MICHAEL FRAME

Geometry of Grief
Reflections on Mathematics, Loss, and Life

SEPTEMBER | 200 p. | 45 halftones | 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 | Cloth $20.00

We all know the euphoria of intellectual epiphany—the thrill of sudden understanding. But coupled with that excitement is a sense of loss: a moment of epiphany can never be repeated. In Geometry of Grief, mathematician Michael Frame draws on a career’s worth of insight—including his work with Benoit Mandelbrot on fractal geometry—and a gift for rendering the complex accessible as he delves into this twinning of understanding and loss. Grief, Frame reveals, can be a moment of possibility.

Frame investigates grief as a response to an irrevocable change in circumstance. This reframing allows us to see parallels between the loss of a loved one or a career and the loss of the elation of first understanding a tricky concept. From this foundation, Frame builds a geometric model of mental states. An object that is fractal, for example, has symmetry of magnification: magnify a picture of a mountain or a coastline—both fractal—and we see echoes of the original shape. Similarly, nested inside great loss are smaller losses. By manipulating this geometry, Frame shows us, we may be able to redirect our thinking in ways that help reduce our pain. Small-scale losses in essence provide laboratories to learn how to meet large-scale losses.

Interweaving original illustrations, clear introductions to advanced topics in geometry, and wisdom gleaned from his own experience with illness and others’ remarkable responses to devastating loss, Frame’s poetic book is a journey through the beautiful complexities of mathematics and life. With both human sympathy and geometrical elegance, it helps us to see how a geometry of grief can open a pathway for bold action.

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DAVID NIRENBERG and RICARDO L. NIRENBERG

Uncountable
A Philosophical History of Number and Humanity from Antiquity to the Present

SEPTEMBER | 432 p. | 1 halftone | 6 x 9 | Cloth $30.00

From the time of Pythagoras, we have been tempted to treat numbers as the ultimate or only truth. This book tells the history of that habit of thought. But more, it argues that the logic of counting sacrifices much of what makes us human, and that we have a responsibility to match the objects of our attention to the forms of knowledge that do them justice. Humans have extended the insights and methods of number and mathematics to more and more aspects of the world, even to their gods and their religions. Today those powers are greater than ever, as computation is applied to virtually every aspect of human activity. But the rules of mathematics do not strictly apply to many things—from elementary particles to people—in the world. By subjecting such things to the laws of logic and mathematics, we gain some kinds of knowledge, but we also lose others. How do our choices about what parts of the world to subject to the logics of mathematics affect how we live and how we die? This question is rarely asked, but it is urgent, because the sciences built upon those laws now govern so much of our knowledge, from physics to psychology. Uncountable sets out to ask it. In chapters proceeding chronologically from Ancient Greek philosophy and the rise of monotheistic religions to the emergence of modern physics and economics, the book traces how ideals, practices, and habits of thought formed over millennia have turned number into the foundation-stone of human claims to knowledge and certainty. But the book is also a philosophical and poetic exhortation to take responsibility for that history, for the knowledge it has produced, and for the many aspects of the world and of humanity that it ignores or endangers. To understand what can be counted and what can’t is to embrace the ethics of purposeful knowing.

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“Ricardo and David Nirenberg, father and son scholars of mathematics and history, have teamed up in a breathtaking voyage examining the foundations and limits of knowledge in western thought. It is a source of inspiration and comfort to learn how the far-flung ideas about numbers, our existence, and the world we live in have been debated in the past.”—Joachim Frank, Columbia University, Nobel Prize in Chemistry

David Nirenberg is dean of the Divinity School at the University of Chicago, where he also teaches in the Committee of Social Thought and the Department of History. His books include Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition; Neighboring Faiths: Islam, Christianity, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today; and Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages. After doing research in mathematics for a dozen years, David’s father, Ricardo L. Nirenberg, turned to his other calling: philosophy and literature. He has published numerous essays, short fiction, and the novels Cry Uncle and Wave Mechanics: a Love Story. He is the founder and editor of the literary journal offcourse.org.
CHRIS PEARSON

Dogopolis
How Dogs and Humans Made Modern New York, London, and Paris

AUGUST | 248 p. | 21 halftones | 6 x 9 | Cloth $95.00 Paper $24.00

"Dogopolis is a beautifully presented book with an evocative historical voice and great confidence and flair. It is also a lot of fun to read. Pearson offers a treasure trove of details about the shared lives of humans and dogs across three rapidly urbanizing cities that epitomized urban modernity, and deals with themes at the heart of urban history in his examination of the public and private spaces; class, gender, and race relationships; and public health and disease."—Neil Pemberton, Manchester University

Chris Pearson is a senior lecturer in twentieth-century history at the University of Liverpool.

