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New Books

Mandala Books

...a haven for the soul

October, 2026

"Virtue is more to be feared than vice, because its excesses are not subject to the regulation of conscience." -

— Adam Smith

October's Insights from Lisa

Welcome to October my friends and your reading for the next 4 weeks :) October draws us into a season of thresholds, where the past stirs close beneath the rustle of falling leaves. There is magic in the air! Ancient, potent and alive with the mystery of what is ending and what is waiting to be transformed.

The cards flew out in pairs this month. Two Tarot cards and two Oracle cards, almost as though each had something to say to each other. I couldn't help noticing the symbolism of two. Twos speak of choices and possibilities, of partnership and cooperation with other people and within the parts of ourselves. They hold joy and sadness, instinct and reason, fear and bravery, hesitation and action. Twos are powerful because they hold the living tension between opposites, the liminal space where shadow and light, instinct and reason, self and other can meet.



October understands this kind of duality. The leaves turn brilliant shades of red and gold even as they prepare to let go and fall. Cool nights arrive beneath warm afternoons; the wind carries the promise of winter while the earth is in full colour. Mother Earth shows us how to release what has reached its ending and that letting go can be beautiful. Yes, this is a bit of a cliché but very true. What falls away does not become meaningless. It returns to the soil, where it nourishes what will grow next.

This is also a time when many of us feel especially close to our ancestors and the wisdom carried through generations. Their presence may come to mind in a familiar recipe, an old story, a habit passed down without anyone remembering where it began. We feel them in the quiet of a darkening evening, or hear the echo of their hard-won lessons in our own choices. As the veil between worlds is growing thin, we can make space to listen to the ancestors, to the land and to the deep knowing within ourselves.

The first pair of cards speaks to the inner life: Vampire, with its message of emotional intelligence, and the Eight of Bats, the Eight of Swords. Together they invite us to notice what is happening beneath the surface of our thoughts. The Eight of Swords can

continued on the next page

describe the feeling of being caught in worry, fear, or indecision, as though we've wandered into a dark wood under a dark moon and can no longer see the path. Sometimes our thoughts become so tangled that every direction looks impossible. We all know these feelings and experiences too well.

Vampire asks us to look at these feelings with care and curiosity. What is nourishing us? What is draining us? What emotions have we set aside because they seemed too inconvenient, too frightening, or too difficult to name? Emotional intelligence asks us not to judge ourselves for what we feel. It asks us to pay attention. Like a creature of the night, we learn to sense what is present even when we cannot see it clearly. We've talked before about being curious before furious, this card reminds us of that.

The Eight of Swords is rarely a simple tangle. Some bindings were forged in seasons when vigilance was necessary, by grief, betrayal, inherited warnings, or choices made with very few good options. They may have protected us once but now they keep us confined. This card asks us to enter our mind's haunted rooms with a lantern and look closely. Whose voice is this...really? What danger belongs to the past? What burden have we mistaken for duty? Freedom begins with discernment and with honouring what we survived while deciding what still deserves a place in our lives. This month we are asked to define certain burdens so that they may be released. The chains that bind in this card, are not fixed as we know. But the fear felt in this card is real regardless of how tightly she is or is not bound. Together, these cards offer a quiet but potent reminder. The fear that you must keep working to prove your worth, may help explain the life you've built. BUT! it does not get to decide the life you build, from here.

The second pair opens a threshold. Midnight is more than a magical hour; it is when daylight's explanations recede and the mind meets what it has kept in the margins. We know darkness can distort, but it can also sharpen the senses. Old memories, half-buried desires, and truths long postponed may take shape there. This card asks us to sit with ambiguity. Intuition is not always a whisper from beyond; sometimes it is experience recognizing a pattern before reason has found its name. We feel it before we can name it. This is a reminder that it is OK to trust it, even when we cannot name it.

Temperance offers a steady hand as we cross that threshold. Its wisdom is patience, balance, and the careful blending of things that may seem to oppose one another. Relief does not always arrive as a sudden answer. Sometimes it comes as we give ourselves time to feel, reflect, and let different truths settle together. We can carry what we have learned from the past, good experiences and painful ones, without allowing old fear to make every choice for us. The past can become a lantern: a source of hard-earned wisdom that helps us see the next step. The past does not get to control the future.

