

# WOMONSCAPE TIMES

~A monthly publication by the Womonscape Center Inc.~



## W O M O N S C A P E C E N T E R

### NO-RULES BOOK GROUP (NRBG)

The *Womonscape Times* and the *No-Rules Book Group* will be on a brief vacation during the next few weeks. There will be no newsletter during the month of April and no book group during the month of March. In other words....

Next No-Rules Book Group Meeting      April 20, 2023  
Next Womonscape Times Newsletter      May 2023

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### SOME BOOKS WE'VE READ SINCE FEBRUARY

OK, it's official.  
Winter hates us.  
Really, how else can we interpret the impossibly messy storms that always *just so happen* to fall on Thursday after Thursday during these past few months?

The February *No-Rules Book Group* meeting had to be canceled due to a less-than-fascinating combination of ice on top of snow.

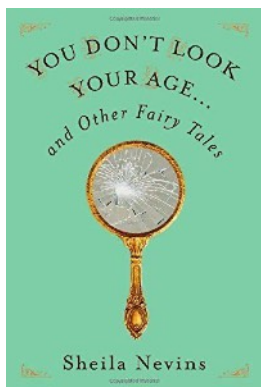
But, hey, did that stop us from reading?  
Certainly not!

Here are some highlights of what our readers were listening to and watching during these weather-challenged weeks.

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### YOU DON'T LOOK YOUR AGE... AND OTHER FAIRY TALES by Sheila Nevins

• audio book

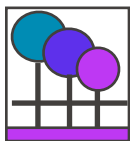


Sheila Nevins is probably best known as an executive at HBO documentary films from 1979 to 2018. She has spent decades telling the stories of other people. This time she decided to tell stories from her own life as a Jewish professional woman, wife, and mother, in the form of memoir-essays. Some are disturbing, some comical, but all are honest and interesting. Nevins feels that at her age (she was born in 1939) telling the truth is freeing. The audio version of the book is read by some of her remarkable friends and heroes, including Marlo Thomas, Kathy Bates, Gayle King, Lily Tomlin, and Meryl Streep.



Sheila Nevins

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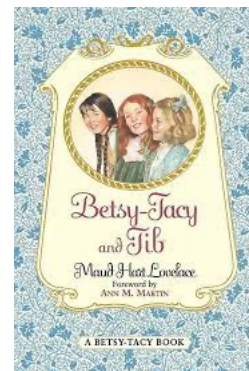
**NO-RULES BOOK GROUP**

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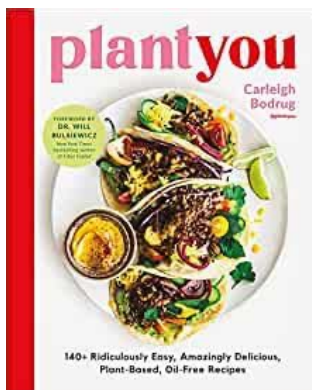
**BETSY, TACY AND TIB** by Maud Hart Lovelace

Looking for a cozy escape from neurotic wintry weather? Spend some time in Deep Valley, Minnesota in the early 20th century with these three girls. Betsy, Tacy, and Tib is the second in a semi-autobiographical series written by Ms. Lovelace about growing up in Mankato, Minnesota. The girls are all in the middle years of elementary school, all have bossy older sisters, and all have a particular knack for getting into mischief, particularly when they are together. They wonder what would happen if they mixed every food in the kitchen together into one big pudding in one chapter, and challenge each other to flying (without a plane or parachute) in another. They also wonder about the world: Why are Tib's German parents so different from the other girls' parents? Why are there so many children in Tacy's Irish family and only three in Betsy's and Tib's? What language are the mysterious new Syrian residents of Deep Valley speaking? The result is a loving portrait of life in the midwestern U.S. in the years before World War I.



