Delicate Edible Birds - And Other Stories

From Lauren Groff, author of the critically acclaimed and bestselling novel Fates and Furies, comes Delicate Edible Birds, one of the most striking short fiction debuts in years. Here are nine stories of astonishing insight and variety, each revealing a resonant drama within the life of a twentieth-century American woman. In "Sir Fleeting," a Midwestern farm girl on her honeymoon in Argentina falls into lifelong lust for a French playboy. In "Blythe," an attorney who has become a stay-at-home mother takes a night class in poetry and meets another full-time mother, one whose charismatic brilliance changes everything. In "The Wife of the Dictator," that eponymous wife ("brought back . . . from [the dictator's] last visit to America") grows more desperately, menacingly isolated every day. In "Delicate Edible Birds," a group of war correspondents—a lone, high-spirited woman among them—falls sudden prey to a brutal farmer while fleeing Nazis in the French countryside. In "Lucky Chow Fun," Groff returns us to Templeton, the setting of her first book, for revelations about the darkness within even that idyllic small town. In some of these stories, enormous changes happen in an instant. In others, transformations occur across a lifetime—or several lifetimes. Throughout the collection, Groff displays particular and vivid preoccupations. Crime is a motif—sex crimes, a possible murder, crimes of the heart. Love troubles recur; they're in every story—love in alcoholism, in adultery, in a flood, even in the great flu epidemic of 1918. Some of the love has depths, which are understood too late; some of the love is shallow, and also understood too late. And mastery is a theme—Groff's women swim and baton twirl, become poets, or try and try again to achieve the inner strength to exercise personal freedom. Overall, these stories announce a notable new literary master. Dazzlingly original and confident, Delicate Edible Birds further solidifies Groff's reputation as one of the foremost talents of her generation.

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FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF FATES AND FURIES Lauren Groff's critically acclaimed The Monsters of Templeton was shortlisted for the Orange Broadband Award for New Writers 2008, and critics hailed her as an enormous talent and a writer to watch. In Delicate Edible Birds, she fulfils that promise. Delicate Edible Birds includes nine stories of vastly different styles and structures. "L. De Bard and Aliette" recreates the tale of Abelard and Heloise in New York during the 1918 flu epidemic; 'Lucky Chow Fun' returns to Templeton, the setting of Groff's debut novel, for a contemporary account of what happens to outsiders in a small, insular town; the title story of Delicate Edible Birds is a harrowing, powerfully moving drama about a group of war correspondents, a lone woman among them, who fall prey to a frightening man in the French countryside while fleeing the Nazis. With a dazzling array of voices and settings, Delicate Edible Birds will cement Lauren Groff's reputation as one of the foremost talents of her generation.

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Florida

FINALIST FOR THE NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER OF THE STORY PRIZE ONE OF NPR'S BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR From the universally acclaimed, New York Times bestselling author of Fates and Furies and Matrix Florida is a "superlative" book (Boston Globe), "frequently funny" (San Francisco Chronicle), "brooding, inventive and often moving" (NPR Fresh Air) --as Groff is recognized as "Florida's unofficial poet laureate, as Joan Didion was for California." (Washington Post) In her thrilling new book, Lauren Groff brings the reader into a physical world that is at once domestic and wild—a place where the hazards of the natural world lie waiting to pounce, yet the greatest threats and mysteries are still of an emotional, psychological nature. A family retreat can be derailed by a prowling panther, or by a sexual secret. Among those navigating this place are a resourceful pair of abandoned sisters; a lonely boy, grown up; a restless, childless couple, a searching, homeless woman; and an unforgettable, recurring character—a steely and conflicted wife and mother. The stories in this collection span characters, towns, decades, even centuries, but Florida—its landscape, climate, history, and state of mind—becomes its gravitational center: an energy, a mood, as much as a place of residence. Groff transports the reader, then jolts us alert with a crackle of wit, a wave of sadness, a flash of cruelty, as she writes about loneliness, rage, family, and the passage of time. With shocking accuracy and effect, she pinpoints the moments and decisions and connections behind human pleasure and pain, hope and despair, love and fury—the moments that make us alive. Startling, precise, and affecting, Florida is a magnificent achievement.
The Monsters of Templeton

"The day I returned to Templeton steeped in disgrace, the fifty-foot corpse of a monster surfaced in Lake Glimmerglass." So begins The Monsters of Templeton, a novel spanning two centuries: part a contemporary story of a girl's search for her father, part historical novel, and part ghost story. In the wake of a disastrous love affair with her older, married archaeology professor at Stanford, brilliant Wilhelmina Cooper arrives back at the doorstep of her hippie mother-turned-born-again-Christian's house in Templeton, NY, a storybook town her ancestors founded that sits on the shores of Lake Glimmerglass. Upon her arrival, a prehistoric monster surfaces in the lake bringing a feeding frenzy to the quiet town, and Willie learns she has a mystery father her mother kept secret Willie's entire life. The beautiful, broody Willie is told that the key to her biological father's identity lies somewhere in her family's history, so she buries herself in the research of her twisted family tree and finds more than she bargained for as a chorus of voices from the town's past -- some sinister, all fascinating -- rise up around her to tell their side of the story. In the end, dark secrets come to light, past and present day are blurred, and old mysteries are finally put to rest. The Monsters of Templeton is a fresh, virtuoso performance that has placed Lauren Groff among the best writers of today.