There may be an inner back-and-forth this month: one part of us ready to move forward, another asking us to pause; one part yearning for change, another remembering what change has cost before. We don't have to rush to silence that debate. When we listen to both sides, we can discover what each one is trying to tell us. Sometimes that honest reckoning is how we grow into a fuller understanding of ourselves. From the tension, a more grounded balance may begin to emerge, a quiet stillness that feels earned rather than forced. Balance and measured steadiness is a balm and can offer ease and a comfortable place to hash out thoughts, test out other possibilities while we are patient with ourselves.

As a final message, Crow Spirit arrives with the invitation to co-create with Spirit. Crow is a watcher between worlds, clever and curious, at home among both the living and the mysteries beyond our sight. This card asks us to take part in our own becoming while remaining open to guidance. We might notice a repeated image, a dream that lingers, a conversation that arrives at just the right moment, or a sudden instinct we can't quite explain. We can meet those moments with discernment and wonder, asking what they stir in us and what wisdom they might hold.

The cards do not ask us to solve every mystery before crossing October's threshold. They ask for the practiced attention of those who know a life is shaped in its passages: to recognize an old fear when it stirs, to listen beneath the noise, and to meet the dark with the wisdom we have gathered along the way.

As autumn loosens its hold, the trees enact an ancient spell. What is released returns to the soil; endings become the dark, fertile ground of what follows. Grieve what has passed. Keep what it taught you. Trust the unseen work stirring beneath the surface.

This is October, the hour when the worlds draw near, the old stories stir, and the night itself feels enchanted. There truly is magic in the air! The energy around us now is potent, thick with ancestral memory, sharpened intuition and charged with the wisdom of those who came before us and the power to transform what has reached its end. October is a gorgeous reminder that endings are often beginnings that simply sit under a veil of mystery. Speak kindly to yourselves and enjoy this incredible month. Hugs and Happy Samhain everyone, Lisa xo

Cards Used in this Reading:

1. The Halloween Oracle by Stacey Demarco
 2. The Halloween Tarot by Kipling West
 3. The Spirit Animal Oracle by Colette Baron-Reid
-

We live in a world addicted to convenience. Countless tools and innovations fill our daily lives, allowing us to swipe, tap, click, and subscribe without a second thought. We order food to our front door, call an Uber for a ride down the street, and scroll through the endless songs and TV shows at our fingertips. In theory, convenience should give us more energy and time to do things we want to do, and make unpleasant jobs faster and simpler. But is it working?

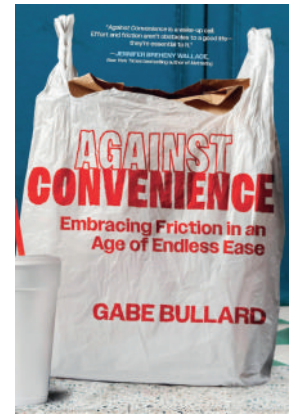
AGAINST CONVENIENCE
Embracing Friction in an Age of Endless Ease

Gabe Bullard

In this book, journalist Gabe Bullard reveals the hidden architecture behind the ubiquitous modern-day services and technologies that allegedly make our lives easier. You'll learn:

- How the "false conveniences" we choose every day don't actually eliminate work, effort, or money
- Why convenience culture fuels burnout and shallow living
- How pop culture is being shaped by "second screen" and "lean back" content
- The ways that friction-maxxing — from talking to your cashier, cooking from scratch, and hand writing letters — can enrich our lives with meaning and rewards

At best, many of these conveniences aren't any more convenient than what they replaced. At worst, they leave us isolated—home alone with soggy french fries, forgettable streaming shows, a degraded planet, and a smaller bank account. But we don't have to settle. In *Against Convenience*, Bullard draws a road map for how we can fight back against the juggernaut of empty ease to live a more meaningful, deeper, and gratifying life.

