



## Best books... Lyn Hughes

Lyn Hughes's first novel, *The Factory*, was shortlisted for the National Book Council's New Writing Award. Her latest novel is *Flock*, a tale of love, history and wallpaper

**The Odyssey** by Homer, translated by E.V. Rieu (Penguin, \$11.95). I loathe travel books. And sailing. Yet since reading Homer, I've never witnessed the sun setting over the ocean without thinking of his "wine-dark sea". Or of Cavafy's wonderful poem of sojourn and sorrow, *Ithaka*. Plus there's the same salt tang of homoeroticism. It's a read that demands attention.

**Music for Torching** by A.M. Homes (Granta Books, \$23.95). What else is there, when a marriage falls apart, but to burn down the house? Amy Homes's characters do just that in her dazzlingly dark novel. She loves all of her characters – but never

blindly. The people in Homes's middle-America could be my neighbours. Or yours.

**Vita: The Life of V. Sackville-West** by Victoria Glendinning (Phoenix House, \$27). Gardening, lesbians, writing. Wellies waiting at the kitchen door. Who could resist? *Vita* is like essence of Bloomsbury. Or Enid Blyton. Such languor. Afternoons spent on weeding and contemplation. Mornings whiled away at sun-filled desks, composing love letters in longhand. The perfect novel-biography.

**Selected poems of Anne Sexton** edited by Diane Wood Middlebrook and Diana Hume George (Mariner Books,

\$23.95). I love her. Her poetry fizzles like a dissolving antacid. I love the intensely female, intensely courageous poems with riffs on menopause and madness. Sexton gives me that little kick in the gut you can only get from a line of poetry.

**Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World** by Haruki Murakami (Vintage, \$24.95). Late and all-resisting (I thought him way too cool), I fell in love with Murakami. So clear, yet so confusing. From page one, I knew I was in safe hands. I'd fallen down Alice's rabbit hole, but I would emerge more knowing, more human. What an elegant writer; cool, but not detached. He delivers the goods.

## New releases

### DVDs

#### The American

After the riveting opening scene, the rest of the film "seems to be in a state of suspended animation", says The Sydney Morning Herald. George Clooney plays an assassin who is on the run from hunters in Europe. Despite the slow pace, it's an interesting movie and Clooney – as always – is very "watchable".

### Skyline

This sci-fi flick about a group of friends in LA and brain-sucking aliens taking over earth is a bad one, says the Sunday Herald Sun. There's "poor CGI, horrible acting, unconvincing aliens and incredibly bad dialogue". Aliens might want to invade the world just to prevent this film's release.

### The Switch

Jennifer Aniston stars in this comedy about a woman who can't see that her friend is in love with her. The plot is "corny and clichéd" and the ending is predictable, says the Sunday Mail. If possible, switch to another movie.

### Games

#### Homefront

This is a "fun, well-constructed shooter" but tries to be too much like *Call of Duty*, says The Daily Telegraph (UK). In 2027 a united Korea has taken over the US and you're working for the American resistance. Unfortunately it "fails to live up to its promise".

#### MotorStorm Apocalypse

This entertaining motor racing game takes place in an apocalyptic urban area, says The Guardian. It's not the best racing game, but the controls are easy and the fun factor will keep you glued to the screen for hours.

## The Week's guide to what's worth seeing and reading

### Showing now

#### Video Witness: News

**from the World** A series of documentaries focusing on human rights issues in nations such as Burma and Iran. Until 2 April, Gallery of Modern Art Cinémathèque, Brisbane. [www.qag.qld.gov.au](http://www.qag.qld.gov.au).

### Book now

#### Canberra District Wine

**Harvest Festival** Showcases the best wines made in the Australian climate. It features live music, wine tastings, winery tours, lunches, dinners and more. 2-3 April. Various locations just north of Canberra. [www.canberrawines.com.au](http://www.canberrawines.com.au).



Canberra Wine Harvest Festival

#### Rick Stein's Food Odyssey

A two-hour show of food and travel tales from around the world. Touring Australia 29 March-18 April. [www.ricksteintour.com.au](http://www.ricksteintour.com.au).

#### Hillarys Wellness Expo

Explore "wellness, spirit, sustainable living and the creative arts" through stress-relief sessions, yoga classes and live music at Hillarys Boat Harbour, 25km north of Perth. 8-10 April. [www.hillarysboatharbour.com.au](http://www.hillarysboatharbour.com.au).

#### State of Origin II NSW

will be desperate to win the only Origin game in Sydney this year. 15 June. ANZ Stadium. [www.ticketek.com.au](http://www.ticketek.com.au).

### Just out in paperback

**Zeitoun** by Dave Eggers (Penguin, \$24.95). This piece of narrative non-fiction is the true story of one man's courage after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005. "Brilliantly crafted, powerfully written and deftly reported" (The Guardian).

**Headline acts** *The few genuinely hard facts we have from reports of the conflict in Libya have been confusing. So our newspapers could be forgiven for hedging their bets when it came to attempting a headline summary:*

*The Sydney Morning Herald was untroubled by doubt...*

*...but the Herald Sun retreated behind a cautious cliché:*

*The Australian Financial Review had a bob each way...*

*...while The Advertiser just dreaded the prospect of a long haul:*

Next stop, Tripoli

Allies win the battle, not war

Mixed messages from the allies

Libyan crisis won't go away

### Coming up for auction

The 1972 Brownlow Medal of Collingwood great Len Thompson will be on offer at Leski's **Sporting & General Memorabilia Auction** and is expected to fetch \$75,000-\$100,000. Various items from sporting history are also for sale, plus collectables such as dolls, film posters and railway memorabilia. 30-31 March, 13 Cato St, Hawthorne East, Vic. [www.leski.com.au](http://www.leski.com.au).