intimate account of the great shocks and grand pleasures of being alive.

National Pastime

The astonishing novel and “tour de force” about a love affair in postwar France from the iconic author of All That Is
Twenty-year-old Yale dropout Phillip Dean is traveling Europe aimlessly in a borrowed car with little money. When he stops for a few days in a church-quiet town near Dijon, he meets Anne-Marie Costallat, a young shop assistant. The two begin an affair both carnal and innocent, and she quickly becomes to him the real France, its beating heart and an object of pure longing. James Salter, author of Light Years and the memoir Burning the Days, was an essential voice in the evolution of late twentieth-century prose, a stylist on par with Updike and Roth who won the PEN/Faulkner Award for his collection Dusk and Other Stories. One of the first great American novels to speak frankly of human desire free of guilt and shame, A Sport and a Pastime inspired Reynolds Price to call it “as nearly perfect as any American fiction I know.” This ebook edition features an illustrated biography of James Salter including rare photos from the author’s personal collection.

The Art of the Epigraph

With an introduction by John Banville. From his first published story in the Paris Review in 1968, James Salter's stories have been universally acclaimed. Including his two published collections, Dusk and Other Stories (1988) and Last Night (2005), and the previously uncollected 'Charisma', this volume contains over twenty short stories by one of the finest writers of our time. Concerning men and women in their most intimate moments, struggling with loss, desire, or the burden of memory, each indelible narrative in the Collected Stories is marked by James Salter's great literary grace, his ability to show the subtleties of a character or situation with precision, and his equally assured ability to command reversals of fortune or shocking revelations. 'It's the short stories which make him one of the greatest writers of the last century and the present one' Financial Times 'Writing that is bowstring-taut and carries considerable punch' Sunday Times 'Salter's stories are masterpieces of poise and clarity, so much so that their dazzling surface stillness often blinds you to the surprisingly bold risks' Metro

Love Game

Szymanski and Zimbalist pay special attention to the rich and complex evolution of baseball from its beginnings in America, and they trace modern soccer from its foundation in England through its subsequent expansion across the world.
Burning the Days

From the bestselling, Booker Prize-winning author of The White Tiger and Amnesty, a “ferociously brilliant” (Slate) novel about two brothers coming of age in a Mumbai slum, raised by their crazy, obsessive father to be cricket champions. *A NETFLIX ORIGINAL SERIES * AN NPR BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR * A NEW YORK TIMES and WASHINGTON POST NOTABLE BOOK Manjunath Kumar is fourteen and living in a slum in Mumbai. He knows he is good at cricket—if not as good as his older brother, Radha. He knows that he fears and resents his domineering and cricket-obsessed father, admires his brilliantly talented sibling, and is fascinated by curious scientific facts and the world of CSI. But there are many things, about himself and about the world, that he doesn’t know. Sometimes it even seems as though everyone has a clear idea of who Manju should be, except Manju himself. When Manju meets Radha’s great rival, a mysterious Muslim boy privileged and confident in all the ways Manju is not, everything in Manju’s world begins to change, and he is faced by decisions that will challenge his sense of self and of the world around him. Filled with unforgettable characters from across India’s social strata—the old scout everyone calls Tommy Sir; Anand Mehta, the big-dreaming investor; Sofia, a wealthy, beautiful girl and the boys’ biggest fan—Selection Day “brings a family, a city, and an entire country to scabrous and antic life” (Chicago Tribune).

Creating the National Pastime

A trade paperback reissue of National Book Award finalist Mary Gaitskill’s debut collection, Bad Behavior—powerful stories about dislocation, longing, and desire which depict a disenchanted and rebellious urban fringe generation that is searching for human connection. • Now a classic: Bad Behavior made critical waves when it first published, heralding Gaitskill’s arrival on the literary scene and her establishment as one of the sharpest, erotically charged, and audaciously funny writing talents of contemporary literature. Michiko Kakutani of The New York Times called it “Pinteresque,” saying, “Ms. Gaitskill writes with such authority, such radar-perfect detail, that she is able to make even the most extreme situations seem real... her reportorial candor, uncompromised by sentimentality or voyeuristic charm...underscores the strength of her debut.”

