# Nonfiction

## \* Acid for the Children: A Memoir

Flea. Grand Central, \$29 (400p) ISBN 978-1-4789-8351-4

Red Hot Chili Peppers bassist Flea recalls his youth in this electric, surprisingly moving memoir. The author, born Michael Peter Balzary in 1962 in Melbourne, Australia, moved to Los Angeles in 1972 with his mother and her erratic boyfriend. He describes his mother as unaffectionate ("There is not one instance in my life where I can ever remember her holding or cuddling me") and inattentive, which gave him opportunity to run the streets unsupervised. When he wasn't causing trouble ("I became a regular shoplifter," he admits), he was listening to music (Charlie Parker, the Beatles) and reading books (Kurt Vonnegut "parented me," he writes). In high school, he met Anthony Kiedis, the future Chili Peppers lead singer, who instantly became his "brother" and with whom he'd start making music in 1983. Flea talks about "going primal" on the bass, which he taught himself to play; liking girls; and doing drugs (including crystal meth and cocaine), but this is not a typical sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll story. The author respectfully references his first girlfriend, to whom he lost his virginity at 17, and calls drug use a "pit of sadness," adding, "You can do anything. Walk through it, don't numb or hide." Flea is an enlightened narrator, and this passionate, smart memoir will resonate with readers whether they're fans of the band or not. (Nov.)

### Alta California: From San Diego to San Francisco, a Journey on Foot to Rediscover the Golden State

Nick Neely. Counterpoint, \$26 (432p) ISBN 978-1-64009-165-8

In this detailed travel memoir, environmental writer Neely (Coast Range) relates his 650-mile walk in the footsteps of an 18th-century Spanish exploration along the coast of California. In 1769, the Portola expedition went overland from what became the towns of San Diego to San Francisco, setting the stage for the settlements, forts, and Catholic missions that would become California. Neely relies



Cubby, a comfort dog shown here with his handler, Bonnie Fear, is one of the canine do-gooders profiled in Liz Stavrinides and John Schlimm's Extraordinary Dogs (reviewed on p. 53).

heavily on expedition journals along his walk, especially one by a friar named Juan Crespi, and reimagines the near untouched splendor of the West Coast. Even walking through subdivisions and cities and along highways, he finds poetic images in the most unlikely places ("The holy red palms of an In-N-Out cup. A water bottle of sunflower seed husks like a ravaged birdfeeder from someone's lips") and encounters many of those who rely on the landsurfers, farm laborers, winemakers. Along the way, he explores the roots of such famous Californians as José Francisco Ortega (founder of the Ortega chili company), writer John Steinbeck, civil engineer William Mulholland, and John Paul Getty. Neely ends in the Bay Area under a redwood tree where the Portola expedition camped, with the hope that the tree "might live another thousand years." Neely's naturalist, erudite work will appeal to readers of Thoreau's Walden and Edward Albee's Desert Solitaire. (Nov.) . . . . . . . . . . . . .

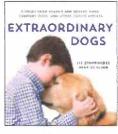
#### ★ The Lives of Lucian Freud: The Restless Years, 1922–1968 William Feaver. Knopf, \$40 (704p) ISBN 978-0-525-65752-1

Art, debauchery, nightlife, and lowlifes fill out this rollicking biography of the celebrated British painter. Art critic and curator Feaver (Frank Auerbach) follows Lucian Freud (1922-2011), grandson of psychologist Sigmund Freud, through his rise to the top of Britain's art scene, where his realist portraits thrummed with tension and suspicion, perhaps because of the marathon sittings his models endured or the pitiless depictions of flesh in his paintings. Feaver has much to say about the art-"Here are individual fingernails and individual hairs, some with split ends," he writes of the landmark Girl with Roses, "as fully realized as the golden tresses of a Dürer"—but more about Freud's daily picaresque: the relentless womanizing (he fathered 12 illegitimate children), the studied eccentricities (he carpeted his studio with broken glass), the gambling addiction that saddled him with debts to gangsters, and the swirl of colorful acquaintances, from nobility to famous artists to petty criminals, all of whom he painted. Feaver heavily quotes from his interviews with Freud, and the artist's chatty, insouciant voice-"I said, 'I'm going to pay you when I've got the money and if you kill me you won't get the money,' an argument that impressed them"—suffuses the book. The result is a riotously entertaining narrative that immerses readers in Freud's beguiling sensibility. Photos. (Nov.)

that's where he crossed paths with Morin. Long-term caretakers of Hôtel des Invalides, the large historic veterans hospital and Napoleon's tomb in the center of Paris, the Morin family had been using their roles as keepers of the keys to the complex's secret passageways and underground tunnels to hide members of the French Resistance and downed Allied pilots. It didn't take long for the American airman and the beautiful French Resistance fighter to fall in love, before tragedy separated them. Drawing on interviews with a still-feisty Yvette, now 90, and unfettered access to the Joe's papers and letters, Harding masterfully recreates thrilling details of air combat, the intrigue of the French Resistance, and the horrors of war. This masterfully told and dramatic tale will keep readers spellbound until the final page. Agent: Scott Mendel, Mendel Media Group. (Oct.)