**PLANTYOU** by Carleigh Bodrug

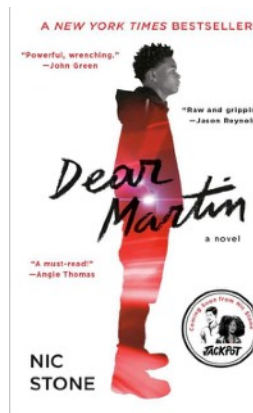
The subtitle of this book is well deserved: "140+ Ridiculously Easy, Amazingly Delicious, Plant-Based, Oil-Free Recipes." Ms. Bodrug is a young, enthusiastic Canadian, and this is her first cookbook. She has managed to make healthy vegan foods delicious and approachable, using common



grocery-store ingredients, clear directions, and appetizing photography. For a sample of Ms. Bodrug's work, as well as her contagious enthusiasm, check out the internet; even better, check out this book!

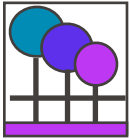
**DEAR MARTIN** by Nic

Ms. Stone wrote this story for young adults after years of personal experience working with teens and people of different racial and cultural backgrounds. She grew up in Atlanta, attended Spelman College, mentored teens, lived in Israel, married, and raised two sons—all of which helped prepare her to write this debut novel. Dear Martin follows a year in the life of Justyce McAllister, a 17-year-old high school senior who is very successful academically and has big plans for his future. As a young Black male, however, he struggles with the injustice he sees around



him, sometimes directed at him, and other times at his friends. To sort out his thoughts, he writes letters to one of his heroes, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Justyce lives in the area of Atlanta where King once lived, and identifies with the King philosophy of nonviolence, but is unsure how to apply it to modern situations. The reader is left with an honest, complex look at the issues facing youth today.





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**NO-RULES BOOK GROUP**

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## **FILM REVIEWS**

**POKER FACE** (streaming on Peacock)

• television series created by Rian Johnson, starring Natasha Lyonne

*Poker Face* is a murder mystery television series starring Natasha Lyonne. A self-proclaimed murder mystery buff, Lyonne openly models her new series after the old classic mystery series, *Columbo*, starring Peter Falk as a ruffled and seemingly inept detective. In *Poker Face* Lyonne plays Charlie Cale, someone who is in on the truth. Literally. Somehow Charlie has the innate ability to know when someone is lying and uses it to her advantage. Throughout the series she finds herself in a variety of situations where someone ends up murdered. Lyonne's character then slowly figures out who is telling the truth and who is lying. And that's what makes the show so fascinating, watching Charlie uncover the truth and decide what to do, how to get the "bad guys" arrested, while rarely being in direct contact with the police. Just like *Columbo*, Charlie solves each case in a single episode. Since Charlie herself is on the run from some big time gangsters we meet at the beginning of the series, she moves on to a new job and setting with each subsequent episode. The only constants in her life are her broken-down car, her sharp intellect and her witty sense of humor. Rated MA for occasional brief violence. (See page 5 for more on Lyonne)



**ELLA FITZGERALD: JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS** • 2019 documentary streaming on Netflix

Often referred to as the "First Lady of Song," Ella Fitzgerald was a leading woman of song and scat for over 50 years. This documentary traces Ella's career from the moment when she surprised a Harlem audience as the winner of the 1934 Apollo Theatre talent contest at the age of 15. With a career spanning over 50 years, Ms. Fitzgerald prevailed through horrible racism and poverty. The documentary follows, in mostly chronological order, Ella's career through interviews: friends, family members, and colleagues speak of Ms. Fitzgerald's personal trials, tribulations and successes. Included in the documentary are conversations with her



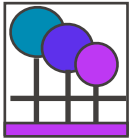
son, Ray Brown Jr., and performers Tony Bennett, Johnny Mathis, Cleo Laine, Itzhak Perlman, Smokey Robinson, and Marilyn Monroe. Scattered throughout the film are numerous musical selections by Ms. Fitzgerald and wonderful snapshots of her everyday life. Also included are samples of her famous scatting and highlights of her wonderful sense of humor. This is well worth the watch.



The only thing better than singing is more singing.

~ Ella Fitzgerald





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**HAVE YOU HEARD OF THIS WOMAN?**



**TERESITA GÓMEZ: LA GRAN DAMA DEL PIANO**

Teresita Gomez will turn 80 this year, and she's still going strong. In fact, she's adding a book of memoirs to her list of accomplishments. Just what are those accomplishments, you ask? Here's a partial list.