Light Years
The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England

"In Don’t Save Anything . . . Kay Eldredge Salter assembles her late husband’s bread— and—butter journalism— yet how delicious good bread and butter can be! . . . As always, Salter emphasizes simple, vivifying details." —Michael Dirda, The Washington Post One of the greatest writers of American sentences in our literary history, James Salter’s acute and glimmering portrayals of characters are built with a restrained and poetic style. The author of several memorable works of fiction—including Dusk and Other Stories, which won the PEN/Faulkner Award—he is also celebrated for his memoir Burning the Days and many nonfiction essays. In her preface, Kay Eldredge Salter writes, “Don’t Save Anything is a volume of the best of Jim’s nonfiction—articles published but never collected in one place until now. Though those many boxes were overflowing with papers, in the end it’s not really a matter of quantity. These pieces reveal some of the breadth and depth of Jim’s endless interest in the world and the people in it . . . One of the great pleasures in writing nonfiction is the writer’s feeling of exploration, of learning about things he doesn’t know, of finding out by reading and observing and asking questions, and then writing it down. That’s what you’ll find here.” This collection gathers Salter’s thoughts on writing and profiles of important writers, observations of the changing American military life, evocations of Aspen winters, musings on mountain climbing and skiing, and tales of travels to Europe that first appeared in The New Yorker, Esquire, People, Conde? Nast Traveler, the Aspen Times, among other publications.

Written on the Body

From its modest beginnings in rural America to its current status as an entertainment industry in postindustrial America enjoyed worldwide by millions each season, the linkages between baseball’s evolution and our nation’s history are undeniable. Through war, depression, times of tumultuous upheaval and of great prosperity – baseball has been held up as our national pastime: the single greatest expression of America’s values and ideals. Combining a comprehensive history of the game with broader analyses of America’s historical and cultural developments, National Pastime encapsulates the values that have allowed it to endure: hope, tradition, escape, revolution. While nostalgia, scandal, malaise and triumph are contained within the study of any American historical moment, we see in this book that the tensions and developments within the game of baseball afford the best window into a deeper understanding of America’s past, its purpose, and its principles.
When the colonies that became the USA were still dominions of the British Empire they began to imagine their sporting pastimes as finer recreations than even those enjoyed in the motherland. From the war of independence and the creation of the republic to the twenty-first century, sporting pastimes have served as essential ingredients in forging nationhood in American history. This collection gathers the work of an all-star team of historians of American sport in order to explore the origins and meanings of the idea of national pastimes—of a nation symbolized by its sports. These wide-ranging essays analyze the claims of particular sports to national pastime status, from horse racing, hunting, and prize fighting in early American history to baseball, basketball, and football more than two centuries later. These essays also investigate the legal, political, economic, and culture patterns and the gender, ethnic, racial, and class dynamics of national pastimes, connecting sport to broader historical themes. American National Pastimes chronicles how and why the USA has used sport to define and debate the contours of nation. This book was published as a special issue of the International Journal of the History of Sport.

The growth and demise of a love affair is chronicled in Salter's portrait of the relationship between a young Yale dropout and the provincial French girl who becomes his mistress.

With his stirring, rapturous first novel--originally published in 1956 --James Salter established himself as the most electrifying prose stylist since Hemingway. Four decades later, it is clear that he also fashioned the most enduring fiction ever about aerial warfare. Captain Cleve Connell arrives in Korea with a single goal: to become an ace, one of that elite fraternity of jet pilots who have downed five MIGs. But as his fellow airmen rack up kill after kill--sometimes under dubious circumstances--Cleve's luck runs bad. Other pilots question his guts. Cleve comes to question himself. And then in one icy instant 40,000 feet above the Yalu River, his luck changes forever. Filled with courage and despair, eerie beauty and corrosive rivalry, The Hunters is a landmark in the literature of war.
Pastime

Reaching as far back as ancient times, Ronojoy Sen pairs a novel history of India’s engagement with sport and a probing analysis of its cultural and political development under monarchy and colonialism, and as an independent nation. Some sports that originated in India have fallen out of favor, while others, such as cricket, have been adopted and made wholly India’s own. Sen’s innovative project casts sport less as a natural expression of human competition than as an instructive practice reflecting a unique play with power, morality, aesthetics, identity, and money. Sen follows the transformation of sport from an elite, kingly pastime to a national obsession tied to colonialism, nationalism, and free market liberalization. He pays special attention to two modern phenomena: the dominance of cricket in the Indian consciousness and the chronic failure of a billion-strong nation to compete successfully in international sporting competitions, such as the Olympics. Innovatively incorporating examples from popular media and other unconventional sources, Sen not only captures the political nature of sport in India but also reveals the patterns of patronage, clientage, and institutionalization that have bound this diverse nation together for centuries.

