

THE SECRET LIFE OF PRONOUNS (Bloomsbury Press). In an ingenious approach to linguistics, social psychologist James W. Pennebaker scrutinized written language samples—from the Gettysburg Address to Craigslist ads—by tallying up the little words the rest of us don’t even notice: pronouns, articles, and prepositions. Turns out different people use them differently, a fact that’s surprisingly revealing of our personalities and social conditioning. Gender-studies nerds will like that the book breaks down the speaking styles of men and women, looking briefly at trans folks and the role of testosterone in word choice. And Pennebaker is as entertaining as he is meticulous: He shows us how we can tell Lady Gaga is a depressive from one 27-word tweet. —*Katie Haegeler*



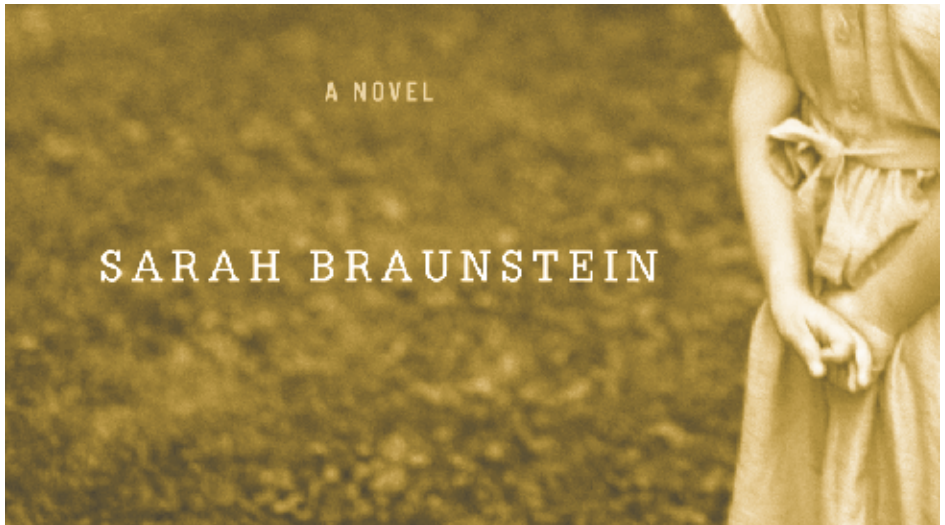
WOMEN WHO ROCK COLORING BOOK BY GIRLS ROCK! RHODE ISLAND (etsy.me/rG5Fc3). You’re never too old for a box of crayons, but you should consider tossing your Lisa Frank coloring books to wave your musical freak flag high with the Women Who Rock Coloring Book, sales of which support a nonprofit that encourages musical expression for young girls. Connecting the dots and embellishing illustrations of Erykah Badu, Nico, and Yoko Ono never felt so right, and you’ll probably binge on nostalgia while doing so. (Yes, you really should have formed that garage band back in high school.) Fight the patriarchal domination of music: Support Girls Rock! Rhode Island and the local artists behind this cool project, and admire your own rockin’ creativity and opposition to social norms by coloring outside the lines. —*Ashley Jean Hight*



VAYA BAGS (vayabags.com). When Queens, New York, resident Tia Meilinger couldn’t find a well-made, eco-friendly, waterproof messenger bag to suit her needs, she made one. And now she can make one for you, too. Meilinger hand-constructs each Vaya Bag (options include backpacks, panniers, and messenger bags of all sizes) by converting discarded materials like scrap sailboat awnings, bicycle tubes, and other materials, and the result is a stylish, functional bag with enough straps to keep your laptop safe during the most harrowing commutes. With several styles and prices to choose from, they’re a great socially conscious option for the bag lover in your life. —*Kelsey Wallace*



DAPPERQ.COM. For gender non-conformers, getting dressed to impress can often make you look more like the kid who raided dad’s closet than the handsome bent-gent you were going for. (A baseball cap, grandpa’s tie, knee-grazing shorts, and a flannel? Really?) With scant fashionable options for female-bodied, menswear-loving folk, it’s not totally your fault. But with DapperQ.com, you no longer have an excuse. This Brooklyn-based multimedia blog celebrates current men’s fashion for multivariant bodies and gender identities with instructional videos like “How to Tie a Bowtie,” queer critiques of the latest from rugged runways, and plenty of well-dressed boundary transgressors to feast your fashion-loving eyes on. —*Yana Tallon-Hicks*



THE SWEET RELIEF OF MISSING CHILDREN (W.W. Norton and Co.). The style and content of Sarah Braunstein’s first novel go a long way toward justifying its clunky title. The book actually is about the quenching of existential thirst that occurs, in dissatisfying sips or the deluge of an epiphany, for a dozen disparate characters in the course of a fractal-like plot that touches on their departures from their families, including three unconnected teenagers—two of their own accord and one not—and several adults and fetuses. Before the novel came out, Braunstein won a Rona Jaffe Foundation grant and was one of the National Book Foundation’s 2010 “5 Under 35” authors. So it’s no surprise that what sounds, on the surface, as melodramatic as a week’s worth of Oprah interviews is more akin to the film *Magnolia* (if Saul Bellow had written the novelization), with its pace, surprises, and insights into human yearning. As one central character wonders, “What other things and people and places were out there, echoes of him which he needed but would never be able to find?” —*J.B.*