Teresita was born in Medellin, Colombia, on May 9, 1943. A few days after she was born, she was placed for adoption with a couple who were custodians at the Palacio de Bellas Artes, an exclusive fine arts school in the city of Medellin. Not only did her parents work at this school, they lived at the school, so it was very important that little Teresita behave properly when the school staff and students were around. And the young girl was easy to notice, since she was a Black girl with White parents. Unfortunately, racial prejudices are not unique to the United States.



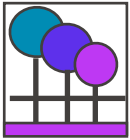
When little Teresita was three years old, one of the music teachers at the school allowed her to watch a piano lesson that was being taught to young white girls. Even though she was made to watch the lesson at a distance, Teresita memorized where the students put their hands. At night, when her father went from classroom to classroom, cleaning, she followed him, practicing on all the different pianos. "I did all this in hiding. My mom was so worried they would catch us and throw us out," she remembered.

One day Teresita was playing a lullaby and a piano teacher walked in. The teacher screamed, "The Black girl is playing piano!" Teresita started crying; she thought she would certainly be punished. Instead, the surprised teacher picked up the little girl and told her, "I'm going to teach you in secret every Tuesday." That was the beginning of an incredible musical life.

The piano teacher followed through with lessons and arranged a scholarship for Teresita at the Palacio de Bellas Artes. At the age of 10, she gave her first solo concert at the school. At the age of 12, Ms. Gomez made her professional debut at Teatro Colon in Bogota, the Colombian equivalent of Carnegie Hall. She went on to graduate from the country's top conservatory and became a professor as well as continuing to perform as a professional pianist.

Then in the 1980s, when she was already renowned for her ability to play European classical music, Ms. Gomez began to study and perform the works of Colombian classical composers. This was considered revolutionary in the world of classical music, since up until then the music of Colombian composers had been considered less valuable than that of European composers. "I thought it was important that we shouldn't be embarrassed to play Colombian music," Ms. Gomez explained. "I wanted to get rid of that shame."

Over the course of her career, Teresita Gomez has played in concert halls around the world and recorded many albums. In 2005, the Colombian government awarded her the *Cross of Order de Boyar* for her artistic accomplishments and her honorable representation of Colombia abroad. In 2017, the University of Antioquia awarded her a special gold medal for musical contributions over the course of 60 years as a professional pianist. In August of 2022 she performed at the inauguration of President Gustavo Petro and Vice-President Francia Marquez, the first female Afro-Colombian person to hold this position. And today, more than forty years after she began playing Colombian classical music, her fellow Colombian musicians play these selections with confidence and pride. Happy Birthday, Teresita Gomez!



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**HAVE YOU HEARD OF THIS WOMAN?**

**NATASHA LYONNE**



You know how some people have a voice that is so unique it couldn't possibly be confused with anyone else? Well, actor-writer-director Natasha Lyonne is one of those people. Once you've heard her gravelly, often sarcastic New York City accent, it's hard to forget. And her personal life has been just as unique as her voice.

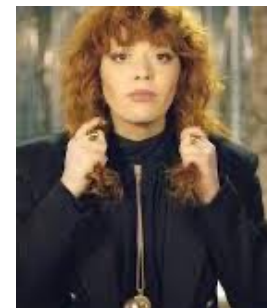
Natasha Bianca Lyonne Braunstein was born in New York City on April 4, 1979. Both of her parents were from Orthodox Jewish families, and she was raised Orthodox. Her father's side of the family was from Flatbush, New York, while her mother's side of the family were Hungarian-Jewish immigrants, who survived the Holocaust. Her father was a boxing promoter and race car driver; her mother was a ballerina.

When Natasha was eight years old, her family moved to Israel, where she lived for a year and a half. There she was cast in an Israeli children's film, *April Fool*, which sparked an interest in acting. However, her parents divorced while the family was in Israel, and Natasha returned to New York City with her mother and her older brother.