"Dogopolis is an engaging account of how dogs and humans differently interacted with each other and their city counterparts in New York, London, and Paris from the early 19th century to the 1930s. Pearson brings to life the complex and often conflicting relationships between urban dwellers and their canine friends, as well as the broader sociocultural implications of these interactions. It is a fascinating read that sheds light on the role of dogs in shaping modern urban life."

—Susan B. Lawrence, University of Illinois

Stroll through any American or European city today and you probably won’t get far before seeing a dog being taken for a walk. It’s expected that these domesticated animals can easily navigate sidewalks, streets, and other foundational elements of our built environment. But what if our cities were actually shaped in response to dogs more than we ever realized?

Chris Pearson’s Dogopolis boldly and convincingly asserts that human-canine relations were a crucial factor in the formation of modern urban living. Focusing on New York, London, and Paris from the early nineteenth century into the 1930s, Pearson shows that human reactions to dogs significantly remolded them and other contemporary Western cities. It’s an unalterable fact that dogs—often filthy, bellicose, and sometimes off-putting—run away, spread rabies, defecate, and breed wherever they like, so as dogs became more and more common in nineteenth-century middle-class life, cities had to respond to people’s fear of them and revulsion at their least desirable traits. The gradual integration of dogs into city life centered on disgust at dirt, fear of crime and vagrancy, and the promotion of humanitarian sentiments. On the other hand, dogs are some people’s most beloved animal companions, and human compassion and affection for pets and strays were equally powerful forces in shaping urban modernity. Dogopolis details the complex interrelations among emotions, sentiment, and the ways we manifest our feelings toward what we love—showing that together they can actually reshape society.

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Western ruins have long been understood as objects riddled with temporal contradictions, whether they appear in Baroque poetry and drama, Romanticism’s nostalgic view of history, eighteenth-century paintings of classical subjects, or even recent photographic histories of the ruins of post-industrial Detroit. *Decay and Afterlife* pivots away from our immediate, visual fascination with ruins, and instead focuses on the *textuality* of ruins in works about disintegration and survival. Combining an impressive array of literary, philosophical, and historiographical works both canonical and neglected, and encompassing Latin, Italian, French, German, and English sources, Aleksandra Prica addresses ruins as textual forms, examining them in their extraordinary geographical and temporal breadth, highlighting their variability and reflexivity, and uncovering new lines of aesthetic and intellectual affinity. Through theoretically rich close readings, she traverses the longue durée of 800 years of intellectual and literary history, from Seneca and Petrarch to Hegel, Goethe, and Georg Simmel. She tracks Europe’s ruins discourses as they metamorphose over time, identifying unremarked resemblances and resonances, ignored contrasts and tensions, as well as the shared apprehensions and ideas these thinkers bring to light. Throughout, she asks, “What persists in keeping the ruins of a once grand past alive?”

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JAMES I. PORTER

Homer
The Very Idea

SEPTEMBER | 280 p. | 14 halftones | 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 | Cloth $27.50 Paper $5.00

Homer, the great poet of the Iliad and the Odyssey, is revered as a cultural icon of antiquity and a figure of lasting influence. But his identity is shrouded in questions about who he was, when he lived, and whether he was an actual person, a myth, or merely a shared idea. Rather than attempting to solve the mystery of this character, James I. Porter explores the sources of Homer’s mystique and their impact since the first recorded mentions of Homer in ancient Greece.

Homer: The Very Idea considers Homer not as a man, but as a cultural invention nearly as distinctive and important as the poems attributed to him, following the cultural history of an idea and of the obsession that is reborn every time Homer is imagined. Offering novel readings of texts and objects, the book follows the very idea of Homer from his earliest mentions to his most recent imaginings in literature, criticism, philosophy, visual art, and classical archaeology.

