

A Bill King photograph from the Turnbull & Asser Archive, from *The Day of the Peacock: Style for Men 1963–1973*, by Geoffrey Aquilina Ross (V&A Publishing). Center, Fred Perry winning his third consecutive Wimbledon title, July 3, 1936, from *Wimbledon: 101 Reasons to Love the Greatest Tournament in Tennis*, by David Green (Stewart, Tabori & Chang).



Susan Sontag roars to life in **Sigrid Nunez's** *Sempre Susan* (Atlas & Co.), an intimate portrait of America's most famous public intellectual—and the author's exacting mentor, as well as the unconventional mother of Nunez's then boyfriend, David Rieff. Sontag is a study in contradictions, intellectually bulletproof and insecure, bullying and easily felled by beauty. As magnetic and complicated as Sontag herself, Nunez's homage is both critical and compassionate, a gossipy tell-all and elegantly crafted chronicle of a young writer's artistic education.

Margaret Robison—mother of mommy-was-crazy memoirists Augusten Burroughs and John Elder Robison—tells her side of the story in *The Long Journey Home* (Spiegel & Grau). For better or worse, all women are “daddy's girls.” **Dr. Peggy Drexler** maintains in *Our Fathers, Ourselves* (Rodale). *Knowing Your Value* (Weinstein), **Mika Brzezinski** advises, is the first step in getting what you're worth. **Robert**



HOT TYPE

Gottlieb highlights the colorful *Lives and Letters* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux) of a multitude of iconic figures and performers. **Howard Blum** pans gold's history in *The Floor of Heaven* (Crown). The lives of the gold-rush-era men in **John Sayles's** novel claim *A Moment in the Sun* (McSweeney's). **Mitchell Zuckoff** spins the true-life adventure of three W.W. II fliers, two men and a woman, who are *Lost in Shangri-La* (Harper), the unmapped, cannibal-infested jungles of New Guinea. The ghost of Hank Williams haunts **Steve Earle's** novel, *I'll Never Get out of This World Alive* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). **Danzy Senna's** perceptive stories in *You Are Free* (Riverhead) show how nothing is black-and-white. *The Quotable Hitchens: From Alcohol to Zionism* (Da Capo) presents a cavalcade of *Vanity Fair's* notorious provocateur-in-chief **Christopher Hitchens's** finest flaming arrows, mud balls, and political grenades. Duck and cover! —ELISSA SCHAPPELL

Former Paramount exec **Peter Bart** rats on the *Infamous Players* (Weinstein) of 60s and 70s Hollywood. **Brian Jones** claims *Failing Intelligence* (Dialogue) led to the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Surreal miniaturist **Helen Phillips's** debut collection, *And Yet They Were Happy* (LeapLit), is full of gems. **Bill Roedy** solos in *What Makes Business Rock* (Wiley). **Molly Jong-Fast** releases *The Social Climber's Handbook* (Villard). **Ann Hodgman** instructs children on *How to Die of Embarrassment Every Day* (Henry Holt). **Douglas Kennedy** captures *The Moment* (Atria) of love at first sight. **Edna O'Brien's** stories breathe life into *Saints and Sinners* (Back Bay). **Kate Payne** knits together *The Hip Girl's Guide to Homemaking* (Harper Design). **Rachel Simon** rides on *The Story of Beautiful Girl* (Grand Central). **Pete Hamill** prowls *Tabloid City* (Little, Brown). **Priscilla Gilman** illuminates *The Anti-Romantic Child* (Harper). **Charles Leerhsen** roars through the Indy 500's history in *Blood and Smoke* (Simon & Schuster). **Lorenzo Mattotti** and **Lou Reed** ink *The Raven* (Fantagraphics).

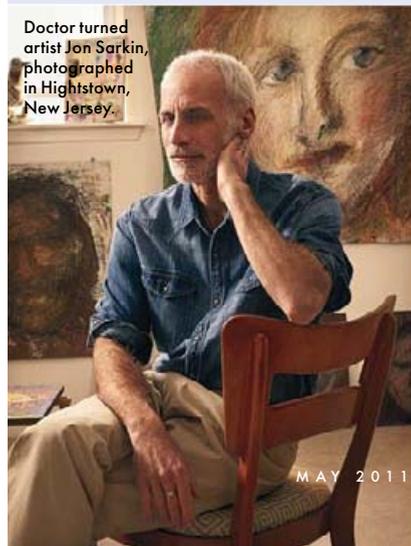
Creative Awakening

It was the perfect afternoon for a round of golf. **Jon Sarkin**, a chiropractor (and brother of *V.F.* features editor Jane Sarkin), was about to take his first swing on the eighth hole. While he was thinking about the sand trap, however, a patch of capillaries in his cerebral cortex shifted a hundredth of an inch.

As the award-winning journalist Amy Ellis Nutt describes in her new book, *Shadows Bright as Glass* (Free Press), the resulting headaches and “buzzing deep inside his head” eventually forced him to seek a surgical cure. After the operation, Sarkin's brain began leaking blood, his heart stopped twice, and his neurons committed mass suicide. No one expected him to survive. When he did recover, the twisting pain in Sarkin's head had been replaced by an existential dread.

Salvation arrived in the form of a doodle. Before long, Sarkin had sold his medical practice and was spending 12 hours a day in his makeshift studio. His paintings were abstract riots of color, mashups of Picasso and Saul Steinberg. Eventually, Sarkin became a successful painter, able to make a living doing what he loves. “You know the stories of old blues guys who go to the crossroads and meet the Devil and come back and they can suddenly do anything?,” Sarkin asks. “Well, I met the Devil, too.” —JONAH LEHRER

Doctor turned artist Jon Sarkin, photographed in Hightstown, New Jersey.



SARKIN PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARK SEUGER; STYLED BY CHRISTINE HAHN; CLOTHING BY BANANA REPUBLIC; GROOMING BY CANDICE FORNESS; PHOTOGRAPHS FROM A.F. IMAGES (PERRY); TIM HOUT (BOOK STACK); FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS