

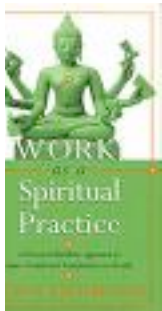
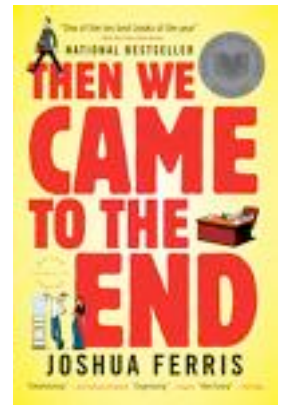
A Literary Magazine for the Maternally Inclined
<http://www.literarymama.com>

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Essential Reading: Work

Are you heading to work tomorrow morning? Dreaming of returning to work someday? Here is a list of work essentials to keep you entertained and informed. Enjoy!

[Kristina Riggle](#), Fiction Co-Editor, says, "Why aren't there more 'office' novels? I don't know, but I am very glad to have read [Then We Came to the End](#) by Joshua Ferris. The story is told in collective first person, yes, 'we.' This sounds bizarre, like it's a cheap gimmick that can't possibly work, but it does work. The collective office workers at an ad agency hitting the skids narrate the story, and then the narrative will follow an individual for a time and the narration becomes more traditionally told in the third person, and then the office collective weighs in again with how 'we' feel about it. The individual stories are compelling, sometimes funny -- sometimes darkly so -- and the first person plural strategy works because there does get to be a sort of 'hive mind' in an office setting, even if the individual workers can't stand each other."



Literary Reflections Editor, [Sarah Raleigh Kilts](#), writes, "I recommend the non-fiction title, [Work as a Spiritual Practice: A Practical Buddhist Approach to Inner Growth and Satisfaction on the Job](#). Author Lewis Richmond has been both a corporate executive and a Zen Priest. As such, his twin perspectives make him a uniquely qualified voice regarding the Buddhist tenet of 'Right Livelihood.' This book is funny, pithy, practical and inspiring; it successfully bridges what often seems like a chasm-like expanse between ancient teachings and the modern American work experience. It is a highly accessible book that can help anyone (regardless of faith) navigate the morally murky waters of the workplace."

[Suzanne Kamata](#), Fiction Co-Editor, recommends "[In Fear and Trembling](#) by Amelie Nothomb. "This is a story of a competent young Belgian woman who goes to work at a company in Tokyo where she finds that work ethics are not universal. For example, when she demonstrates initiative, her superiors see her action as insubordination. Instead of being rewarded, she is demoted to cleaning the bathrooms. This darkly comic novel is based on Nothomb's own experience working for a Japanese company in Japan. Nothomb also offers general insight into the lives of working women in Japan."



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[Columnist](#) and Creative Nonfiction Editor, Susan Ito, shares "I'd like to recommend [When the Personal Was Political: Five Women Doctors Look Back](#) by Toni Martin, MD. The [blurb](#) that follows is from another Amazon reader's review - I thought she did a great job of describing it:

Toni Martin has written a remarkable and incisive book that uses qualitative research techniques - auto-ethnography, participant observation, and informant interviews - to produce an insider's analysis of the lives and work of women doctors who entered medical school at the crest of second wave feminism in the early 1970s. Part memoir, part life history, her book does what any good formal ethnography does - it illuminates an important aspect of the general by focusing tightly on the particular. In this case, the specifics are her life and the lives of four friends, her medical school study group, and their experiences in the world of American medicine as women and mothers and as doctors (or as Martin wryly acknowledges, that distinct species, women doctors). An elegant and crisp piece of prose that reads like a great "page-turner." Martin's medicine is easy to swallow.'

