

# BOOK STUFF

#36

'A room without books is like a body without a soul.' Cicero

## DO YOU KNOW?

A quiz to get you thinking about books and your next read

1. What type of book is the OED?
2. What did Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* protest against?
3. Created by P G Wodehouse, who is Bertie Wooster's manservant?
4. Who created George Smiley?
5. Which Dickens novel is about the French Revolution?
6. What kind of animal is Moby-Dick?
7. Where according to the Bible, is the site of the final battle between nations that will end the world?
8. Complete the title: Diary of a \_\_\_\_\_ Kid
9. The Vietnam film *Apocalypse Now* was based on a short novel about European savagery in the Belgian Congo in the late 1800s. What was the name of the book?
10. In his song 'Superheroes' Stormzy namechecks a hugely popular Black writer for Young Adults. Fill in the blank: "Serena or Venus, the way I serve it, / I'm \_\_\_\_\_ the way I sell books."



## A poem?

*This Is Just To Say*

I have eaten  
the plums  
that were in  
the icebox

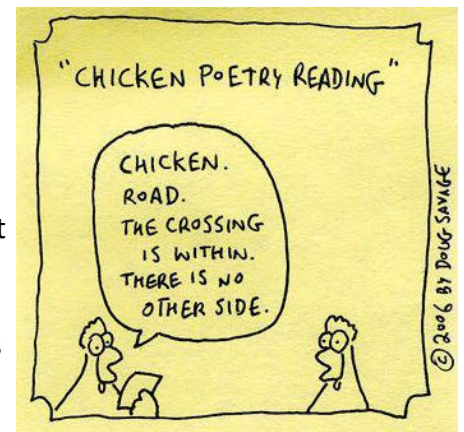
and which  
you were probably  
saving  
for breakfast

Forgive me  
they were delicious  
so sweet  
and so cold

William Carlos Williams

What makes a poem? Does it have to rhyme? Does it have to have a regular rhythm? Where's the pleasure?

For some readers, *This Is Just To Say* is a kind of experiment in poetry. The words themselves could very easily be a real note left on a kitchen table to explain what happened to the plums: 'This is just to say I have eaten the plums that were in the icebox and which you were probably saving for breakfast Forgive me they were delicious so sweet and so cold.' But Williams sets out to turn them into a poem with short lines and lots of space. Does this change the way we read it, perhaps making us pause and savour the words as we might enjoy eating the plums?



## The 100 word story challenge

Things you can take

A name. A message. Nobody's shit. A hike. A hit. A beating.

Notes. A page from their book. Criticism.

A walk on the wild side. Ice with your drink. Salt with your margarita. A sip. Directions. Risks. A joy ride. The red pill. The car into the shop.

What you can get. The money and run. The long way home. The trash out.

A seat. Time off. An oath. Turns. The rap for it. It all in.

A break. Everything for granted. A moment to think about it. A different route. It all back. A life. Your life. A joke.

Corey Miller

## An ethical dilemma

Eric was a regular at the Nest café. The quality of the food and drink was unexceptional but they were remarkably cheap.

One day he asked the manager how she did it. She leaned over and whispered conspiratorially, 'Easy. You see, all my staff are from Africa. They need to survive but can't get regular jobs. So I let them sleep in the cellar, feed them enough, and give them £5 cash a week. It's great – they work all day six days a week. With my wage bill so low, I can offer low prices and make handsome profits.

'Don't look so shocked,' she continued, reading his reaction. 'This suits everyone. They choose to work here because it helps them, I make money, and you get a bargain. Top up?'

Eric accepted. But perhaps it would be his last coffee here. Despite the manager's justification, he felt as a customer he would be complicit in exploitation. As he sipped his americano, however, he wondered if the staff would appreciate his boycott. Weren't these jobs and the shelter of the cellar better than nothing?

From Julian Baggini, *The Pig that Wants to be Eaten and 99 Other Thought Experiments*



## Some TV tips to look out for in 2022

From the Guardian:

### ***This is Going to Hurt***

An adaptation of Adam Kay's wild diary as a junior doctor. Stars Ben Whishaw (BBC2)

### ***Atlanta***

A new series of Donald Glover's eccentric take on Black American experience (BBC)

### ***Derry Girls***

The final series of life among Derry teenagers at the height of the Troubles in the 1970s. Hilarious and warm-hearted. (Ch4)

### ***The Undeclared War***

It's 2024 and GCHQ is under attack from unknown cyber assailants. Stars Mark Rylance, Simon Pegg, Adrian Lester and Hannah Khalique-Brown. (Ch4)

### ***Queenie***

An adaptation of Candice Carty-Williams's bestselling novel about a young Black journalist whose life begins to unravel when she takes a break from her boyfriend. (Ch4)

### ***Peaky Blinders***

The sixth and final series of the Birmingham gangster drama. The Second World War looms while Cillian Murphy as Tommy Shelby battles the British fascist Oswald Mosley. (BBC1)

- Answers
1. a dictionary (Oxford English Dictionary)
  2. slavery
  3. Jeeves
  4. John Le Carre
  5. *A Tale of Two Cities*
  6. a sperm whale
  7. Armageddon
  8. Wimpy
  9. *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad
  10. Malorie Blackman



[www.giveabook.org.uk](http://www.giveabook.org.uk)  
[www.prisonreadinggroups.org.uk](http://www.prisonreadinggroups.org.uk)