A Sport and a Pastime

The lives of officers in an Air Force squadron in occupied Europe encompass the contradictions of military experience and the men’s response to a young newcomer, bright and ambitious, whose fate is to be an emblem of their own. In Cassada, Salter captures the strange comradeship of loneliness, trust, and alienation among military men ready to sacrifice all in the name of duty and pride. After futile attempts at ordinary revision, Salter elected to begin with a blank page, to compose an entirely new novel based upon the characters and events of his second long unavailable novel, The Arm of Flesh. The result, Cassada, is a masterpiece.

Every Boy’s Book of Sport and Pastime

Follows one young man from his impoverished childhood with a crack-addicted mother, through his discovery of the sport of football, to his rise to become one of the most successful, highly-paid players in the NFL.
A Sport and a Pastime

Now back in print, Mrs. Caliban is “totally unforgettable” (The New York Times Book Review) and “something of a miracle” (The New Yorker) In the quiet suburbs, while Dorothy is doing chores and waiting for her husband to come home from work, not in the least anticipating romance, she hears a strange radio announcement about a monster who has just escaped from the Institute for Oceanographic Research... Reviewers have compared Rachel Ingalls’s Mrs. Caliban to King Kong, Edgar Allan Poe’s stories, the films of David Lynch, Beauty and the Beast, The Wizard of Oz, E.T., Richard Yates’s domestic realism, B-horror movies, and the fairy tales of Angela Carter—how such a short novel could contain all of these disparate elements is a testament to its startling and singular charm.

A Sport and a Pastime

Tennis has never been played better than it is today. To watch Rafael Nadal spin a forehand at 4000 rpm, Maria Sharapova arabesque out of a serve, Serena Williams utterly destroy a short ball, or Roger Federer touch a volley into an impossibly angled winner is to watch not only the best players with the best coaching hitting with the best racquets, it is to watch the culmination of an entire history. Love Game is different from most tennis books—it isn’t a ghostwritten biography, and it won’t teach you how to slice your serve. It’s a book about tennis’s grand culture, one that unveils the sport’s long history as it lives and breathes (or grunts) in the modern game. No one is better equipped to tell this story than novelist and historian Elizabeth Wilson. With a penchant for tennis’s inherent drama, she finds its core: a psychological face off between flamboyant personalities navigating the ebbs and flows of fortune in the confines of a 78 x 36–foot box—whether of clay, grass, or DecoTurf. Walking the finely kempt lawns of Victorian England, she shows how tennis’s early role as a social pastime that included both men and women—and thus, lots of sexual tension—set it apart from most other sports and their dominant masculine appeal. Even today, when power and endurance are more important than ever, tennis still demands that the body behave gracefully and with finesse. In this way, Wilson shows, tennis has retained the vibrant spectacle of human drama and beauty that have always made it special, not just to sports fans but to popular culture. Telling the stories of all the greats, from the Renshaw brothers to Novak Djokovic, and of all the advances, from wooden racquets to network television schedules, Wilson offers a tennis book like no other, keeping the court square in our sights as history is illuminated around it.
Cassada

The most personal and revealing Spenser thriller of all, Pastime is Robert B. Parker's electrifying masterpeice of crime fiction--a startling game of memory, desire, and danger that forces Spenser to face his own past. Ten years ago, he saved a teenage boy from a father's rage. Now, on the brink of manhood, the boy seeks answers to his mother's sudden disapearance. Spenser is the only man he can turn to. This time, it's more than a routine search for a missing person--Spenser must search his own soul.

The Art of Fiction

A graphic novel-style history of baseball, providing an illustrated look at the major games, players, and rule changes that shaped the sport. This graphic novel steps up to the plate and covers all the bases in illustrating the origin of America's national pastime, presenting a complete look at the beginnings (both real and legendary), developments, triumphs, and tragedies of baseball. It also breaks down the cultural impact and significance of the sport both in America and overseas (including Japan, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic), from the early days of America to the flying W outside Wrigley Field in 2016. Featuring members of Baseball's Hall of Fame and modern day stand-outs—including Cy Young, Babe Ruth, Jackie Robinson, Hank Aaron, the 1930s New York Yankees, the 2004 Boston Red Sox, the 2016 Chicago Cubs, and more—The Comic Book Story of Baseball spotlights the players, teams, games, and moments that built the sport's legacy and ensured its popularity.

