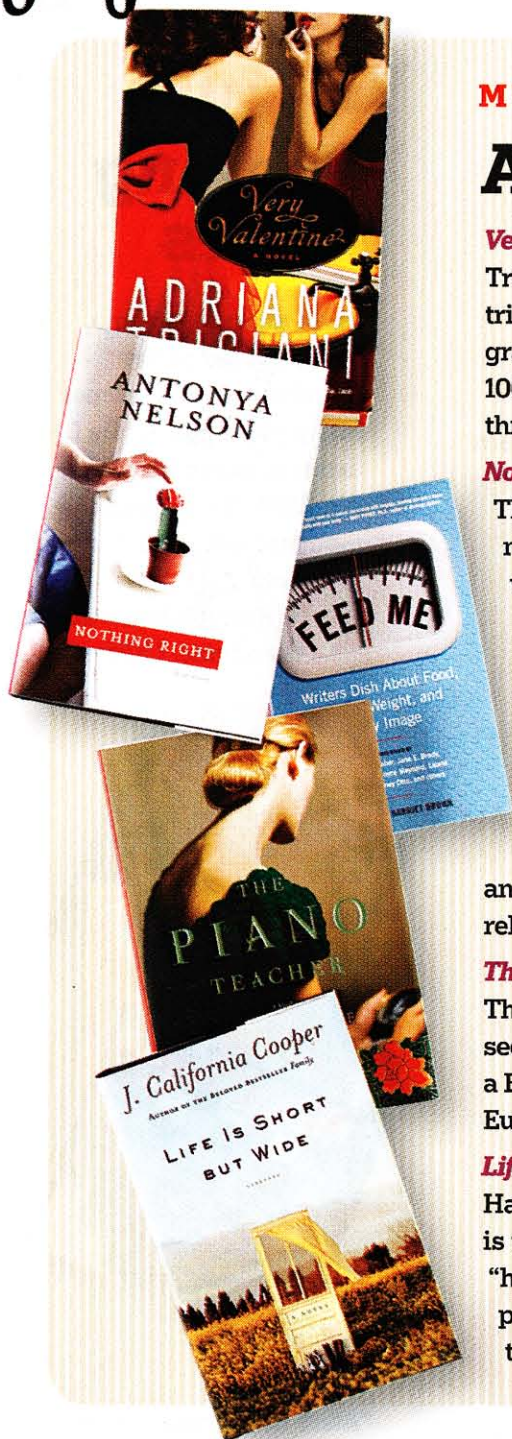


As seen in HALLMARK MAGAZINE

enjoy Downtime



MUST-READS

Amazing Women

Very Valentine by Adriana Trigiani (Harper, \$26).

Trigiani introduces a new lovable heroine in this first book of a trilogy. One of three sisters, 33-year-old Valentine lives with her grandmother and works as a custom shoemaker at her family's 100-year-old business in New York. When the company's future is threatened, savvy Valentine decides to save the day.

Nothing Right: Short Stories by Antonya Nelson (Bloomsbury, \$25).

The characters in this collection of insightful stories include a mother and her teenage son who finally achieve common ground when his girlfriend becomes pregnant, and a divorced woman who finds herself with a chatterbox roommate addicted to plastic surgery. In each, Nelson strikes the perfect balance between dark humor and a deep sympathy for the troubles of ordinary people.

Feed Me! edited by Harriet Brown (Ballantine, \$15).

Of the many obsessions we might succumb to in a lifetime, food is perhaps the most seductive. This poignant, funny essay collection features writers like Ann Hood grappling with diets and body image. Their essays will make you reflect on your own relationship to food—and may also leave you hungry!

The Piano Teacher by Janice Y. K. Lee (Viking, \$26).

This impressive, gripping-to-the-end debut novel explores intersecting lives in Hong Kong. At different points in time, two women—a British piano teacher for a wealthy Chinese family and a doomed Eurasian socialite—fall in love with the same dangerous man.

Life Is Short but Wide by J. California Cooper (Doubleday, \$25).

Hattie B. Brown, who lives in an Oklahoma town called Wideland, is the wise, gossip-loving narrator of this inspiring story about “hard-to-find, hard-to-get, hard-to-keep love.” It’s a nostalgic portrait of rural life, and of the African-American experience in the Midwest during the early 20th century. —Carmela Ciuraru