**Sweetness in the Belly**

Lilly, the main character of Camilla Gibb’s stunning new novel, has anything but a stable childhood. The daughter of English/Irish hippies, she was “born in Yugoslavia, breast-fed in the Ukraine, weaned in Corsica, freed from nappies in Sicily and walking by the time [they] got to the Algarve…” The family’s nomadic adventure ends in Tangier when Lilly’s parents are killed in a drug deal gone awry. Orphaned at eight, Lilly is left in the care of a Sufi sheikh, who shows her the way of Islam through the Qur’an. When political turmoil erupts, Lilly, now sixteen, is sent to the ancient walled city of Harar, Ethiopia, where she stays in a dirt-floored compound with an impoverished widow named Nouria and her four children. In Harar, Lilly earns her keep by helping with the household chores and teaching local children the Qur’an. Ignoring the cries of “farenji” (foreigner), she slowly begins to put down roots, learning the language and immersing herself in a culture rich in customs and rituals and lush with glittering bright headscarves, the chorus of muezzins and the scent of incense and coffee. She is drawn to an idealistic half-Sudanese doctor named Aziz, and the two begin to meet every Saturday at a social gathering. As they stay behind to talk, Lilly finds her faith tested for the first time in her life: “The desire to remain in his company overwhelmed common sense; I would pick up my good Muslim self on the way home.” Just as their love begins to blossom, they are wrenched apart when the aging emperor Haile Selassie is deposed by the brutal Dergue regime. Lilly seeks exile in London, while Aziz stays to pursue his revolutionary passions. In London, Lilly’s life as a white Muslim is no less complicated. A hospital staff nurse, she befriends a refugee from Ethiopia named Amina, whose daughter she helped to deliver in a back alley. The two women set up a community association to re-unite refugees with lost family members. Their work, however, isn't entirely altruistic. Both women are looking for someone: Amina, her husband, Yusuf, and Lilly, Aziz, who remains firmly, painfully, implanted in her heart. The first-person narrative alternates seamlessly between England (1981-91) and Ethiopia (1970-74), weaving a rich tapestry of one woman’s quest to maintain faith and love through revolution, upheaval and the alienation of life in exile. Sweetness in the Belly was universally praised for the tremendous empathy that Gibb brings to an ambitious story. Kirkus Reviews writes that the novel “reflect(s) the pain, cultural relocation and uncertainty of tribal, political and religious refugees the world over. Gibb’s territory is urgently modern and controversial but she enters it softly, with grace, integrity and a lovely compassionate story. [It is a] poem to belief and to the displaced—humane, resonant, original, impressive." According to the Literary Review of Canada, Sweetness in the Belly is “…a novel that is culturally sensitive, consummately researched and deeply compassionate…richly imagined, full of sensuous detail and arresting imagery…Gibb has smuggled Western readers into the centre of lives they might never otherwise come into contact with, let alone understand.”

**Sweetness in the Belly**

Soon to be a major motion picture starring Dakota Fanning Like Brick Lane and The Kite Runner, Camilla Gibb’s widely praised new novel is a poignant and intensely atmospheric look beyond the stereotypes of Islam. After her hippie British parents are murdered, Lilly is raised at
a Sufi shrine in Morocco. As a young woman she goes on pilgrimage to Harar, Ethiopia, where she teaches Qur’an to children and falls in love with an idealistic doctor. But even swathed in a traditional headscarf, Lilly can’t escape being marked as a foreigner. Forced to flee Ethiopia for England, she must once again confront the riddle of who she is and where she belongs.

**Sweetness In The Belly**

A richly imagined tale of one woman's search for love and belonging. In Thatcher's London, Lilly, a white Muslim nurse, struggles in a state of invisible exile. As Ethiopian refugees gradually fill the flats of the housing estate where she lives, Lilly tentatively begins to share with them her longing for the home she herself once had in Africa and her heartbreaking search for her missing lover. Back in Haile Selassie's Ethiopia, the young Lilly, born in the 1950s to British parents, now orphaned and full of religious conviction, finds herself living in the city of Harar. She is drawn to the idealistic young doctor, Aziz, himself an outsider in the community. But then convulsions of a new revolutionary order separate them, sending Lilly to an England she has never seen, while Aziz disappears.

**The Beauty of Humanity Movement - A Novel**

The acclaimed author of Sweetness in the Belly journeys to Vietnam in this rich and tantalizing new novel. Raised in the United States but Vietnamese by birth, Maggie has come to Hanoi seeking clues to the fate of her father, a dissident artist who disappeared during the war. Her search brings her to Old Man Hu'ng's pho stall. The old man once had a shop frequented by revolutionary artists, but now Tu', a hustling young entrepreneur, is his most faithful customer. Maggie, Hu'ng, and Tu' come together during a highly charged season that will mark them forever. Exploring the indelible legacies of war and art, as well as love's power to renew, The Beauty of Humanity Movement is a stellar achievement by a globally renowned literary light.

