

# fiction

★Atkinson, Kate. **Transcription.**

Little, Brown. Sept. 2018. 352p.

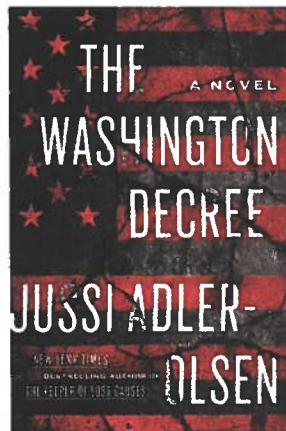
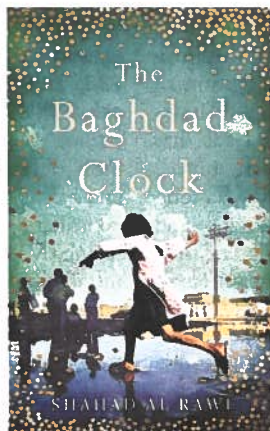
ISBN 9780316176637. \$28;

ebk. ISBN 9780316479752. F

Is it ever possible to transcend the choices of the past? In this superb new novel from Atkinson (*A God in Ruins*), it's 1940 when Juliet Armstrong is recruited into the British intelligence service, MI5. She supports an operation by transcribing recorded meetings between a British agent, posing as a member of the Gestapo, and British Nazi sympathizers. At 19 and somewhat naïve but with considerable wit and intelligence, she is soon entangled in espionage, undertaking an active role in the operation and bringing several traitors to justice. When the war ends, Juliet leaves MI5 for the BBC, first in Manchester, and then in London, where she produces programs for the emerging schools educational ser-

At 25, sexy, single Lacey Whitman is on the fast track in New York City, juggling careers as a fashion trend forecaster and cofounder of a start-up clothing app. She's shocked to discover at a routine checkup that she has the gene for breast cancer, leaving her two choices: either have a double mastectomy or live screening to screening until something is potentially found. Fueled by wine and pizza, Lacey and her friends make up a Boob Bucket List, eight sexcentric things she wants to do with her boobs before their possible removal. Clark (*The Regulars*) comes back in full force with this laugh-out-loud, crude, graphic sexual awakening story, defining, on one level, the role breasts play in women's lives. From botched role play with an ex-boyfriend to public sex in a dungeon and a threesome in which the other participants are more interested in capturing

Christmas birth of Louis Lamontagne, we follow the exploits of this larger-than-life strongman, lothario, and eventual funeral director, before moving onto his daughter, Madeleine, who opens a successful chain of diners. The last half of the book focuses on Madeleine's son Gabriel, a gentle dimwit and ladies' man who tracks a woman to Berlin but gets distracted by Magda Berg, an elderly neighbor who shares a long narrative about her World War II experiences and reveals unexpected connections to the Lamontagne family. Wildly ambitious in scope and structure, Dupont's novel (originally titled *La Fiancée Américaine*) mostly succeeds in throwing many balls into the air and having each land where it has the most impact. Readers may be tempted to start the book again to pick up all the clues they missed the first time through. The entire work is a testament to the power, and pitfalls, of storytelling. Through exaggeration, selective memory, and perspective, whose version of the story can we believe? **VERDICT** Highly recommended.—Christine DeZelar-Tiedman, Univ. of Minnesota Libs., Minneapolis



**The power & pitfalls of storytelling; a friendship that transcends war; will scare the apathy out of you**

vice in 1950. As Juliet's life tantalizingly unfolds, it becomes apparent that she has made some very provocative choices during the war, and that absolutely nothing is as it seems. **VERDICT** With a fascinating cast of characters, careful plotting, and lyrical language in turns comical and tragic, Atkinson's complex story carefully unveils the outer demands and inner conflicts that war inflicts on people. A delight for fans of A.S. Byatt and Ian McEwan. [See Pre-pub Alert, 3/12/18.]—Penelope J.M. Klein, Fayetteville, NY

Clark, Georgia. **The Bucket List.**

Emily Bestler: Atria. Aug. 2018.

352p. ISBN 9781501173028. \$26;

ebk. ISBN 9781501173042. F

on social media, Lacey is brought to her knees as she learns to lean in, let go, and accept her fate. **VERDICT** Wonderfully eye-opening, clearly well researched, and handled delicately, this is sure to make summer a little hotter.—Erin Holt, Williamson Cty. P.L., Franklin, TN

★Dupont, Eric. **Songs for the Cold of Heart.** QC Fiction. Jul. 2018. 608p.

tr. from French by Peter McCambridge.

ISBN 9781771861472. \$27.95. F

An emerging voice in Quebec fiction, Dupont releases his second novel to be translated into English, presenting an epic family saga peppered with tall tales, sex, humor, unspeakable tragedy, and a touch of magic realism. Beginning with the

Giffin, Emily. **All We Ever Wanted.** Ballantine.

Jun. 2018. 352p. ISBN 9780399178924.

\$28; ebk. ISBN 9780399178931. F

The latest from Giffin (*First Comes Love*) tells the stories of Nina, a middle-aged, ultrawealthy philanthropist, and 16-year-old Lyla, a scholarship student at the exclusive private school that Nina's son Finch attends. At a party, Lyla passes out drunk and an explicit, racially charged photo of her circulates. Finch is accused of taking the photo, resulting in his acceptance to Princeton being withdrawn. Sophomore Lyla has a crush on senior Finch and wants the whole thing dropped. Nina loves her son, but the situation brings up a long-buried memory of date rape from her university days, so she sympathizes with Lyla and contacts her and her single father, Tom. As the story unfolds, it is not clear who actually took the photo, who sent it, who is guilty, and who deserves loyalty. Along the lines of William Landay's *Defending Jacob*, with a parent who is horrified at what their child might have done but still loves them, the story delves further into sexual assault as well as issues of class and how much privilege accrues to the extremely wealthy. **VERDICT** A compelling