

By Ricki Morse



He attended university in Tokyo, fell in love with American jazz, owned and operated a jazz bar in Tokyo for a dozen years before beginning writing. I'm not sure when he started running marathons, but he still completes the NYC marathon in professional times. He lived in Paris; he taught at Harvard; he has published dozens of fictional works, each different, some reflecting fantastic worlds, some so mundane that a major event is the cat disappearing (or an elephant), as the case may be. His non-fiction is as riveting



and timely as his fiction.


All of this is to ease you into the totally amazing and intimately mundane world of Haruki Murakami. He is the most egalitarian widely referential writer I know of, quoting everything thing from Greek philosophy to the Rolling Stones. All of his references seem to have equal value; everything is up for grabs.

As a matter of fact, the Q in 1Q84 sounds the same as the number 9 in Japanese. So we are entering an alternate reality, deftly echoing George Orwell's 1984, but in this case the Big Brother is a religious sect. And we are led into this alternate/simultaneous space by a young woman who steps off a taxi to take a short cut down an exit stair and avoid waiting in traffic on her way to work. Her profession as an assassin draws in several of the other strands of Murakami's literary world including L.A. detective fiction, Hollywood terror films, powerful love stories and fantasy fiction. In his alternate reality there are two moons, which most of our characters notice, and we wonder if those who don't notice have not joined us in this other space.

Now a real surprise, this book is a page turner, all 950 pages! As I passed the middle I tried to slow down my reading so that it wouldn't be over. This is without a doubt the best book I have read in decades.

We really cannot fault the New York Times reviewer, Janet Maslin, who completely missed the book. It requires that you let go of assumptions and enter the story. However, I found it amusing that Murakami anticipated her review on Page 380, where he gives a similar review of the book our hero, Tengo, is rewriting, noting that many readers will fail to understand the Little People and the Air Chrysalis. I certainly don't understand either phenomenon, but it becomes clear that linear understanding is not the point.

His alternate reality somehow touches parts of our interior lives we have not explored, from unremitting love to dire brutality. We know they are there, but somehow haven't found the stairway to get there. Murakami just keeps opening doors and inviting us to enter, door after door, stairway after stairway.

I recommend that you to accept his invitation. 











PACIFIC STANDARD TIME AT THE GETTY CENTER

Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980 is a unique collaboration among curators and other cultural organizations across Southern California. From the 1940s through 2012, the unprecedented endeavor showcased the region's artistic production during an important period in the history of modern and contemporary art.

In cooperation with Pacific Standard Time, the Getty presents four exhibitions that explore diverse media and artists of the period. Look at the map at right for the location of the exhibitions and related materials. Additional information is also available on the floor at the Getty Center.

Visit the Information Room in the West Pavilion, Please Level, to learn more about Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980.

FROM START TO FINISH
Los Angeles's City Culture

IN FOCUS
Los Angeles 1945-1980

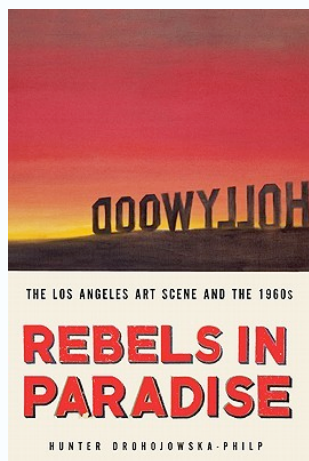
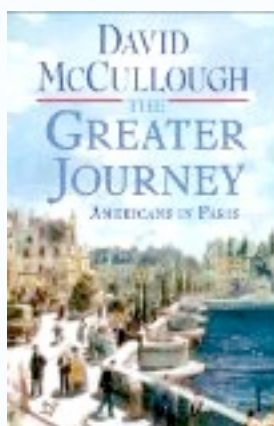
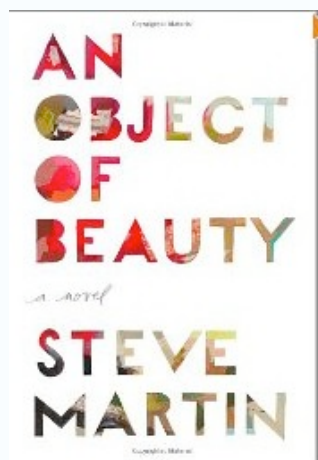
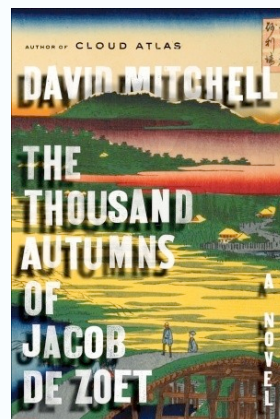
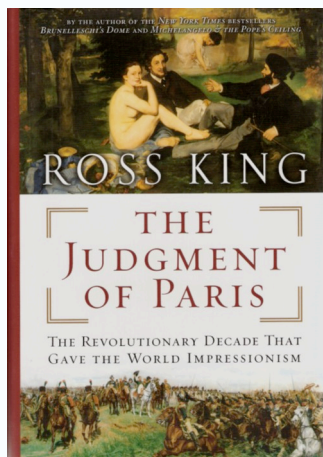
CONCRETE AND CIRCULARS
IN L.A. PAINTING AND SCULPTURE 1950-1970

THE HISTORY OF
CIVIL RIGHTS

THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM

 Four people are posing in front of a large informational display. The display features the title 'PACIFIC STANDARD TIME AT THE GETTY CENTER' and various text and images related to the exhibition. The people are dressed in casual to semi-formal attire.





Comments?
 Suggestions?
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Lori Mohr, Editor