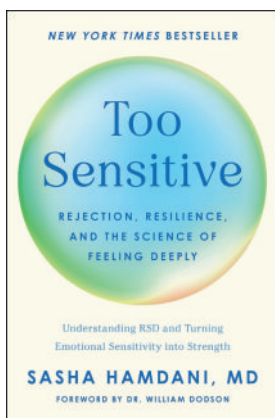


ISBN: 978-1335000699 * Hanover Square Press, 2026 * 328 pages * \$42.00

TOO SENSITIVE
Rejection, Resilience, and the Science of Feeling Deeply

Sasha Hamdani, MD

Overly dramatic. Irrational. Too sensitive. These are some of the labels applied to those of us who are emotionally triggered by everyday moments. Whether it's a delayed text message, a last-minute invite, or a subtle shift in tone, what begins as a flicker of uncertainty can spiral into self-doubt, shame, or withdrawal.



From the outside, these reactions may seem overblown. But what if emotional sensitivity is not a personality flaw but rather the result of a highly responsive and attuned nervous system? In *Too Sensitive*, Dr. Sasha Hamdani—known to her online following as @thepsychdoctormd—offers an accessible explanation of emotional sensitivity as well as practical guidance for how to manage it. For many people, especially those with ADHD and other forms of neurodivergence, emotional sensitivity may be recognized as Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD). Feelings of being excluded, overlooked, or dismissed are not all in our heads—they are based in our biology. In her groundbreaking book, Dr. Hamdani introduces the first assessment tool to discern where you fall on the emotional sensitivity spectrum and offers practical tools to restore calm to the nervous system.

Drawing from psychiatry, neuroscience, and the gentle compassion of lived experience, Dr. Hamdani shares research-informed strategies to regulate emotional surges, interrupt spirals, and build self-worth and resilience in relationships and at work. Most importantly, *Too Sensitive* reframes sensitivity not as fragility but as a powerful form of emotional awareness that can be understood and transformed into strength.

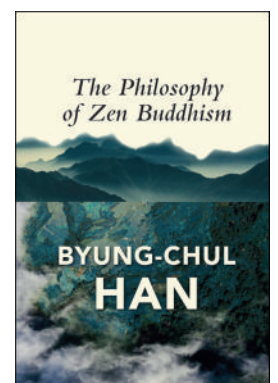
ISBN: 978-1250423764 * Flatiron Books, 2026 * 297 pages * \$41.99

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ZEN BUDDHISM

Zen Buddhism is a form of Mahāyāna Buddhism that originated in China and is strongly focused on meditation. It is characteristically sceptical towards language and distrustful of conceptual thought, which explains why Zen Buddhist sayings are so enigmatic and succinct. But despite Zen Buddhism's hostility towards theory and discourse, it is possible to reflect philosophically on Zen Buddhism and bring out its philosophical insights.

In this short book, Byung-Chul Han seeks to unfold the philosophical force inherent in Zen Buddhism, delving into the foundations of Far Eastern thought to which Zen Buddhism is indebted. Han does this comparatively by confronting and contrasting the insights of Zen Buddhism with the philosophies of Plato, Leibniz, Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Heidegger and others, showing that Zen Buddhism and Western philosophy have very different ways of understanding religion, subjectivity, emptiness, friendliness and death.

Byung-Chul Han

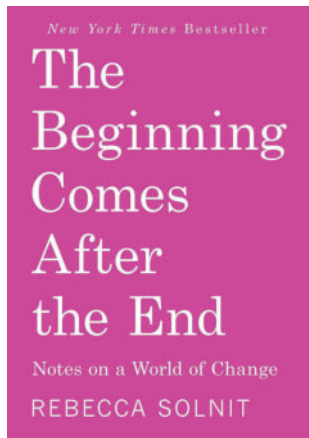


ISBN: 978-1509545100 * Polity Books, 2022 * 120 pages * \$20.95

THE BEGINNING COMES AFTER THE END

Notes on a World of Change

Rebecca Solnit



In her new book, Rebecca Solnit offers a compelling exploration of the extraordinary social, political, scientific, and cultural transformations that have reshaped our world over the past three quarters of a century.

In this sequel to her enduring bestseller *Hope in the Dark*, Solnit surveys a world that has changed dramatically since the year 1960. Despite the forces seeking to turn back the clock on history, change is not a possibility; it is an inevitability.