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“Porter is an exceptional scholar. Clear, intelligent, and filled with fascinating examples, this book is contemporary while reaching beyond the fashionable, and it will arouse a good deal of discussion.”
—Simon Goldhill, author of Preposterous Poetics

James I. Porter is the Irving Stone Professor of Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of numerous books, including Nietzsche and the Philology of the Future, The Invention of Dionysus: An Essay on ‘The Birth of Tragedy’, and The Sublime in Antiquity. He has also edited several books and is a coauthor of Postclassicsisms, also published by the University of Chicago Press.
**Lives of the Great Languages**

Arabic and Latin in the Medieval Mediterranean

In this ambitious book, Karla Mallette studies the nature and behaviors of the medieval cosmopolitan languages of learning—classical Arabic and medieval Latin—as they crossed the Mediterranean. Through anecdotes of relationships among writers, compilers, translators, commentators, and copyists, Mallette tells a complex story about the transmission of knowledge in the period before the emergence of a national language system in the late Middle Ages and early modernity.

Mallette shows how the elite languages of learning and culture were only tenuously related to the languages of everyday life. These languages took years of study to master, marking the passage from intellectual childhood to maturity. In a coda to the book, Mallette speculates on the afterlife of cosmopolitan languages in the twenty-first century, the perils of monolingualism, and the ethics of language choice. The book offers insight for anyone interested in rethinking linguistic and literary tradition, the transmission of ideas, and cultural expression in an increasingly multilingual world.

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Karla Mallette is professor of Mediterranean studies in the Department of Middle East Studies and professor of Italian in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Michigan. She is the author of *European Modernity and the Arab Mediterranean* and *The Kingdom of Sicily, 1100-1250: A Literary History.*

“Lives of the Great Languages is a keenly original and challenging intervention in the discussion of the life and death of languages. Anyone interested in the history of Arabic language and culture will find it informative and insightful. It is what we need in order to rethink the national and monolingual frame through which we discuss languages, literary traditions, and cultural expressions.”—Wen-chin Ouyang, University of London
HELENA DE BRES

Artful Truths

The Philosophy of Memoir

SEPTEMBER | 248 p. | 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 | Cloth $95.00  Paper $22.50

- Presents an engaging, accessible philosophical tour of the memoir
- Contains many compelling examples drawn from literature
- Will appeal broadly to lovers of fiction and nonfiction

*Artful Truths* offers a concise guide to the fundamental philosophical questions that arise when writing a literary work about your own life. Bringing a philosopher’s perspective to a general audience, Helena de Bres addresses what a memoir is, how the genre relates to fiction, memoirists’ responsibilities to their readers and subjects, and the question of why to write a memoir at all. Along the way, she delves into a wide range of philosophical issues, including the nature of the self, the limits of knowledge, the idea of truth, the obligations of friendship, the relationship between morality and art, and the question of what makes a life meaningful.

Written in a clear and conversational style, it offers a resource for those who write, teach, and study memoirs, as well as those who love to read them. With a combination of literary and philosophical knowledge, de Bres takes the many challenges directed at memoirists seriously, while ultimately standing in defense of a genre that, for all its perplexities—and maybe partly because of them—continually proves to be both beloved and valuable.

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"*Artful Truths* is wonderful, beautifully written, consistently amusing, and very useful. De Bres unpacks all the philosophical and ethical questions imaginable surrounding the genre of memoir and charges fearlessly into accusations against the form, examining and dissecting each doubt before celebrating the genre with panache."—Phillip Lopate, author of *The Art of the Personal Essay*

**Helena de Bres** is associate professor of philosophy at Wellesley College. Her personal essays, public philosophy, and humor writing have appeared in *The Point, New York Times, Rumpus, Aeon Magazine,* and *McSweeney’s Internet Tendency,* and she’s currently writing a memoir about the nature and value of philosophy.
**WILLIAM GERMANO**

**On Revision**

The Only Writing That Counts

OCTOBER | 208 p. | 1 halftone, 6 line drawings | 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 | Cloth $45.00  Paper $20.00

*Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing*

Revision is a kind of writing, argues William Germano, indeed the only writing that ultimately counts. That’s because only revision makes a piece of writing worth the time and attention of readers. With the wit and wisdom that distinguished his now classic guides *Getting It Published* and *From Dissertation to Book*, Germano explains how to get your writing up to the level where it matters not just to yourself but to others.

*On Revision* goes far beyond the usual advice to cut for concision, discussing revision as expansion, structural revision across the larger span of a work, revision as response to one’s audience, and revision as rethinking. Although full of practical advice, this book is no mere how-to, and to approach it only as a guide wouldn’t do it justice. It is also a learned, deeply thoughtful essay on what impels revising, and on the writer’s task.