The Art of Fielding

A Sport and a Pastime is an astonishing performance, the classic novel from a remarkable writer whose sentences bristle with a singular passion. Salter chronicles a love affair between a young shopgirl and an American college dropout against the backdrop of provincial France. The narrator's cool distillation of events-real or imagined-makes the book both lyrical and tightly, dangerously pitched.

The Comic Book Story of Baseball
The author brings an amazing story of a world that looks only too possible, and a family struggling to maintain its humanity in circumstances that daily threaten their every value and their very existence.

Don't Save Anything

This is the brilliant memoir of a man who starts out in Manhattan and comes of age in the skies over Korea, before emerging as one of America's finest authors in the New York of the 1960s. Burning the Days showcases James Salter's uniquely beautiful style with some of the most evocative pages about flying ever written, together with portraits of the actors, directors and authors who later influenced him. It is an unforgettable book about passion, ambition and what it means to live and to write.

Dusk and Other Stories

Baseball Beyond Our Borders celebrates the globalization of the game while highlighting the different histories and cultures of the nations in which the sport is played. This collection of essays tells the story of America's national pastime as it has spread across the world and undergone instructive, entertaining, and sometimes quirky changes in the process. Covering nineteen countries and a U.S. territory, the contributors show how each country imported baseball, how baseball took hold and developed, how it is organized, played, and followed, and what local and regional traits tell us about the sport's place in each culture. But what lies in store as baseball's passport fills up with far-flung stamps? Will the international migration of players homogenize baseball? What role will the World Baseball Classic play? These are just a few of the questions the authors pose.

Nation at Play

A treasury of more than 250 epigraphs gathered from 500 years of literature explores how carefully selected quotes, lyrics and poems set the tone for subsequent reading experiences and inform readers about author sensibilities. 30,000 first printing.
The Hunters

James Salter’s exalted place in American letters is based largely on the intense admiration of other writers, but his work resonates far beyond the realm of fellow craftsmen, addressing themes—youth, war, erotic love, marriage, life abroad, friendship—that speak to us all. Following the publication of his first novel, Salter left behind a military career of great promise to write full-time and—through decades of searching, exacting work—became one of American literature’s master stylists. Only months before he died, at the age of eighty-nine, he agreed to serve as the first Kapnick Writer-in-Residence at the University of Virginia, where he composed and delivered the three lectures presented in this book and introduced by his friend and fellow novelist, National Book Award-winning author John Casey. Salter speaks to us here with an easy intimacy, sharing his unceasing enchantment with the books that made up his reading life, including works by Balzac, Flaubert, Babel (whose prose is “like a handful of radium”), Dreiser, Céline, Faulkner. These talks provide an invaluable opportunity to see the way in which a great writer reads. They also offer a candid look at the writing life—the rejection letters, not one but two negative reviews in the New York Times for the same book, writing in the morning or at night and worrying about money during the long afternoons. Salter raises the question, Why does one write? For wealth? For admiration, or a sense of “importance”? Confronting a blank sheet that always offers too many choices, practicing a vocation that often demands one write instead of live, the answer for Salter was creating a style that captured experience, in a world where anything not written down fades away. Kapnick Foundation Distinguished Writer-in-Residence Lectures

All That Is

What could be better than diving into cool water on a hot day? In this enormously enjoyable and informative history of swimming, Eric Chaline sums up this most summery of moments with one phrase: pleasure beckons at the water’s edge. Strokes of Genius traces the history of swimming from the first civilizations to its current worldwide popularity as a sport, fitness pastime, and leisure activity. Chaline explores swimming’s role in ritual, early trade and manufacturing, warfare, and medicine, before describing its transformation in the early modern period into a leisure activity and a competitive sport—the necessary precursors that have made it the most common physical pastime in the developed world. The book celebrates the physicality and sensuality of swimming—attributes that Chaline argues could have contributed to the evolution of the human species. Swimming, like other disciplines that use repetitive
movements to train the body and quiet the mind, is also a means of spiritual awakening—a personal journey of
discovery. Swimming has attained the status of a cultural marker, denoting eroticism, leisure, endurance, adventure,
exploration, and excellence. Strokes of Genius shows that there is not a single story of human swimming, but many
currents that merge, diverge, and remerge. Chaline argues that swimming will become particularly important as we
look toward a warmer future in which our survival may depend on our ability to adapt to life in an aquatic world.

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