The changes amount to nothing less than dismantling an old civilization and building a new one, whose newness is often the return of the old ways and wisdoms. In this rising worldview, interconnection is a core idea and value. But because the transformation is obscured within a longer arc of history, its scale is seldom recognized.

While the white nationalist and authoritarian backlash drives individualism and isolation, this new world embraces antiracism, feminism, a more expansive understanding of gender, environmental thinking, scientific breakthroughs, and Indigenous and non-Western ideas, pointing toward a more interconnected, relational world.

ISBN: 979-8888904510 * Haymarket Books, 2026 * 147 pages * \$26.50

EVEN THE BIRDS

Ruth Taylor

*The author of the novel **Even the Birds** is Ruth Taylor, who lives and writes in London, Ontario. **Even the Birds** is her debut novel and won the 2025 Guernica Prize for Literary Fiction.*

Peace has come to Guatemala after thirty-six years of war. Isabel, a guerrilla fighter of mixed Mayan and non-Indigenous heritage, returns from battle to the daughter she left in the care of her conservative aunt many years before. Soraida, afraid to lose the child she has raised, begrudgingly welcomes her rebel niece into her home, an arrangement that forces her to question her own role in the country's conflict. Isabel struggles to be the mother her daughter needs, but orphaned very young and marked by the war, she is not sure what that would be. Fifteen-year-old Yasmin faces problems of her own. The trio's commitment to each other falters, but it also evolves. And whether out of duty or out of love, they may yet help each other find peace—and even happiness—in their still deeply divided country.

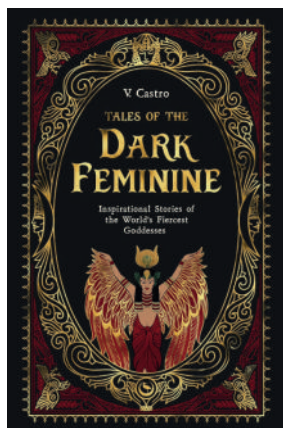
ISBN: 978-1778491429 * Guernica Editions, 2026 * 249 pages * \$24.95



TALES OF THE DARK FEMININE

Inspirational Stories of the World's Fiercest Goddesses

V. Castro



Dark goddess energy is powerful and transformative, embodying the sensual, the hunter, the warrior, the mother, and even the grotesque and horrific. These 26 tales of powerful female goddesses and spirits will entrance those daring enough to explore the shadows of the human psyche, offering lessons from our ancient origins and help us understand ourselves in today's world. Embrace your own inner darkness alongside these fierce deities and spirits, such as:

- The fierce Indian goddess Kali, who teaches not to fear endings but instead use our creativity to remove obstacles and carve out our own path.
 - The mighty Yoruba orisha Yemaya, who birthed the waters of the whole planet, and teaches of the need to nurture and love oneself.
 - The ravenous Egyptian goddess Sekhmet, who is the very definition of "I am woman, hear me roar!"
 - The occult Greek goddess Hecate, beloved of modern witches, who offers a stunning portrayal of femininity manifesting in magic.
- And many more!

The retold legends are accompanied by information about the goddess's history, symbols and core energy. This stunning volume is perfect for those who love fantasy and horror and all who wish to learn about the powerful female archetypes in cultures around the world.

ISBN: 978-1786789983 * Watkins Publishing, 2025 * 272 pages * \$41.50

THE ALCHEMY OF THE BROKEN BLADE

Forging Inner Transformation from the Fire of Experience

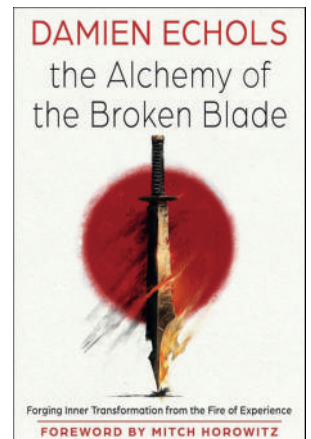
Damien Echols

Bestselling author Damien Echols delivers a practical tool kit for personal transformation and healing, not based on theory but on lived experience. He shares a spiritual practice born from extremes: From a wrongful conviction that led to death row, solitary confinement, spiritual breakdown, and resurrection, Echols spent years clawing his way out of despair and into a life he could stand inside again. And through that process, Echols discovered a path—not clean or easy but sacred.