**This Is Happy**

"'All sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story or tell a story about them,' Isak Dinesen once said. Sorrows are all pain otherwise, pain without sense or meaning. But joys, too, it seems to me, need their context. And sometimes their coexistence needs to be borne. The coexistence or possibility of the opposite can be what gives an experience its meaning. At its simplest, that is a story." —Camilla Gibb, This Is Happy In this profoundly moving memoir, Camilla Gibb, the award-winning, bestselling author of Sweetness in the Belly and The Beauty of Humanity Movement, reveals the intensity of the grief that besieged her as the happiness of a longed for family shattered. Grief that lived in a potent mix with the solace that arose with the creation of another, most unexpected family. A family constituted by a small cast of resilient souls, adults broken in the way many of us are, united in love for a child. Reflecting on tangled moments of past sadness and joy, alienation and belonging, Gibb revisits her stories now in relation to the happy daughter who will inherit them, and she finds there new meaning and beauty. Raw and unflinching, intelligent and humane, This Is Happy asks the big questions and finds answers in the tender moments of the everyday.
The Petty Details of So-and-So's Life

With her second novel, The Petty Details of So-and-so's Life, award-winning and celebrated author Camilla Gibb probes the bruises of family with humanity, hilarity, and a keen eye for the grotesque to deliver one of the most anticipated books of the year. A startling and ambitious novel, as funny as it is poignant, The Petty Details of So-and-so's Life tells the story of Blue and Emma Taylor, who, despite an almost telepathic connection, respond to the sudden disappearance of their explosive father in remarkably different ways. Emma sets off in pursuit of a new family, and discovers a sense of belonging in the most unexpected places. Burly, tattoo-stamped Blue, haunted by the brutal, disparaging voice of their father, embarks on a cross-country search for the elusive parent. Emma and Blue share a most intimate connection, one forged in the secret worlds and wordless communications of childhood. As they grow, they discover the limits of the language they share.

Mouthing the Words

Thelma is six years old. Life at home is unsettling and disturbing; her father's games are not enjoyable and her mother dotes on Willy, the favoured child. When her parents move to Canada, Thelma smuggles her imaginary friends with her in her suitcase. By turns harrowing and wonderfully funny, Mouthing the Words tells Thelma's story of sexual abuse, anorexia, borderline multiple personality disorder and her return to England. Reminiscent of Jeanette Winterson and Sylvia Plath, Mouthing the Words is a remarkable and inspiring fiction debut.

The Relatives - A Novel

From the renowned author of Sweetness in the Belly, The Beauty of Humanity Movement and This Is Happy, comes a bold, urgent and richly imagined novel about what it means to be a family in our modern world. Lila is on a long, painful journey toward motherhood. Tess and Emily are reeling after their ugly separation and fighting over ownership of the embryos that were supposed to grow their family together. And thousands of miles away, the unknown man who served as anonymous donor to them all is being held in captivity in Somalia. While his life remains in precarious balance, his genetic material is a source of both creation and conflict. What does it mean to be a family in our rapidly shifting world? What are our responsibilities to each other with increasing options for how to create a family? As these characters grapple with life-altering changes, they will find themselves interconnected in ways they cannot have imagined, and forced to redefine what family means to them.

The Last Exiles - A Novel

"A thought-provoking, poignant and unflinching novel." —Jean Kwok, New York Times bestselling author of Searching for Sylvie Lee An unforgettable saga inspired by true events, The Last Exiles is a searing portrait of a young couple in Pyongyang and their fight for love and freedom Jin and Suja meet and fall in love while studying at university in Pyongyang. She is a young journalist from a prominent family, while he is from a small village of little means. Outside
the school, North Korea has fallen under great political upheaval, plunged into chaos and famine. When Jin returns home to find his family starving, their food rations all but gone, he makes a rash decision that will haunt him for the rest of his life. Meanwhile, miles away, Suja has begun to feel the tenuousness of her privilege when she learns that Jin has disappeared. Risking everything, and defying her family, Suja sets out to find him, embarking on a dangerous journey that leads her into a dark criminal underbelly and tests their love and will to survive. In this vivid and moving story, award-winning filmmaker Ann Shin offers a rare glimpse at life inside the guarded walls of North Korea and the harrowing experiences of those who are daring enough to attempt escape. Inspired by real stories of incredible bravery, The Last Exiles is a stunning debut about love, sacrifice and the price of liberty.

**Creekside - An Archaeological Novel**

In Creekside, dedicated archaeologist Meg Harrington guides her students in a race against time to protect the legacy of the past before bulldozers rip it to shreds. The setting is a Kentucky pasture slated for development—the construction of the new Creekside subdivision. Once, that same beautiful stretch of land was home to three generations who experienced love, loss, and tragedy in their log cabin beside the creek. It was here during the late 18th century that Estelle Mullins struggled to build her home on the dangerous frontier. In Meg’s 21st-century world of archaeology we read about excavation techniques, daily experiences at a dig, tight construction deadlines, the use of heavy equipment, report writing, artifact analysis, damage from looters and collectors, and the reality of site destruction in the path of modern development. The depiction of Estelle’s frontier life includes Kentucky’s early Euro-American settlement of the Cumberland Gap, encounters with Shawnee defending their land, Protestant fragmentation, the rise of religious fundamentalism, the immigrant stampede down the Ohio River, and the persistent issue of class-based land ownership. The two partially interwoven story lines link artifact and place, ancestors and descendants, the present and the past, and inspire us to explore the personal connections between them all in fresh and vital ways.

**Entertainment News**

Thousands of Venezuelan musicians, mostly children and adolescents, have attempt to set the record of the world’s largest orchestra during a concert in Caracas A provocative exhibit by dissident ...

**Movie Reviews**

Rebecca Hall’s piercing drama stars Tessa Thompson and Ruth Negga as old friends navigating the color line in 1920s New York. By Manohla Dargis Radu Jude’s rousing, form-bending new feature ...

**sweetness in the belly camilla gibb summary**