2013

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Editor’s Note: Hey, are y’all reading this? If you know of an article that should be called to Against the Grain’s attention ... send an email to <kstrauch@comcast.net>. We’re listening! — KS

WHO DOESN’T LOVE AN ANIMAL BOOK?
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)
(1) E. B. White, Charlotte’s Web (1952); (2) Wilfrid Blunt, Omar: A Fantasy for Animal Lovers (1966); (3) Joy Adamson, Born Free (1960); (4) Hermann Tirler, A Sloth in the Family (1963); (5) Peter Fischer, Animal Liberation (1975).

FROM STETTIN ON THE BALTIC TO TRIESTE ON THE ADRIATIC
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)
Oh, goody, let’s go behind the Iron Curtain. (1) Milan Kundera (1967); (2) Fazil Iskander, Sandro of Chegem (1973); (3) Tibor Fischer, Under the Frog (1992); (4) Peter Schneider, The Wall Jumper (1983); (5) Eva Hoffman, Lost in Translation (1989).

NOVELS OF LITERARY LIFE
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)
Let’s read about writer’s block. (1) W.M. Thackeray, Pendennis (1848-1850); (2) George Gissing, New Grub Street (1891); (3) George Orwell, Keep the Aspidistra Flying (1936); (4) Anthony Powell, Books Do Furnish a Room (1971); (5) Nigel Williams, My Life Closed Twice (1977).

LITERARY MISSING PERSONS
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)
Five books on missing persons and absent figures: (1) Virginia Woolf, Moments of Being (1976) (yes, this is a posthumous collection of essays); (2) Kobo Abe, The Woman in the Dunes (1962); Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman, The Decoration of Houses (1897); Percival Everett, Erasure (2001); George Plimpton and Jean Stein, Edie (1982) (Oral biography of Warhol Factory Girl Edie Sedgwick. She’s missing because she’s long dead of an overdose.).
See — Heidi Julavits, “Five Best,” The Wall Street Journal, Feb. 2-3, 2013, p.C10. (Julavits has an interest in the topic, as her fourth novel The Vanishers is out in paperback.)

CURTAIN CALL FOR KITTY
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)
Who says you can’t train a cat? Truman Capote’s novella Breakfast at Tiffany’s is being brought to the Broadway stage, and there’s a key role for a stray cat that Holly Golightly refuses to name anything other than “Cat.” In Act II, the cat represents Holly’s spirit and has to scam on cue because they’re “independents, both of us.” Of course, many auditioned, but only one was chosen. Some froze in the lights, others clawed the trainer and hissed at the director. Only a gray-striped kitten made a true Broadway exit and won the coveted part.

ESPIONAGE TALES
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)