The Alchemy of the Broken Blade is a blending of Eastern (Zen) and Western (Hermetic) philosophies, braided together into a single spiritual process for transformation. Alchemy and Kaizen may seem worlds apart, but they share a root principle: transformation through presence. The core concept revolves around finding your personal “Way” (dō), a path of lasting transformation achieved through sustained practice. Alchemy says: Take yourself apart. Purify. Refine. Recombine. Buddhism says: Start where you are. Take one small step, then another. Both are doorways to becoming.

Echols stresses that you must find your own path—inner transformation is personal to each of us. Our varied experiences give us our tools, our unique materia magica.

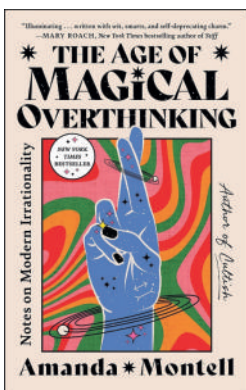
ISBN: 978-1578639397 * Red Wheel Weiser, 2026 * 217 pages * \$28.95



THE AGE OF MAGICAL OVERTHINKING

Notes on Modern Irrationality

Amanda Montell



“Magical thinking” can be broadly defined as the belief that one’s internal thoughts can affect unrelated events in the external world: think of the conviction that one can manifest their way out of poverty, stave off cancer with positive vibes, thwart the apocalypse by learning to can their own peaches, or transform an unhealthy relationship to a glorious one with loyalty alone. In all its forms, magical thinking works in service of restoring agency amid chaos, but in *The Age of Magical Overthinking*, Montell argues that in the modern information age, our brain’s coping mechanisms have been overloaded, and our irrationality turned up to an eleven.

In a series of razor sharp, deeply funny chapters, Montell delves into a cornucopia of the cognitive biases that run rampant in our brains, from how the “halo effect” cultivates worship (and hatred) of larger-than-life celebrities, to how the “sunk cost fallacy” can keep us in detrimental relationships long after we’ve realized they’re not serving us. As she illuminates these concepts with her signature brilliance and wit, Montell’s prevailing message is one of hope, empathy, and ultimately forgiveness for our anxiety-addled human selves.

If you have all but lost faith in our ability to reason, Montell aims to make some sense of the senseless. To crack open a window in our minds, and let a warm breeze in. To help quiet the cacophony for a while, or even hear a melody in it.

ISBN: 978-1668007983 * Simon and Schuster, 2026 * 257 pages * \$26.00

CHINESE POLESTAR ASTROLOGY

A Practical Guide to Decoding the Secrets of Your Character, Inner Nature, and Fate

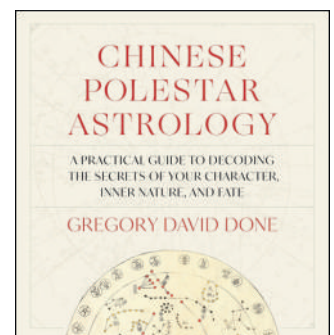
Gregory Davod Done

According to *Chinese Polestar Astrology*, life is a dance between fate, nature, and character; factors that intertwine to create patterns and layers that define our existence. Understanding or deciphering their reciprocity may hold the answer to our life’s purpose—giving us a roadmap to better navigate our lives.

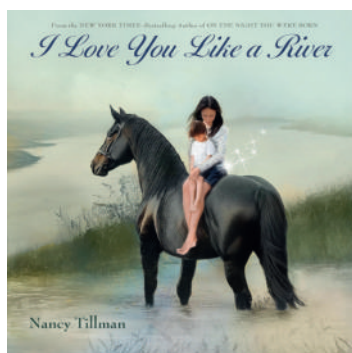
Though less well-known than Western or Vedic astrology, Chinese Polestar is a rich and detailed system that uses celestial positioning, the five elements, and twelve animals as metaphors to understand our human experience, tendencies, and possibilities. By determining our birth chart, and learning the tradition’s cosmology and symbolism, we can—through reflection and meditation—encourage beneficial states of being and minimize or resolve our negative limitations in all areas of our life.

