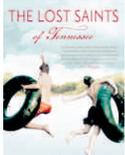


A cheat sheet to fiction debuts in February

Author	Born	Day job	Book	Synopsis	Recalls	Our take	Sample prose
 Amy Franklin-Willis	1971, Birmingham, Ala.	University fundraiser	 "The Lost Saints of Tennessee" (Atlantic Monthly)	Good old-fashioned Southern family dysfunction	 Pat Conroy	Could be a bestseller	"Violet knows now. She knows where Leroy was headed that day, almost 30 years ago now, when he came down Five Hills road too fast. Too drunk. Daisy told her."
 Tupelo Hassman	1973, Santa Cruz, Calif	English professor	 "Girlchild" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)	Brave little girl survives Reno trailer park hell	 Dorothy Allison	Harrowing and lyrical	"If the legs of the new triangle are 12 inches long and 9 inches long, and a little girl is 1/2 the height of the man's shadow at midday, use the Pythagorean theorem to answer the following question: What is taking place inside this triangle?"
 Ramona Ausubel	1979, Santa Fe, N.M.	New mom	 "No One Is Here Except All of Us" (Riverhead)	World War II Jewish village makes itself invisible	 Gabriel García Márquez	Surprisingly gentle Holocaust fable	"On the third morning of the world, my uncle Hersh, the saddlemaker, knocked on our big blue door. We children were on the floor by the window reading a book I had sneaked from one world to the other."
 Emma Straub	1980, New York City	Bookseller	 "Other People We Married" (Riverhead)	Witty tales of contemporary urban characters	 Lorrie Moore	Hors d'oeuvre for upcoming novel	"Nothing was as much like the movies as the last month of my life, when strange women brought me lemonade and baked goods, which I then consumed without worry that I was being poisoned for the lease to my co-op."

this week

Readings and book signings on Long Island

Monday

Author **Jean Claude Baker**, son of renowned performer Josephine Baker, signs his new book "Josephine: The Hungry Heart" (Cooper Square Press) after a screening of a documentary about his mother. At 7:30 p.m., *Cinema Arts Centre, 423 Park Ave., Huntington*. Tickets are \$13 and include reception, 631-423-7611, cinemaartscentre.org



Friday

David Evanier, author of "All the Things You Are: The Life of Tony Bennett" (Wiley), talks and signs his biography of the singer. At 7:30 p.m., *Port Washington Public Library, One Library Dr., 516-883-4400, pwpl.org*



Saturday

Actor **Alec Baldwin** reads from Charles Dickens' classic "Oliver Twist." At 2 p.m., *Book-Hampton, 41 Main St., East Hampton, 631-324-4939, bookhampton.com*



Next Sunday

Author **Cheryl Dunbar Kahke** shares memories of the 1920s through the early '40s from her self-published book "Reminiscing About Ocean Beach and Fire Island." At 2 p.m., *Fire Island Light-house, east of Robert Moses State Park, parking field 5, 631-661-4876, fireislandlighthouse.com*

Compiled by
Mary Beth Foley

Taking his position on yoga

THE SCIENCE OF YOGA: The Risks and the Rewards, by William J. Broad. Simon & Schuster, 298 pp., \$26.

BY CONNIE STEWART
Los Angeles Times

Who knew yoga could be so dangerous? Or is the risk overblown? A man sits on his heels for hours (over a period of days or weeks) and deadens nerves in his lower legs. A woman practices Kapalbhathi — forceful exhaling — and collapses a lung. A woman attempting the wheel — making the body arc like a croquet wicket — balances on her head, bends her neck backward and suffers a stroke.

Author William J. Broad, a yogi since 1970 and the chief science writer for *The New York Times*, remains devoted to the practice. He has much to say about yoga's benefits to the mind and body. But his

chapter on bizarre injuries will get the most attention. His six examples from medical journals include three strokes: yoga postures that include "extreme bending of the neck" can cause a clot in the vertebral arteries, triggering a rare type of stroke that tends to strike young, healthy people.

When the author tries to quantify yoga injuries, however, the most common seem to be orthopedic: lower back, shoulder, knee and neck. Not that those aren't painful, as Broad can attest.

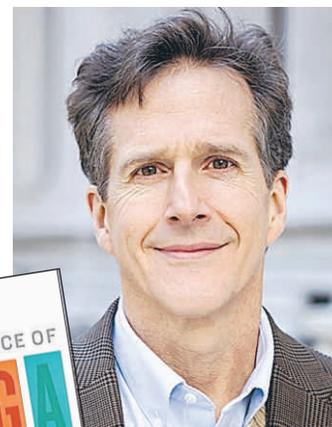
"My research has prompted me to change my own routine," he writes. "I have de-emphasized or dropped certain poses, added others, and in general now handle yoga with much greater care."

Forget freaky injuries, however: Modern urbanites' true terror is gaining weight. Broad finds that yoga does not raise metabolism; in fact, it lowers it. Nor does yoga improve physical conditioning like aerobic exer-

cise does. (More vigorous forms of yoga, such as vinyasa flow, might do better. Yoga studies are rare, since drug companies have no reason to pay for them.)

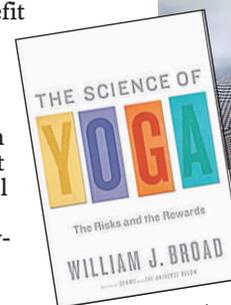
Lowering metabolism sounds like a bad thing, but it contributes to a major benefit of yoga: boosting moods. An experiment at Duke University Medical Center, published in 1989, included about 100 people: a control group, another that used stationary bicycles and a group of yogis. After four months, the bicyclists had improved their conditioning and the yogis had not — but they believed they had.

The yogis "reported enhanced sleep, energy, health, endurance and flexibility," Broad writes. "They described how they experienced a wide range of social benefits, including better sex lives, social lives and family relationships. . . .



William J. Broad

PHOTO BY DELLA BASS



They had better moods, self-confidence and life satisfaction."

As for sex, Broad finds that yoga raises testosterone levels and lowers the level of cortisol, a stress hormone. Another yoga practice, rapid breathing, can boost arousal. You don't need pills or twin bathtubs.

Some practitioners think of yoga as a path to enlightenment. This book can be enlightening for yogis and non-yogis alike.