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**William Germano** is the author of several books, including *Getting It Published: A Guide for Scholars and Anyone Else Serious about Serious Books* and *From Dissertation to Book*, both also published by the University of Chicago Press. His most recent book, co-written with Kit Nicholls, is *Syllabus: The Remarkable, Unremarkable Document That Changes Everything*. He has served as editor-in-chief at Columbia University Press, vice president and publishing director at Routledge, and dean of the faculty of humanities and social sciences at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, where he is now professor of English literature.
In recent years, tech companies such as Google and Facebook have rocked the world as they have seemingly revolutionized the culture of work. We’ve all heard stories of lounges outfitted with ping pong tables, kitchens with kombucha on tap, and other amenities that supposedly foster creative thinking. Nothing could seem further from earlier workplaces associated with a different revolution in capitalism: factories, in which employees are required to perform highly circumscribed tasks as quickly as possible to meet quotas—for next to no pay. However, as Moritz Altenried shows in *The Digital Factory*, these types of workplaces are not so far from the Googleplex as we might think. While recent accounts of the transformation of labor after the demise of the factory highlight the creative, communicative, immaterial, or artistic features of contemporary labor, Altenried uncovers the factory-like conditions in which many new digital workers perform their jobs. These workers, such as video game testers, social media content moderators, and Amazon fulfillment center workers, perform highly repetitive, unskilled tasks for low and often contingent wages. Altenried combines five years of qualitative research with an analysis of infrastructural technologies to give us a first-hand account of many new forms of digital labor that drive contemporary capitalism. He shows that though today’s factories might look and feel different than they did 150 years ago, they still follow the same logics and produce the same unequal outcomes.

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CLAUDIO E. BENZECRY

The Perfect Fit
Creative Work in the Global Shoe Industry

We know a lot about how clothing and shoes are made cheaply, but very little about the process when they are made beautifully. In The Perfect Fit, Claudio E. Benzecry looks at the craft that goes into designing shoes for women in the US market, revealing that this creative process takes place on a global scale. Based on unprecedented behind-the-scenes access, The Perfect Fit offers an ethnographic window into the day-to-day life of designers, fit models, and technicians as they put together samples and prototypes, showing how expert work is a complement to and a necessary condition for factory exploitation.

Benzecry looks at the decisions and constraints behind how shoes are designed and developed, from initial inspiration to the mundane work of making sure a size seven stays constant. In doing so, he also fosters an original understanding of how globalization works from the ground up. Drawing on five years of research in New York, China, and Brazil, The Perfect Fit reveals how creative decisions are made, the kinds of expertise involved, and the almost impossible task of keeping the global supply chain humming.

Claudio E. Benzecry is associate professor of communication studies and sociology (by courtesy) at Northwestern University. He is the author of The Opera Fanatic: Ethnography of an Obsession and the coeditor of Social Theory Now, also published by the University of Chicago Press.
The idea that a woman may leave a biological trace on her gestating offspring has long been a commonplace folk intuition and a matter of scientific intrigue, but the form of that idea—and its staggering implications for maternal well-being and reproductive autonomy—has changed dramatically over time. Beginning with the advent of modern genetics at the turn of the twentieth century, biomedical scientists dismissed any notion that a mother—except in cases of extreme deprivation or injury—could alter her offspring’s traits. Consensus asserted that a child’s fate was set by a combination of its genes and post-birth upbringing.

Over the last fifty years, however, this consensus was dismantled, and today, research on the intrauterine environment and its effects on the fetus is emerging as a robust program of study in medicine, public health, psychology, evolutionary biology, and genomics. Collectively, these sciences argue that a woman’s experiences, behaviors, and physiology can have life-altering effects on offspring development. Tracing a genealogy of ideas about heredity and maternal-fetal effects, *The Maternal Imprint* offers a critical analysis of conceptual and ethical issues provoked by the striking rise of epigenetics and fetal origins science in postgenomic biology today.
GINO C. SEGRÈ and JOHN D. STACK

Unearthing Fermi’s Geophysics

DECEMBER | 208 p. | 44 halftones, 12 tables | 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 | Cloth $35.00

Nobel Prize–winning physicist Enrico Fermi (1901–54) is known for his work on experimental particle physics, quantum theory, and statistical mechanics; his contributions to the Manhattan Project; and for his particular ability to condense complicated problems into approximations for understanding and testing theory in a variety of scientific disciplines.