Longtime Taoist and Buddhist practitioner and astrology expert Gregory Done introduces us to this spiritual practice and gives us all we need to determine our birth chart, understand it, and work with what it can teach us. rns prove transformation isn’t just possible—it’s predictable. The future is our own conscious evolution.

ISBN: 978-1645473404 * Shambhala, 2026 * 528 pages * \$53.99



NEW CHILDREN'S BOOKS



I LOVE YOU LIKE A RIVER by Nancy Tillman \$27.99

*Love's all around us, as wide as the wind
in this wonderful world that we find ourselves in....*

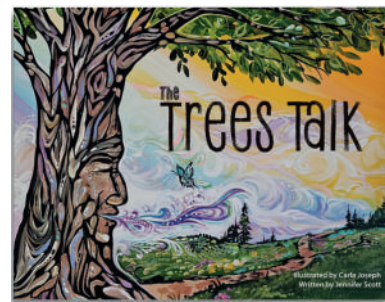
*It's there everywhere that you look, in full view.
And it's almost, quite perfectly, how I love you.*

Readers of all ages will treasure this positive and loving reminder that our world—and our souls—are connected by love.

THE TREES TALK by Jennifer Short and illustrated by Carla Joseph \$22.99

The Trees Talk is a lyrical poem that teaches children about the wisdom of the trees. When our loved ones pass on to the next world, author Jennifer Scott encourages us to sit with the trees. They carry messages from our ancestors for each of us, if we just take the time to listen.

Sweeping and lush paintings by Carla Joseph move readers through a journey to learn about the relationship between our ancestors and the nature around us.

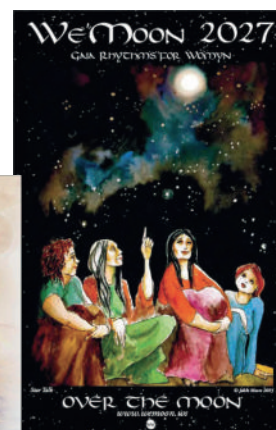


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What does it take to become a Woman in Total Control of Herself? A decision to become the mistress of your own power and a commitment to reclaiming agency over your life. **W.I.T.C.H. Tarot** was created to help you find the path towards your sovereignty, and companion you on the journey of maintaining your authenticity—your practical magic. Find inspiration in the 78 lushly composed collage-style tarot cards and discover guidance in the empowering musings, poetry, and card meanings. These magical readings include themes of empowerment and authentic living; spell work and oracular insights; every reading becomes a ritual of returning to your authentic self.

W.I.T.C.H. TAROT
Woman In Total Control of Herself

Angi Sullins
Silas Toball, Illus.

ISBN: 978-1646712946 * U.S. Games Systems, 2026 * 78 cards & guidebook * \$58.50

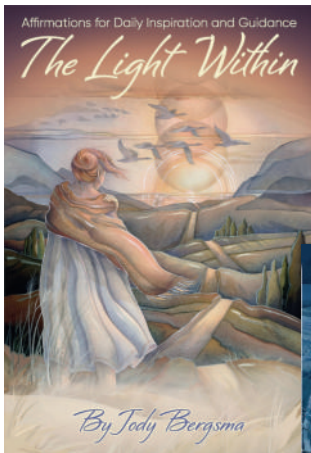


THE LIGHT WITHIN

Jody Bergsma

Popular visionary artist Jody Bergsma has always recognized the incredible power of words to protect us from negativity and bring about powerful shifts in our self-confidence and well-being. To create **The Light Within** Jody paired her luminescent paintings with affirmations to encourage you to believe in yourself and support your goals. For each inspirational card she offers an uplifting quote, exploration of the symbolism within the artwork, and guidance to help you assimilate the energy of the affirmation into your journey of spiritual growth. This set includes 54 oversized affirmation cards featuring luminescent art and a detailed 184-page guidebook.

ISBN: 978-1646712120 * U.S. Games Systems, 2024 * 54 cards & guidebook * \$40.00



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