2011 Noteworthy Nonfiction

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1861: The Civil War Awakening
by Goodheart, Adam
973.711 GOO
As the United States marks the 150th anniversary of our defining national drama, historian Adam Goodheart presents an original account of how the Civil War began. 1861 is an epic of courage and heroism beyond the battlefields. Early in that fateful year, a second American revolution unfolded, inspiring a new generation to reject their parents' faith in compromise and appeasement, to do the unthinkable in the name of an ideal. It set Abraham Lincoln on the path to greatness and millions of slaves on the road to freedom. Goodheart takes us from the corridors of the White House to the slums of Manhattan, from the mouth of the Chesapeake to the deserts of Nevada, from Boston Common to Alcatraz Island, vividly evoking the Union at this moment of ultimate crisis and decision.

33 Revolutions per Minute: A History of Protest Songs, from Billie Holiday to Green Day
by Lynskey, Dorian
781.592 LYN
A history of protest music embodied in 33 songs since the 1930s.

The Big Thirst: The Secret Life and Turbulent Future of Water
by Fishman, Charles
333.91 FIS
The water coming out of your kitchen tap is four billion years old and might well have been sipped by a Tyrannosaurus rex. Rather than only three states of water, liquid, ice, and vapor, there is a fourth, "molecular water," fused into rock 400 miles deep in the Earth, and that's where most of the planet's water is found. Unlike most precious resources, water cannot be used up; it can always be made clean enough again to drink, indeed, water can be made so clean that it's toxic. Water is the most vital substance in our lives but also more amazing and mysterious than we appreciate. As the author brings to life in this narrative, water runs our world in a host of awe inspiring ways, yet we take it completely for granted. But the era of easy water is over. Bringing readers on a lively and fascinating journey from the wet moons of Saturn to the water obsessed hotels of Las Vegas, where dolphins swim in the desert, and from a rice farm in the parched Australian outback to a high tech IBM plant that makes an exotic breed of pure water found nowhere in nature, he shows that we have already left behind a century long golden age when water was thoughtlessly abundant, free, and safe and entered a new era of high stakes water.

Blood, Bones, & Butter: The Inadvertent Education of a Reluctant Chef
by Hamilton, Gabrielle
BIO HAMILTON
The chef of New York's East Village Prune restaurant presents an account of her search for meaning and purpose in the central rural New Jersey home of her youth, marked by a first chicken kill, an international backpacking tour, and the opening of a first restaurant.

Blue Nights
by Didion, Joan
BIO DIDION
In this memoir, the author shares her observations about her daughter as well as her own thoughts and fears about having children and growing old, in a personal account that discusses her daughter's wedding and her feelings of failure as a parent. It opens on July 26, 2010, as Didion thinks back to Quintana's wedding in New York seven years before. Today would be her wedding anniversary. This fact triggers vivid snapshots of Quintana's childhood, in Malibu, in Brentwood, at school in Holmby Hills. Reflecting on her daughter but also on her role as a parent, Didion asks the candid questions any parent might about how she feels she failed either because cues were missed or perhaps displaced. Seamlessly woven in are incidents Didion sees as underscoring her own age, something she finds hard to acknowledge, much less accept.

Bossypants
by Fey, Tina
792.7208 FEY
From her youthful days as a vicious nerd to her tour of duty on Saturday Night Live; from her passionately halfhearted pursuit of physical beauty to her life as a mother eating things off the floor; from her one-sided college romance to her nearly fatal honeymoon, comedian Tina Fey reveals all, and proves that you're no one until someone calls you bossy.

Catherine the Great: Portrait of a Woman
by Massie, Robert K.
BIO CATHERINE II
Presents a reconstruction of the eighteenth-century empress's life that covers her efforts to engage Russia in the cultural life of Europe, her creation of the Hermitage, and her numerous scandal-free romantic affairs.

Death in the City of Light : The Serial Killer of Nazi-occupied Paris
by King, David
364.1523 KIN
The gripping true story of a brutal serial killer who unleashed his own reign of terror in Nazi-occupied Paris. Dr. Marcel Petiot was eventually charged with 27 murders, although authorities suspected the total was considerably higher. The trial became a circus, and Petiot enjoyed the spotlight. A harrowing exploration of murder, betrayal, and evil of staggering proportions.

Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine and the Murder of a President
by Millard, Candice
973.8409 MIL
A narrative account of the twentieth president's political career offers insight into his background as a scholar and Civil War hero, his battles against the corrupt establishment, and Alexander Graham Bell's failed attempt to save him from an assassin's bullet.

