

another man. Raised by an alcoholic grandmother in Chicago, she was sexually abused at a young age by her uncle and his friends. By the time she turned 14, she was addicted to crack and working as a prostitute to support her two infants. In the 25 years that followed, she was stabbed 13 times and shot five times. "Folks tell me, ain't all that happen to you," she writes. "I wish to God I was lying my head off." Myers-Powell isn't shy describing her gritty past ("I done seen some girls do some pretty awful things...that crack had tore my ass up") and the delivery is stirring. This page-turner impresses from start to finish. (June)

Napoleon: A Life Told in Gardens and Shadows

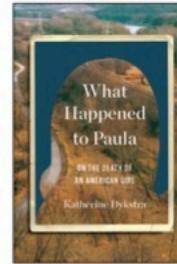
Ruth Scurr. Liveright, \$28.95 (416p) ISBN 978-1-63149-241-9

Historian Scurr (*Fatal Purity: Robespierre and the French Revolution*) spotlights Napoleon Bonaparte's lifelong preoccupation with gardens and gardening in this unusual and perceptive biography. She takes note of the plot of land at boarding school that Napoleon turned into a private retreat, and describes how a doomed mulberry nursery, intended to be partially funded by the government, nearly bankrupted his family after his father's death and fueled his own frustration with the monarchy. Napoleon's interest in plant and animal specimens from state-sponsored voyages of scientific discovery suggests his deep connection to the natural world, as well as his commitment to a strong, imperial France. As emperor, Napoleon renovated several estates, investing tremendous thought and resources into the creation of gardens at each location, and often marked his control over conquered territory by rearranging the landscape for the establishment of gardens, including the Jardin du Capitole in Rome. Gardens as controlled zones of cultivation became even more important to Napoleon during his exile; the book's final chapter details the backbreaking and often fruitless labor performed by servants trying to execute his garden plans on St. Helena. Even readers well-versed in Napoleon's rise and fall will learn something new from this gracefully written and imaginatively conceived portrait. Agent: *Melanie Jackson, the Melanie Jackson Agency*. (June)

★ What Happened to Paula: On the Death of an American Girl

Katherine Dykstra. Norton, \$26.95 (288p) ISBN 978-0-393-65198-0

Journalist Dykstra debuts with a sobering, well-crafted account of her efforts to solve a 50-year-old cold case. In 1970, 18-year-old Paula Oberbroeckling, who lived in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, borrowed her roommate's car in the middle of the night and never returned. Four months later, her decomposed body was found bound and dumped in a ditch. At the time Oberbroeckling went missing, she had a boyfriend, though she had recently broken up with another boyfriend, who was Black, and she might have been pregnant. Neither the police nor the local media had any interest in the case, and in 1972 her police file was closed. The case was ultimately deemed unsolvable due to passing time and the loss of evidence from a flood in 2008. Did Oberbroeckling die of a botched illegal abortion, or was she the victim of someone she knew or of a random killer? The main narrative focuses on the author's research into case files and interviews with those who knew the girl, but in the end she admits she may never know who killed her. Meanwhile, Dykstra casts a searing light on racism, sexism, and the stigma of being a "bad" girl. This is the perfect blueprint for any true crime writer moved to investigate a cold case. Agent: *Duvall Osteen, Aragi*. (June)



Voyagers: The Settlement of the Pacific

Nicholas Thomas. Basic, \$25 (224p) ISBN 978-1-5416-1983-8

Cambridge University anthropologist Thomas (*Islanders: The Pacific in the Age of Empire*) delivers a brisk and intriguing account of how the islands of Oceania came to be inhabited by humans. He begins by documenting the first contacts between Pacific islanders and European explorers including James Cook, who documented linguistic and cultural affinities between the inhabitants of islands thousands of miles apart. Contending that 19th-century maps dividing the Pacific Ocean into regions including Polynesia and Micronesia were based on "invidious and overtly racist contrasts" between natives, Thomas draws on the latest findings in archaeology, genetics, climatology, and linguistics to chronicle the settlement of present-day Australia and New Guinea by people from southeast Asia 45,000 to 50,000 years ago, and tracks the subsequent migration of their descendants across vast stretches of ocean to colonize Hawaii, the Marianas, Tahiti, and other islands and archipelagos. Throughout, Thomas highlights the work

of Indigenous scholars, including Tongan anthropologist Epeli Hau'ofa, and makes the case that the region has been more central to world affairs than is widely known. With lucid explanations of modern advances in historical anthropology and evocative reflections on the author's own fascination with Oceania, this is an accessible introduction to an astounding chapter in human history. (June)

Cultish: The Language of Fanaticism

Amanda Montell. HarperWave, \$27.99 (272p) ISBN 978-0-06-299315-1

Journalist Montell (*Wordslut*) argues in this vivid study that "language is the key means by which all degrees of cultlike influence occur." Uncovering commonalities in the use of "secret mantras and code words" to attract and retain followers, Montell surveys the indoctrination techniques and conformism of cults such as Heaven's Gate and the Peoples Temple (whose adherents committed mass suicide in South America in 1978), as well as "woo-woo wellness influencers," QAnon, and fitness groups such as Peloton and CrossFit.