

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY  
**BEST SELLERS**

**HARDCOVER FICTION**

1. "Plum Lovin'" by Janet Evanovich (St. Martin's)
2. "For One More Day" by Mitch Albom (Hyperion)
3. "Hannibal Rising" by Thomas Harris (Delacorte)
4. "The Alexandria Link" by Steve Berry (Ballantine Books)
5. "Cross" by James Patterson (Little, Brown)
6. "Deep Storm" by Lincoln Child (Doubleday)
7. "Star Wars: Allegiance" by Timothy Zahn (Del Rey)
8. "Hide" by Lisa Gardner (Bantam)
9. "White Lies" by Jayne Ann Krentz (Putnam)
10. "You Suck: A Love Story" by Christopher Moore (William Morrow)

**NONFICTION/GENERAL**

1. "The Best Life Diet" by Bob Greene (Simon & Schuster)
2. "You: On A Diet: The Owner's Manual for Waist Management" by Michael F. Roizen, Mehmet C. Oz (Free Press)
3. "The Secret" by Rhonda Byrne (Beyond Words)
4. "The Audacity of Hope" by Barack Obama (Crown)
5. "The Innocent Man: Murder and Injustice in a Small Town" by John Grisham (Doubleday)
6. "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid" by Jimmy Carter (Simon & Schuster)
7. "Born on a Blue Day: Inside the Extraordinary Mind of an Autistic Savant" by Daniel Tammet (Free Press)
8. "Marley & Me" by John Grogan (Morrow)
9. "The Proper Care and Feeding of Marriage" by Dr. Laura Schlessinger (HarperCollins)
10. "I Feel Bad About My Neck: And Other Thoughts on Being a Woman" by Nora Ephron (Knopf)

**MASS MARKET PAPERBACKS**

1. "Irish Dreams" by Nora Roberts (Silhouette Special Releases)
2. "Most Likely To Die" by Lisa Jackson, Beverly Barton, Wendy Corsi Staub (Zebra)
3. "McKetrick's Luck" by Linda Lael Miller (HQN)(F-P)
4. "The Winter Lodge" by Susan Wiggs (MIRA)
5. "The Templar Legacy" by Steve Berry (Ballantine)
6. "Bite Me if You Can" by Lynsay Sands (Avon)
7. "Honeymoon" by James Patterson, Howard Roughan (Warner Books)
8. "What Price Love?" by Stephanie Laurens (Avon)
9. "The House" by Danielle Steel (Dell)
10. "Natural Cures 'They' Don't Want You to Know About" by Kevin Trudeau (Alliance Publishing)

# He'll be *Dr.* Author soon

## Young writer prepares to begin medical school

By **MARCUS FRANKLIN**  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**NEW YORK**

When Uzodinma Iweala's debut novel, "Beasts of No Nation," was published in 2005, book critics jostled for room at the literary altar to offer praise.

They called the book, about a child soldier in an unnamed African country, "brilliant," "astounding," "riveting," "extraordinary," "searing," "electrifying" and "powerful."

Salman Rushdie wrote, "It's one of those rare occasions when you see a first novel and you think, 'This guy is going to be very, very good.'"

For Iweala, a 24-year-old graduate of Harvard University, much has happened since then. He has won numerous literary awards, moved to his parents' native Nigeria and then relocated to New York to work for an anti-poverty organization.

He also recently signed a two-book deal with publisher HarperCollins.

This month, he plans to return to Nigeria, complete the first book by the end of the summer and begin medical school in the fall at Columbia University.

"I don't think the two are mutually exclusive," Iweala said of writing books and attending medical school as he sat in a coffee shop the day after he returned from an African writers' conference in Italy.

"Will it be hard to do the two together? Oh, yeah, it will be very hard. I'm not kidding myself," he said.

Iweala grew up in a Washington suburb, the second child and first son of Ikemba, an emergency-room doctor, and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, a Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of



AP PHOTO

Uzodinma Iweala's debut novel is "Beasts of No Nation." The story started as a novella he wrote for his senior thesis at Harvard University. His immediate plans are to write two more books and to begin medical school at Columbia University.

Technology-educated economist, and former Nigerian finance minister and World Bank vice president.

Iweala's older sister is studying to be a doctor at Harvard Medical School and his two younger brothers are Harvard undergraduates.

Iweala's novella began as a short story he wrote after reading an article about child soldiers when he was a student at St. Albans School in

Washington. He put the story away but later retrieved and expanded it after hearing a former child soldier speak at Harvard.

He spent a summer in Nigeria researching the subject before submitting the expanded story — narrated by a boy in language similar to pidgin English spoken in Nigeria — as his senior English thesis.

The boy, Agu, loves to read and

wants to be a doctor or engineer until he witnesses his father's murder during a raging civil war and is forced to fight in the conflict.

Writer Jamaica Kincaid, who was Iweala's thesis adviser, later gave the work to her agent, who showed it to HarperCollins executive editor Tim Duggan.