Founding Gardeners: The Revolutionary Generation, Nature, and the Shaping of the American Nation
by Wulf, Andrea
712.0973 WUL
From the author of the acclaimed The Brother Gardeners, a fascinating look at the founding fathers from the unique and intimate perspective of their lives as gardeners, plantsmen, and farmers. For the

founding fathers, gardening, agriculture, and botany were elemental passions, as deeply ingrained in their characters as their belief in liberty for the nation they were creating. Andrea Wulf reveals for the first time this aspect of the revolutionary generation. She describes how, even as British ships gathered off Staten Island, George Washington wrote his estate manager about the garden at Mount Vernon; how a tour of English gardens renewed Thomas Jefferson's and John Adams's faith in their fledgling nation; how a trip to the great botanist John Bartram's garden helped the delegates of the Constitutional Congress break their deadlock; and why James Madison is the forgotten father of American environmentalism. These and other stories reveal a guiding but previously overlooked ideology of the American Revolution. Founding Gardeners adds depth and nuance to our understanding of the American experiment, and provides us with a portrait of the founding fathers as they've never before been seen

George F. Kennan: An American Life
by Gaddis, John Lewis
327.73 GAD
A remarkably revealing view of how this greatest of Cold War strategists came to doubt his strategy and always doubted himself. Winner of the 2011 National Book Critics Circle Award for Biography. Winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Biography.

Girls Like Us: Fighting for a World Where Girls are Not for Sale, and Activist Finds her Calling and Heals Herself
by Lloyd, Rachel
362.88 LLO
At thirteen, British-born Rachel Lloyd found herself spiraling into a life of torment and abuse. Vulnerable yet tough, she eventually ended up a victim of commercial sexual exploitation, until she broke free of the street and her pimp thanks to the help of a local church. But that was just the beginning. . . . Three years later, Rachel arrived in the United States to work with adult women in the sex industry and soon founded her own nonprofit, GEMS (Girls Educational and Mentoring Services), to meet the needs of those shunned by society. She also earned her GED and won full scholarships to college and a graduate program. Today, Lloyd is the director of GEMS in New York City, one of the nation's most groundbreaking nonprofit organizations. In stunning detail and with cinematic style, Lloyd tells her story -- a harrowing and inspirational tale of suffering, recovery, discovery, and nobility.

The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris
by McCullough, David
920 MCC
Relates the story of the American artists, writers, and doctors who traveled to Paris in the nineteenth century, fell in love with the city and its people, and changed America through what they learned there.

A History of the World in 100 Objects
by MacGregor, Neil
930.1 MAC
Traces the stories of one hundred human innovations to explain their pivotal role in shaping civilization, from weapons and the domestication of cows to currency and music.

The Information: A History, a Theory, a Flood
by Gleick, James
020.9 GLE

From the invention of scripts and alphabets to the long misunderstood "talking drums" of Africa, James Gleick tells the story of information technologies that changed the very nature of human consciousness. He also provides portraits of the key figures contributing to the inexorable development of our modern understanding of information, including Charles Babbage, Ada Byron, Samuel Morse, Alan Turing, and Claude Shannon.

John Huston : courage and art
by Meyers, Jeffrey
BIO HUSTON
An actor in the 1920s and scriptwriter in the 1930s, John Huston made his dazzling directorial debut in 1941 with 'The Maltese Falcon'. His career as a filmmaker spanned some fifty-seven years and yielded thirty-seven feature films. He made most of his movies abroad, spent much of his life in Ireland and Mexico, and remains one of the most intelligent and influential filmmakers in history. With equal attention given to Huston's impressive artistic output and tempestuous personal relationships, biographer Jeffrey Meyers presents a vivid narrative of Huston's remarkably rich creative life.

Little Princes: One Man's Promise to Bring Home the Lost Children of Nepal
by Grennan, Conor
362.76 GRE
Describes how the author's three-month service as a volunteer at the Little Princes Orphanage in war-torn Nepal became a commitment for advocacy and reform when he discovered that many of his young charges were victims rescued from human traffickers.

Lost in Shangri-La: A True Story of Survival, Adventure, and the Most Incredible Rescue Mission of World War II
by Zuckoff, Mitchell
940.548 ZUC
Award-winning former Boston Globe reporter Mitchell Zuckoff unleashes the exhilarating, untold story of an extraordinary World War II rescue mission, where a plane crash in the South Pacific plunged a trio of U.S. military personnel into the jungle-clad land of New Guinea.

Maphead: Charting the Wide, Weird World of Geography Wonks
by Jennings, Ken
912 JEN
This book traces the history of mapmaking while offering insight into the role of cartography in human civilization and sharing anecdotes about the cultural arenas frequented by map enthusiasts. It comes as no surprise that, as a kid, Jeopardy! legend Ken Jennings slept with a bulky Hammond world atlas by his pillow every night. It recounts his lifelong love affair with geography and explores why maps have always been so fascinating to him and to fellow enthusiasts everywhere. He takes readers on a world tour of geogeeks, from the London Map Fair to the computer programmers at Google Earth. Each chapter delves into a different aspect of map culture: highpointing, geocaching, road atlas rallying, even the "unreal estate" charted on the maps of fiction and fantasy. He also considers the ways in which cartography has shaped our history, suggesting that the impulse to make and read maps is as relevant today as it has ever been.

