

THIS YEAR'S SPRING & SUMMER PREVIEW SPECIAL features books by veteran authors whose returns are always welcome—Christopher Buckley, Lucinda Franks, A.M. Homes—as well several from newcomers. One of that category is Joshua Ferris's *Then We Came to the End*, a terrific novel set in a just-post-boom Chicago advertising agency; it evokes certain madcap aspects of office farce, but includes as well a gut-wrenching, poignant middle act and payoff that won't leave a dry eye in the proverbial house. When you read it, you're simultaneously aware of the apparent simplicity that makes it a delightful can't-wait-to-get-to-the-next-joke page-turner, and of the complex authorial machine that hums below that surface level. Ferris talked with us about the book's deliberate tonal shift, and his self-knowing and confident comments are exactly the sort that encourage us about this medium in general. It's precisely because there are new writers like Ferris coming up almost every day that the old vets have to watch their backs, and why good books continue to battle it out for primacy in what is, all in all, a rich literary environment.

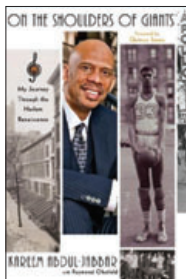
As anyone reading *Kirkus* knows, there is no more important part of that literary environment than the community of libraries and librarians. And so it is with enthusiasm that we introduce in this issue a Special Report on Innovations in Library Services. I explain on page 9 in greater detail what we set out to do, but I encourage you to look at the section, and to provide feedback to me about it.

—JEROME KRAMER, Editor-in-Chief
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On the Shoulders of Giants: My Journey Through the Harlem Renaissance

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar with
Raymond Obstfeld
Simon & Schuster / February / 1416534881 / \$26.00

While there may be numerous high-profile books released this year, there aren't many that will be penned by a bigger author—literally—than former NBA superstar Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Readers who haven't kept up with his post-basketball career may be surprised to find that the physical giant is also an intellectual one. Having previously displayed his knack for narrative nonfiction in the well-received *Brothers in Arms: The Epic Story of the 761st Tank Battalion, WWII's Forgotten Heroes* (2004), Abdul-Jabbar turns his attention—and passion for history—to the Harlem Renaissance, which he says he discovered “in the Summer of 1964, between my junior and senior year of high school. I was struck by the amount of artistic effort



that was put forth in areas of dance, the literary arts, music and other aspects of black culture.” Using a traditional West African call-and-response structure, he focuses on what he calls his “four greatest passions: Harlem, basketball, jazz and writing.” Each section features two chapters, one that provides a wealth of historical details and one that responds to that information with the author's own experiences, a technique that allows the author to offer an intimate, personal account of one of the most creatively fertile—and influential—periods in American history. Despite having now written about his own life and career, World War II and the Harlem Renaissance, Abdul-Jabbar is far from finished pursuing history: “I certainly would like to write books and make films about the Underground Railroad, and various Western stories.”

The Lost Diary of Don Juan

Douglas Carlton Abrams
Atria Books / May / 1416532501 / \$25.00

In an age where celebrity exposés flash across the Web by the hour, can yet another take on this legendary playboy possibly stand a chance? Absolutely. With rights al-

ready sold in more than 20 countries, Douglas Carlton Abrams's fiction debut presents one of the most compelling Don Juans in literary history. Straying from traditional renderings of the Don Juan story as a farcical or cautionary tale against the ravages of unbridled male desire, this self-described student of the world's sensual wisdom (*The Multi-Orgasmic Man*, 1997; *The Multi-Orgasmic Couple*, 2001; *God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time*, 2005; *Light on Life: The Yoga Journey to Wholeness, Inner Peace, & Ultimate Freedom*, 2006—all co-authored) says he wrote the story to unravel the secrets of “how you marry lust and love and find contentment with one person for a lifetime.” Says Abrams, “A Don Juan who would be deserving of the mythic reputation as the greatest lover in the world could not have been a prototypical frat boy out to score; he had to understand women and their needs intimately. And that's what I'm trying to portray: a Don Juan who not only under-