**Extraordinary Dogs: Stories from** Search and Rescue Dogs, Comfort Dogs, and Other Canine Heroes Liz Stavrinides and John Schlimm. St. Martin's, \$27.99 (288p) ISBN 978-1-250-20140-9

This rewarding follow-up to photographer Stavrinides's Miracle Dogs, with text by Schlimm (Moonshine), profiles over 50 dogs responsible for heroic feats. People they have helped, as detailed here, include veterans recuperating from battlefield injuries, homeless shelter residents, first responders, and even children terrified



of trips to the dentist's office. Stavrinides and Schlimm introduce readers to remarkable animals such as Rocket, a Belgian

Malinois/border collie mix, rescued one day before he was scheduled to be euthanized, who proved expert at searching for disaster victims, and Bo, a Korean Jindo mix rescued from being slaughtered for meat and thereafter made by his owners into a "furry, four-legged activist" against dog abuse. The book is sprinkled with sometimes bittersweet anecdotes, such as a visit by a group of comfort golden retrievers to the Sandy Hook Elementary

school that coincided with a fortuitous and large shipment of stress balls. This inspiring work commendably documents how rescue and comfort dogs (and their handlers) help humans deal with trauma. Agent: Steve Troha, Folio Literary Management. (Oct.) . . . . . . . .

#### Here We Are: American Dreams, **American Nightmares**

Aarti Namdev Shahani. Celadon, \$26.99 (256p) ISBN 978-1-250-20475-2

In this tragedy-tinged debut memoir, NPR technology correspondent Shahani discusses her father's 1996 arrest for selling electronics to the Cali cartel of Colombia and the ways in which these events shaped Shahani's life. Shahani's family immigrated from India to New York City in 1981, where her father opened a wholesale electronics store and began selling such items as calculators and watches to customers who he later learned were cartel members. His arrest set in motion a legal nightmare that sent the author on a mission to prevent her father, who wasn't a U.S. citizen, from being deported and to help other families in similar predicaments. Shahani discovers years after her father accepted a plea bargain and served eight months at Rikers Island that he may not have had to serve time at all had his lawyer worked harder to show that the case was thin. In a conversational tone, the book exposes the ugliness of the criminal justice system, which pressures defendants to take plea bargains. The author discusses becoming a journalist and building the kind of successful career her father never had and ends with a letter to her father, who eventually became a U.S. citizen and "whose ups and down taught me how the world really works." This timely, bittersweet immigration story will resonate powerfully with readers. (Oct.)

#### The Hidden World of the Fox Adele Brand. Morrow, \$24.99 (240p) ISBN 978-0-06-296610-0

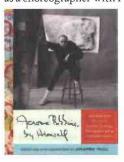
Mammal ecologist Brand offers a spirited look at the red fox in this smart and accessible volume. In the introduction, Brand traces a lifelong pursuit which has included writing about foxes in childhood diaries, studying them in college, and, more recently, fostering orphaned cubs and injured adults for the Fox Project charity. Early chapters focus on their distinctive

appearance and hugely varied habitats. Noting that foxes can survive across the "full measure of the world's diverse environments," Brand recalls seeing them both in India's Thar Desert, among "a scrubby thicket of what the local people call toothbrush bushes," and in London, "on a patch of grass under one of Brixton's tower blocks, half illuminated by streetlight." Subsequent sections deal with foxes' "paradoxical" interactions with each other-which reveal them as simultaneously "independent and interdependent"and with other animals, including rabbits, rodents, and deer. Even a digression on 2014's viral music video "What Does the Fox Say?" proves fruitful, with Brand discussing the full range of things which foxes do "say." Thanks to this mix of biology, personal history, and pop culture, Brand's readers will be left both entertained and better informed about "this small, curious member of the dog family." (Oct.) . . . . . . . . . . . .

#### Jerome Robbins, by Himself: Selections From His Letters, Journals, Drawings, Photographs, and an Unfinished Memoir

Edited and with commentary by Amanda Vaill. Knopf, \$40 (464p) ISBN 978-0-451-49467-2

Vaill (Somewhere: the Life of Jerome Robbins) gathers a fascinating selection of illustrations, photographs, and writings from the personal archives of dance choreographer Jerome Robbins (1918–1998). Eager to escape Weehawken, N.J., Robbins attended college at New York University. In a journal entry, he writes, "There was no money to allow me to continue college... so then I decided I'd try dancing." He studied with Senya Gluck Sandor, then worked his way from chorus member to soloist in summer resort and Broadway shows, before discovering a talent for choreography. Vaill expertly weaves Robbins's insight into his artistic accomplishments: Robbins debuted as a choreographer with Fancy Free in 1944,



and shortly after told a reporter, "I was just another dancer. Now I'm supposed to be somebody and I can't get used to that." As Vaill notes, Robbins