Arcadia

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER "Timeless and vast... The raw beauty of Ms. Groff's prose is one of the best things about Arcadia. But it is by no means this book's only kind of splendor."---Janet Maslin, The New York Times "Even the most incidental details vibrate with life Arcadia wends a harrowing path back to a fragile, lovely place you can believe in."---Ron Charles, The Washington Post In the fields of western New York State in the 1970s, a few dozen idealists set out to live off the land, founding a commune centered on the grounds of a decaying mansion called Arcadia House. Arcadia follows this romantic utopian dream from its hopeful start through its heyday. Arcadia's inhabitants include Handy, the charismatic leader; his wife, Astrid, a midwife; Abe, a master carpenter; Hannah, a baker and historian; and Abe and Hannah's only child, Bit. While Arcadia rises and falls, Bit, too, ages and changes. He falls in love with Helle, Handy's lovely, troubled daughter. And eventually he must face the world beyond Arcadia. In Arcadia, Groff displays her literary gifts to stunning effect. "Fascinating."---People (****) "It's not possible to write any better without showing off."---Richard Russo, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel Empire Falls "Dazzling."---Vogue

Fates and Furies

"Every story has two sides. Every relationship has two perspectives. And sometimes, it turns out, the key to a great marriage is not its truths but its secrets ... At age twenty-two, Lotto and Mathilde are tall, glamorous, madly in love, and destined for greatness. A decade later, their marriage is still the envy of their friends, but ... things are even more complicated and remarkable than they have seemed"

Matrix - THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
Seventeen-year-old Marie, too wild for courtly life, is thrown to the dogs one winter morning, expelled from the royal court to become the prioress of an abbey. Marie is strange - tall, a giantess, her elbows and knees stick out, ungainly. At first taken aback by life at the abbey, Marie finds purpose and passion among her mercurial sisters. Yet she deeply misses her secret lover Cecily and queen Eleanor. Born last in a long line of women warriors and crusaders, women who flew across the countryside with their sword fighting and dagger work, Marie decides to chart a bold new course for the women she now leads and protects. She will bring herself, and her sisters, out of the darkness, into riches and power. MATRIX is a bold vision of female love, devotion and desire from one of the most adventurous writers at work today. 'A thrillingly vivid, adventurous story about women and power that will blow readers' minds. Left me gasping.' EMMA DONOGHUE 'Both epic and intimate, this sweeping novel explores questions of female ambition, creativity and passion with electrifying prose and sparkling wit. A propulsive, captivating read' BRIT BENNETT 'Visionary leader, queer lover, 12th-century writer ... the life of Marie de France is triumphantly reimagined in an assertively modern novel about female ambition and creativity... a highly distinctive novel of great vigour and boldness. From mystical visions that may or may not be divine, to the earthy business of abbey pigs, diseases and account books, Groff does it all with purpose and panache' Guardian 'Groff's writing is muscular and precise, her themes wildly resonant' Sunday Times 'A remarkable novel: unusual, profound, transcendent' Evening Standard

**The Last Animal**

The Last Animal by Abby Geni is that rare literary find — a remarkable series of stories unified around one theme: people who use the interface between the human and the natural world to contend with their modern challenges of love, loss, and family life. These are vibrant, weighty stories that herald the arrival of a young writer of surprising feeling and depth. "Terror Birds" tracks the dissolution of a marriage set against an ostrich farm in the sweltering Arizona desert; "Dharma at the Gate" features the tempest of young love as a teenaged girl must choose between man's best friend, her damaged boyfriend, and a beckoning future; "Captivity" follows an octopus handler at an aquarium still haunted by the disappearance of her brother years ago; "The Girls of Apache Bryn Mawr" details a Greek chorus of Jewish girls at a summer camp whose favorite counselor goes missing under suspicious circumstances; "In the Spirit Room" centers on a scientist suffering the heartbreaking loss of a parent from Alzheimer's while living in the natural history museum where they both worked; in "Fire Blight" a father grieving over his wife's recent miscarriage finds an outlet for comfort in their backyard garden and makes a surprising discovery on how to cherish living things; and in the title story, a retired woman traces the steps of the husband who left her thirty years ago, burning the letters he had sent along the way, while the luminous and exotic wildlife of the Pacific Ocean opens up to receive her. Unflinching, exciting, ambitious and heartfelt, The Last Animal takes readers through a menagerie of settings and landscapes as it underscores the connection between all living
things.

**Where the Light Falls: Selected Stories of Nancy Hale**

Lauren Groff invites a new generation of readers to rediscover the haunting stories of a neglected mid-century master. A teenage girl in Connecticut driven to near delirium over her burgeoning sexuality. A twenty-something New Yorker transplanted to a small Virginia community who boldly befriends the town pariah. A New England widow in search of alcohol and excitement while babysitting her grandson. A Maryland socialite who has built a secret bomb shelter that becomes the center of her imaginative life. These are some of the characters who inhabit Nancy Hale’s lush fiction. Haunting, vivid, and wonderfully subversive, Hale’s stories typically concern women recognizable to all of us—sometimes fragile, possibly wicked, deceptively ordinary, navigating their way uncertainly through life. Nancy Hale was one of the most accomplished short story artists of her era, winner of ten O. Henry Awards and a frequent contributor to The New Yorker from the 1930s to the 1960s. But by the time of her death in 1988, this remarkable writer, so far ahead of her time in her depiction of complex women, was largely forgotten. Now Lauren Groff reintroduces this modern master with a selection of twenty-five of her best stories—brilliant short fiction that encompasses childhood and adolescence, marriage and motherhood, desire and infidelity, madness and memory. Where the Light Falls reveals Hale as a gifted stylist—a painter in light and shadow—and an acute observer of modern American life.