Midnight Rising: John Brown and the raid that sparked the Civil War
by Horwitz, Tony
973.7116 HOR

In this book the author tells the tale of the daring insurrection that put America on the path to bloody war. Plotted in secret, launched in the dark, John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry was a pivotal moment in U.S. history. But few Americans know the true story of the men and women who launched a desperate strike at the slaveholding South. Now, this work portrays Brown's uprising revealing a country on the brink of explosive conflict. Brown, the descendant of New England Puritans, saw slavery as a sin against America's founding principles. Unlike most abolitionists, he was willing to take up arms, and in 1859 he prepared for battle at a hideout in Maryland, joined by his teenage daughter, three of his sons, and a guerrilla band that included former slaves and a spy. On October 17, the raiders seized Harpers Ferry, stunning the nation and prompting a counterattack led by Robert E. Lee. After Brown's capture, his defiant eloquence galvanized the North and appalled the South, which considered Brown a terrorist. The raid also helped elect Abraham Lincoln, who later began to fulfill Brown's dream with the Emancipation Proclamation, a measure he called "a John Brown raid, on a gigantic scale." This book travels antebellum America to deliver both a historical drama and a telling portrait of a nation divided, a time that still resonates in ours.

The Mirage Man: Bruce Ivins, the Anthrax Attacks, and America's Rush to War
by Willman, David
363.3253 WIL
The anthrax mailings of 2001 triggered the FBI's biggest and most complicated investigation since the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Now, for the first time, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Willman tells the gripping story of the hunt for the anthrax killer--a case that consumed the FBI and became a rallying point for launching the Iraq War.

Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything
by Foer, Joshua
153.14 FOE
Having achieved the seemingly unachievable-- becoming a U.S. Memory Champion-- Foer shows how anyone with enough training and determination can achieve mastery of their memory.

Pauline Kael: A Life in the Dark
by Kellow, Brian
BIO KAEL
In her nearly quarter-century (1968-1991) reviewing films at The New Yorker, Pauline Kael became the most widely read, the most influential, the most powerful, and, often enough, the most provocative critic in America. Her passionate engagement with the work of a new generation of artists--and her ability to share her enthusiasm with a fresh, vernacular, and confrontational style--changed the face of film criticism. On the tenth anniversary of her death comes the first full-scale biography: author Brian Kellow has interviewed family members, friends, colleagues, and adversaries and written a detailed portrait of this remarkable, often relentlessly driven woman. Kellow examines the controversy Kael generated by overstepping what many considered the boundaries of critical propriety. He follows her successes as well as her battles. For anyone who loves film or is concerned about the role of criticism in the arts, this book is a revelatory biography of one of the most influential women of the past half century.

Rin Tin Tin: The Life and the Legend
by Orlean, Susan
636.7376 ORL
Allegedly found in the ruins of a bombed-out dog kennel in France during World War I, then brought to Los Angeles by Lee Duncan, the soldier who found and trained him, by 1927 Rin Tin Tin had become

Hollywood's number one box-office star. Susan Orlean's book--about the dog and the legend--is a poignant exploration of the enduring bond between humans and animals. It is also a richly textured history of twentieth-century entertainment and entrepreneurship. It spans ninety years and explores everything from the shift in status of dogs from working farmhands to beloved family members, from the birth of obedience training to the evolution of dog breeding, from the rise of Hollywood to the past and present of dogs in war.

What it is Like to Go to War
by Marlantes, Karl
959.7043 MAR
War is as old as humankind, but in the past, warriors were prepared for battle by ritual, religion and literature, which also helped bring them home. In this narrative, the author weaves accounts of his combat experiences with thoughtful analysis, self-examination, and his readings from Homer to the Mahabharata to Jung. He talks frankly about how he is haunted by the face of the young North Vietnamese soldier he killed at close quarters and how he finally finds a way to make peace with his past. He discusses the daily contradictions that warriors face in the grind of war, where each battle requires them to take life or spare life, and where they enter a state he likens to the fervor of religious ecstasy. He also underscores the need for returning veterans to be counseled properly.

Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?
by Winterson, Jeanette
BIO WINTERSON
This memoir is a tough-minded search for belonging, for love, an identity, a home, and a mother by the author of "Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit"--winner of the Whitbread First Novel award and the inspiration behind the award-winning BBC television adaptation "Oranges."