Unearthing Fermi’s Geophysics opens a window onto two underrepresented facets of this extraordinary thinker: Fermi’s contributions as a teacher and to the field of geophysics. Drawing on Fermi’s handwritten calculations and notes, many of which are reproduced here in photographic facsimile, physicists Gino C. Segrè and John D. Stack have reconstructed a coursebook of Fermi’s insights into the physics of a range of geological and atmospheric phenomena. From gravity on Earth to thermodynamics in the atmosphere, the physics of raindrops, the Coriolis effect in hurricanes, tidal physics, earthquakes and seismic waves, Earth’s magnetism, atmospheric electricity, and much more, Unearthing Fermi’s Geophysics reveals the hidden workings of the world above, around, and below us—and of the mind of a great scientist who was able to bring those physical workings to light.

Praise for The Pope of Physics


“Superb. . . . A definitive study of Fermi’s life and work.”—Wall Street Journal

“Impressive. . . . Both intelligent and extremely engaging.”—Washington Post

“Humane, scientifically astute, and beautifully written.”—Physics Today

Gino Segrè is professor emeritus in and former chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Pennsylvania. Most recently he is coauthor with Bettina Hoerlin of The Pope of Physics: Enrico Fermi and the Birth of the Atomic Age.

John Stack is professor emeritus and former associate head for graduate programs in physics at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.
MICHAEL J. MOORE

We Are All Whalers
The Plight of Whales and Our Responsibility

OCTOBER | 224 p. | 33 halftones | 5 x 8 | Cloth $25.00

The image most of us have of whalers includes harpoons and intentional trauma. Yet eating commercially caught seafood leads to whales’ entanglement and slow death in rope and nets, and the global shipping routes that bring us readily available goods often lead to death by collision. We—all of us—are whalers, marine scientist and veterinarian Michael J. Moore contends. But we do not have to be.

Drawing on over forty years of fieldwork with humpback, pilot, fin, and in particular, North Atlantic right whales—a species whose population has declined more than twenty percent since 2017—Moore takes us with him as he performs whale necropsies on animals stranded on beaches, in his independent research alongside whalers using explosive harpoons, and as he tracks injured whales to deliver sedatives. The whales’ plight is a complex, confounding, and disturbing one. We learn of existing but poorly enforced conservation laws and of perennial (and often failed) efforts to balance the push for fisheries profit versus the protection of endangered species caught by accident.

But despite these challenges, Moore’s tale is an optimistic one. He shows us how technologies for rope-less fishing and the acoustic tracking of whale migrations make a dramatic difference. And he looks ahead with hope as our growing understanding of these extraordinary creatures fuels an ever-stronger drive for change.

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“This is a truly compelling, captivating, and in places heart-wrenching story of one scientist’s journey through a career dealing with a highly endangered species whose very predicament is our fault and whose recovery is also our responsibility, as bycatch is preventable. The power lies with the reader. We are all consumers and hence all culpable in the environmental costs of fish products and goods and services transported at sea. Coexistence is possible, perhaps within our lifetime, and Moore’s book lays the foundation for work yet to come on how to make that coexistence a reality.”—Moira Brown, Canadian Whale Institute

Michael J. Moore is a veterinary scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. He lives in Marion, MA.
JENNIFER MCELWAIN, MARLENE HILL DONNELLY, and IAN GLASSPOOL

Tropical Arctic
Lost Plants, Future Climates, and the Discovery of Ancient Greenland

OCTOBER | 144 p. | 91 color plates, 15 halftones | 8 1/2 x 11 | Cloth $30.00

While today’s Greenland is largely covered in ice, in the time of the dinosaurs the area was a lushly forested, tropical zone. Tropical Arctic tracks a ten-million-year window of Earth’s history when global temperatures soared and the vegetation of the world responded.

A project over eighteen years in the making, Tropical Arctic is the result of a unique collaboration between two paleobotanists, Jennifer C. McElwain and Ian J. Glasspool, and award-winning scientific illustrator Marlene Hill Donnelly. They began with a simple question: “What was the color of a fossilized leaf?” Tropical Arctic answers that question and more, allowing readers to experience Triassic Greenland through three reconstructed landscapes and an expertly researched catalog of extinct plants. A stunning compilation of paint and pencil art, photos, maps, and engineered fossil models, Tropical Arctic blends art and science to bring a lost world to life. Readers will also enjoy a front-row seat to the scientific adventures of life in the field, with engaging anecdotes about analyzing fossils and learning to ward off polar bear attacks.

Tropical Arctic explains our planet’s story of environmental upheaval, mass extinction, and resilience. By looking at Earth’s past, we see a glimpse of the future of our warming planet—and learn an important lesson for our time of climate change.

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