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Book reviews by Hattie Gordon 47

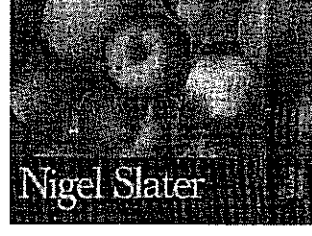


JUST CAN'T PUT DOWN...

BEING LUIS
by Luis Muñoz
IMPRESS BOOKS
£11.99

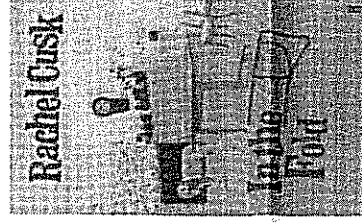
THIS IS the extraordinary story of a man who responded to the injustices of poverty and inequality he saw in his country, Chile, by joining the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) in his mid-twenties. With Pinochet's 1973 coup and its determination to exterminate dissidents, Luis Muñoz was imprisoned in a concentration camp and tortured for months because he and his comrades had dared to dream of a just society. Luis, who now lives in Brighton with his family, recounts his years in Chile with compelling dignity. He shares precious memories of his pregnant wife, Diana, who became one of 'the disappeared'. Luis dedicates his book 'to the thousands who were silenced forever', and his voice brings those that were close to him back to life. *Being Luis* deserves to be read by many as a remarkable testament to the human spirit and as a scandalous reminder that Pinochet has yet to pay for his crimes.

THE KITCHEN DIARIES
by Nigel Slater
FOURTH ESTATE
£25



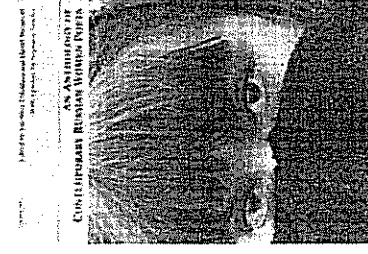
IF YOU have one man in your kitchen, have Nigel. His writing on food is as straightforward and fluid as his recipes (his truffles are legendary in my house). The diary is an original format for a recipe book and one that makes complete sense; it gets you thinking about ingredients in relation to seasons and when they are at their peak. As the man says, "Right food, right place, right time... this is the best recipe of all." He matches changes in weather to cravings: a drizzly January demands ginger cake, salad of red mullet with lime and ginger is for a sultry August. Other delights include spiced pumpkin soup with bacon, chicken with vermouth, tarragon and cream, raspberry vanilla ice-cream cake. Destination: sensory ecstasy.

IN THE FOLD
by Rachel Cusk
FABER & FABER
£10.99



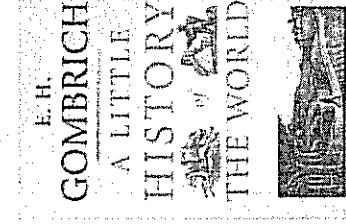
WHEN UNIVERSITY student Michael visits the home of his friend Adam Hanbury, he is intoxicated with the Hanburys' lack of convention. The pretentiously-named Egypt is the family farm, where animals, eccentrics, children, ex-wife and current wife, all live in harmony. Sixteen years later, married with his own young son, Michael returns to Egypt for the lambing season. The myth of the Hanburys is less intact and misconceived morality comes to the fore. Cusk's writing is incisive and hyper-perceptive. Often using darkly comedic dialogue, she roots out generations of family and marital illusions. There is little conventional plot, and this works in the narrative's favour as the prose becomes an acute study of the dynamics of relationships.

AN ANTHOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN WOMEN POETS
Ed Valentina Polukhina & Daniel Wisnibort
CARCANET
£14.95



ALONGSIDE WORK by established writers such as Tatjana Shcherbina and Vera Pavlova, this survey of poetry written by Russian women since the 1980s includes work by the generation born after 1970 and virtually unknown outside Russia. The poets included here have been blessed by history: they have not experienced the difficult exiles of their predecessors and, despite financial instability, many live international lives which have influenced their poetry. Far from ghettoizing women poets in such a book (the associations to the word *poetessa* remain derogatory), this work has been collated because it has not been adequately attended to elsewhere. The first-ever anthology of its kind, the range is vast in its eye-opening reflections on post-Soviet life.

A LITTLE HISTORY OF THE WORLD
by E. H. Gombrich
YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS
£14.99



WRITTEN IN just six weeks in 1935, this book's publication was stopped by the Nazis because its perspective was considered to be 'too pacifist'. Though reprinted after the war

and translated into 18 languages, this is the first English edition and has newly commissioned pen and ink illustrations. Gombrich tells the story of man from the Stone Age to the atomic bomb and, although there is a European slant, we are taken all over the world. He was determined to tell history without plauging readers with dates and time lines. Instead, he focuses on experience; how man acquired speech, made tools and great works of art. Intended for young readers (9-13), he is a gifted storyteller and, as such, the book appeals to children and adults alike – indeed, to anyone with curiosity.