Back in New York, Natasha earned a scholarship to a private Jewish School, where she excelled academically. She continued to take small acting roles on shows like *Pee Wee's Playhouse* and films like *Dennis the Menace*. Unfortunately, she chose to escape from her complicated family problems by using drugs and was expelled for selling marijuana at school. Her mother then moved the family to Miami, where Natasha was enrolled in another school. She did not graduate, opting instead to return to New York to study film and philosophy.

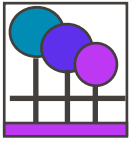
Beginning at age sixteen, Natasha has lived independently from her family. While it was exciting to be on her own, making films with such legendary actors as Julia Roberts and Goldie Hawn, her drug, alcohol, and health problems often made her life rather precarious. Now sober, she has used her life experiences as well as her family history to enrich the quality of her work. In a 2019 NPR interview she explained her life this way:

*~For a long time I think I thought being a tough guy meant being tough at oneself. Like, how much can I take? And now I think I see it quite differently.... My lineage is dark survivors. I come from real Auschwitz stock. So Hitler was a big player in my childhood, and it was this mentality of surviving and no matter what sort of horrors life throws your way, that was something that had been endured by my grandmother and my grandfather and therefore it was kind of the litmus test of a human experience....I certainly think it made me very curious to sort of like, see what else was out there, and kind of push at the edges of this thing called reality, and to start pushing in a little bit in the time-space continuum, and being like, 'Oh what's this? LSD? Let's see where this takes us.~*



During the mid-2000s, Natasha was in trouble with her health and career. She had accumulated a record of drunk driving, legal issues, heroin addiction, hepatitis, and heart problems. At one point she was evicted from an apartment because of her wild and disruptive lifestyle. In 2012 she had serious open-heart surgery, which saved her life. Since then she says her only vices are smoking and comedy.

The entertainment world is very fortunate that Natasha is still with us. Since her recovery she has starred in *Orange is the New Black*, *Russian Doll*, and, most recently, *Poker Face*.



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***MARCH PUZZLER CHALLENGE***

Each symbol represents a vowel. Find the correct vowel for each symbol to decode the puzzle. Note: All consonants in this puzzle are correct.

Th@r@s th#t sp@c\*#l m#g\*c#l pl#c@  
 th#t @x\*sts wh@n y\$% f\$rg@t  
 @v@ryth\*ng @ls@ b@c#%s@ y\$% #r@  
 l#%gh\*ng hyst@r\*c#lly. \*t's th@ \$nly  
 tr%ly s#f@ pl#c@ #nd \*t c#n h#pp@n  
 w\*th # str#ng@r \$r # b@st fr\*@nd.  
 N#t#sh# Ly\$nn@

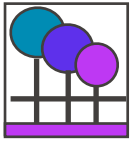
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***UNSCRAMBLE THESE BIRDS***

Unscramble these bird names to see which birds have been flocking to our feeders in the Wisconsin winter....or have they?

aaicdlr	odnwy eeocdkprw	iocdfghln
euykrt	abdl aeegl	auchhntt
eiugnp	edr eidgnw aibbedklr	aeiecdhk
ocrw	aidhllns aecnr	eudftt eioumstt
iobnr	aeocckp	oucjn

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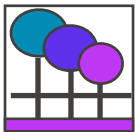
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APRIL 20— is our  
next scheduled  
*No-Rules Book Group*  
in Richland Center.  
See Page 1 for details.  
Next newsletter is  
May 2023

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Times**

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**QUOTES**

• There's a great Albert Camus quote: 'The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion.' When I first re-emerged, I was embarrassed to walk down the street. People would come up and say, 'I heard you were dead!' But I had to remind myself that a lot of the stuff I went through was pretty brutal. I'm definitely thankful that some of the rough patches are behind me.

~ Natasha Lyonne

• I'm very shy, and I shy away from people. But the moment I hit the stage, it's a different feeling. I get nerve from somewhere; maybe it's because it's something I love to do.

• I don't want to say the wrong thing, which I always do. I think I do better when I sing.

~ both quotes by Ella Fitzgerald