

Zach HARRIS

*The New York Times style magazine,
An Artist Imagines Five of the Season's Most Anticipated Books*

March 2019

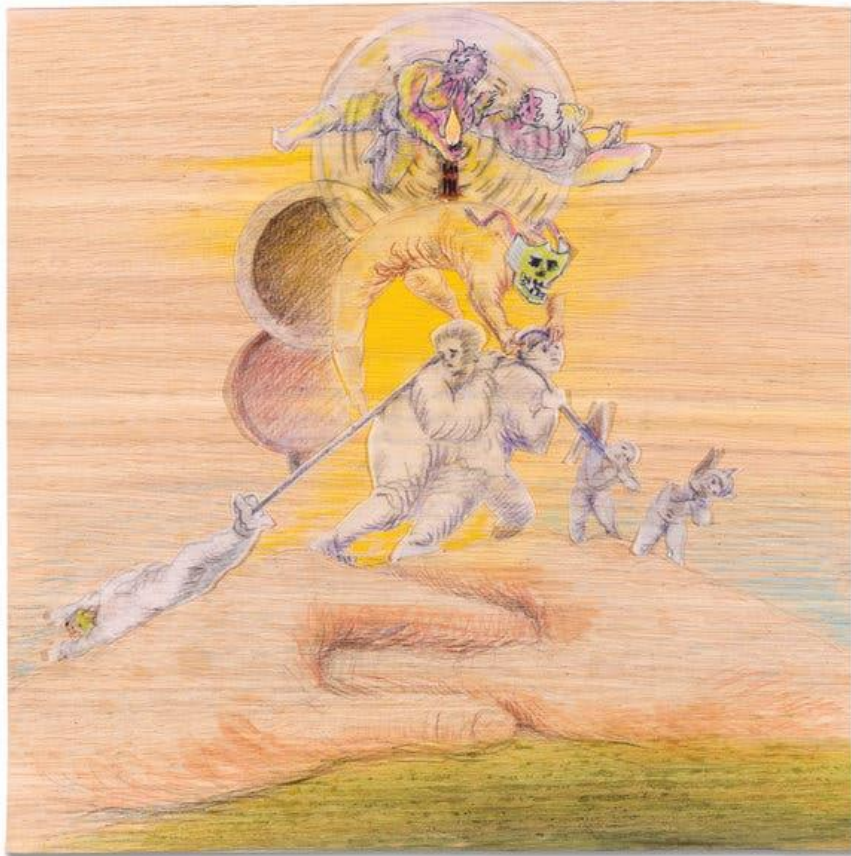
PAGE 76

An Artist Imagines Five of the Season's Most Anticipated Books

We asked Zach Harris to envision what happens on page 76 of four novels and one collection of poetry.

March 21, 2019

The Octopus Museum
Poems by Brenda Shaughnessy



Artwork by Zach Harris. Photograph by Jeff McLane.
Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

From the book:

No matter what the emergency, whenever people are forced to flee you find, piece by piece, how their understanding of their situation changed.

If you read the stories, you're supposed to find abandoned photo albums, suitcases, babies. The useless things cut out by survival's swift knife. Dead weight, long gone.

In response to present-day disasters like gun violence and environmental destruction, Shaughnessy imagines a not-too-distant future in which comforts are scarce and cephalopods rule the earth, imbuing her apocalyptic poems with a mother's warmth and worries. "Our Family on the Run," quoted above, describes a family with a special-needs son ("Cal, four foot six and sixty pounds of tween, who must be carried if we somehow lose that wheelchair") seeking refuge but fully aware there may be nowhere left to go. *In this case, the selected passage appears on page 68, the last page of the book. [Published by Knopf on March 19, 2019.](#)*

The Night Swimmers A novel by Peter Rock



Credit...Artwork by Zach Harris. Photograph by Jeff
McLane. Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los
Angeles

From the book:

She demonstrated how the drawers worked; they stayed locked unless you gripped the sides of the lions' jaws, and then they slid open easily, smoothly. One drawer was empty, and the other held the pocketknife I'd seen her take from his hand.

A middle-aged novelist looks back on a lazy summer spent at his family's cabin in northern Wisconsin, where, as a recent college graduate unsure of what he wanted in life, he would swim in Lake Michigan after dark. He found a kindred spirit that summer in a young widow named Mrs. Abel — until she went missing during one of their swims

together. Some 20 years later, the man returns to the lake, searching for answers in letters, literature and the watery depths of his memory. [Published by Soho Press on March 12, 2019.](#)

Gingerbread A novel by Helen Oyeyemi



Credit...Artwork by Zach Harris. Photograph by Jeff McLane.
Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

From the book:

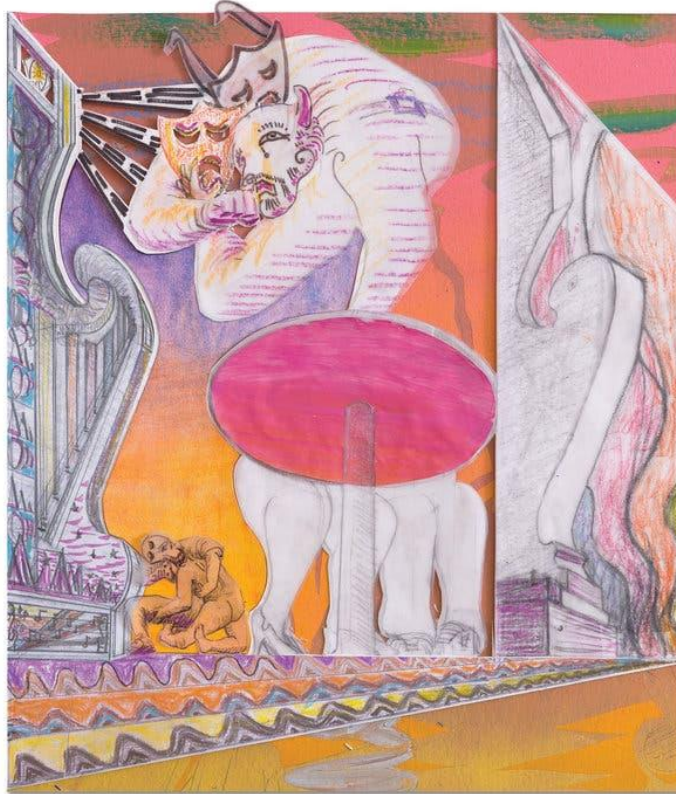
How could she just suddenly grab you like that?

I'll tell them what I did in the morning, Gretel said, and Harriet said, I'll tell them you were scared.

They clung to each other. Did the death penalty apply to them?

The Lee women — mother Harriet and daughter Perdita — live in London, where they lead a mostly normal life and, along with Harriet's old friend Gretel, consume a great deal of baked gingerbread. (The family recipe anchors them to Harriet's mysterious beginnings in the faraway land of Druhástrana.) When a baking accident lands Perdita in the hospital, she finally hears her mother's story and gains a fuller sense of her heritage. [Published by Riverhead on March 5, 2019.](#)

Leading Men A novel by Christopher Castellani



Credit...Artwork by Zach Harris. Photograph by Jeff McLane.
Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

From the book:

“They do not look desperate to me, *Mor*,” said Anja. “They look happy, like little birds.”

“Quite,” Jack said again.

“Well, forgive me, all of you, if it’s not so easy for me to recognize happiness,” Bitte said.

At a raucous Portofino party that almost manages to outshine its guests’ ennui, Frank Merlo and his longtime lover, Tennessee Williams, befriend Anja Blomgren, who goes on to become a famous actress. Years later, Frank thinks back on that and subsequent nights — and what it means to adore someone already adored by the masses — as he lays dying. Anja does the same when she receives a visitor looking for Williams’s last work. [Published by Viking on Feb. 12, 2019.](#)

The Other Americans A novel by Laila Lalami



Credit...Artwork by Zach Harris. Photograph by Jeff McLane. Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

From the book:

We managed to fit into a small boat with our bags. My father began to paddle, working his oar expertly, but I had trouble with mine. This way, Nora, he said. Look. Hold it this way. But the wooden handle kept slipping out of my hands.

After Driss Guerraoui, a Moroccan immigrant who owns a diner in the small Mojave town of Yucca Valley, Calif., is killed in a hit-and-run, it becomes clear that his death was not an accident. Among the grieving family and strained community left behind are his jazz composer daughter, the deputy sheriff she develops feelings for in spite of herself and an undocumented witness to the crime whose safety lies in silence. [*To be published by Pantheon on March 26, 2019.*](#)

About the artist: Zach Harris lives in Los Angeles, where he works primarily with painting, creating hypnotic, intricate carved panels that draw on influences including folk art, medieval cosmological diagrams and Eastern and Western rituals. He [is represented by](#) David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles and will have a solo exhibition there in May. His work can also be found in the collections of the city's Hammer Museum and New Jersey's Princeton University Art Museum, among others.