"It was unlike anything I'd read before," said Duggan, who will edit Iweala's next two books. "The diction, voice and writing style were very unique. It was an emotionally heart-pounding story. It made me look at things that were happening in Africa in a different way."

"I think he's going to be one of the best literary writers this country has. In each book, I think he will break new ground in terms of style and voice. He's a rare talent and he has great range and versatility. I think whatever he does is going to be unusual and fascinating. I want to be there to help cultivate him in his career as a writer."

Iweala's next book is nonfiction and is about the AIDS epidemic in Africa. After that, he plans to return to fiction.

Last February, Iweala, who has also written book reviews and nonfiction pieces for The New York Times and other publications, moved to New York City to work on health issues for the Millennium Villages Project. Based at Columbia University, the project tries to reduce extreme poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa.

This month, Iweala will leave the project and return to Nigeria, a country he has visited constantly since he was a boy and where he also has citizenship. It's a place where his family is "very interested" in seeing conditions improve, he said. He lived there before moving to New York, helping build homes for victims of religious conflict.

He is thinking about moving to the West African country after medical school.

"You have to judge where you would be the most useful and helpful," said Iweala, his voice bearing traces of the Nigerian lilt.

# Varied artistic lives of subjects guide new book of essays

By **CLAUDIA LA ROCCO**  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

While culling essays for her new collection, "Twenty-Eight Artists and Two Saints," Joan Acocella discovered a loose theme: the hardships that come with creation and how various artists dealt with these obstacles or did not.

The humbler virtues of perseverance, she came to see, are as important, and as laudable, as talent.

As she writes in her introduction, "We should love these people not just for artistic reasons, but for moral reasons."

Over the next 500 pages, the New Yorker critic chronicles those whose struggles consumed them, and those who tri-

umphed; though, of course, as with the works these artists made, the biographical picture is rarely so black and white.

Facing such diverse foes as alcoholism, war, writer's block and domestic disarray, some managed only to hold their ground for a time.

Some, like writer M.F.K. Fisher, weathered ups and downs. Others, like fabled ballet dancer Vaslav Nijinsky, plummeted into the abyss with sickening speed.

Acocella is correct in identifying her theme, and she spins out its variations with verve, wit and lucidity; her eye for detail, and pacing, is superb.

Along the way, as the quote above hints, she taps into a deeper, more personal current running through her criti-

cism: her ardent and affectionate defense of artists' rights to their mundane human foibles.

In doing so, Acocella aims not just to applaud these artists, but to protect them from the misinterpretations (and misappropriations) of others. Part of this involves honoring the clumsiness of their failures as much as the grace of their achievements.

Writing about author Joseph Roth's awkward use of fate in his great novel, she muses, "I am almost glad the book has a fault. Roth extracted 'The Radetzky March' from his very innards. This rather desperate, corny fate business reminds us of that fact, and counterbalances the crushing beauty of the rest of the book."

No failure. No context for grace.

Often, these essays were written on the occasion of a new biography, in which, to Acocella's mind, the portrait seems oddly skewed to suit the biographer's pet theory or psychological bent.

Again and again, when faced with such intrusive, often insulting handling of history, Acocella insists on returning to the subjects their dignity, however tattered. What really matters, perhaps all that matters, is that their artistic lives be allowed to guide the story.

As she puts it, "What we need to know about Nijinsky is not what was on his mind but how he transformed this material into art. ... In other words, we need a psychology of creativity."

# 'Blitz' describes day in the life of WW II

By **NORMAN N. BROWN**  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

To those who experienced World War II, the word "blitz" conjures up images of the savage bombing campaign the German Luftwaffe conducted against England during the early months of the 1940s.

In "Blitz," Margaret Gaskin describes one particular day of the bombings and does so with a wealth of detail that fills an entire book. In addition, there are 70 pages of appendixes and notes, enough to satisfy even the most demanding and inquisitive reader.

Gaskin, a native of London, demonstrates deep affection for her hometown and a great knowledge about its history. She has done a colossal job of research, specifically into the bombing of 1 square mile in the city's center on Dec. 29, 1940, perhaps the most severe attack of the campaign.

After his successful land campaigns in Europe, Hitler believed that an isolated Great Britain

would seek peace at any price. He was displeased to learn otherwise, especially since he lacked the military capability to invade England from across the Channel.

Ill-advised by the chief of his air force, Field Marshal Hermann Goering, Hitler attempted to subjugate his stubborn enemy solely from the air by destroying the few remaining planes of the Royal Air Force and its bases.

This goal had almost been achieved when Hitler made an egregious mistake. In his impatience for victory, he switched

tactics and decided that the Luftwaffe would destroy British morale by subjecting London and other cities to steady heavy bombing.

Gaskin reconstructs the bombings as if she were putting together a huge and complex jigsaw puzzle, offering the reader a coherent picture of the city's crumbling buildings and fire-ravaged streets.

She consulted official records, private correspondence and newspaper articles and interviewed those who experienced the raids.

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