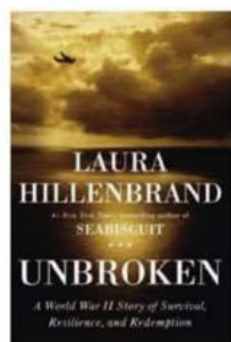


1.



[BOOK]

Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption

By Laura Hillenbrand
(Random House, 496 pages, \$27)

» Laura Hillenbrand last wowed us with *Seabiscuit: An American Legend*. Right out of the gate her biography of World War II Army Air Forces bombardier Louis Zamperini (who, at 93, lives in Hollywood) has us again marveling at her depth of research. Yet facts never slow the plot: Zamperini was a Torrance troublemaker turned Olympic runner turned plane crash survivor turned Japanese POW. The book's vivid portrayal of wartime is a reminder of why, exactly, we celebrate Veterans Day.

// WENDY WITHERSPOON

2.



[CD]

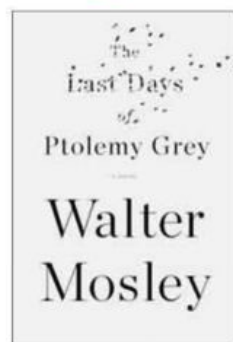
It's Still Like a Secret

El Ten Eleven
(Fake Record Label, \$13)

» The sight of two guys onstage producing the sound of a 20-piece orchestra is commonplace these days, but usually it's because of a suitcase full of laptops and electronic sequencers. Kristian Dunn and Tim Fogarty of the L.A. band El Ten Eleven manage to create lush, all-instrumental rock pieces without digital intervention, thanks to a kick-ass double-neck bass/guitar, a fretless bass, and a massive collection of percussive toys and pedals. The act is a wonder to behold live, but on the group's fourth album, the layered sound is just as hypnotic.

// LESLEY BARGAR
SUTER

3.



[BOOK]

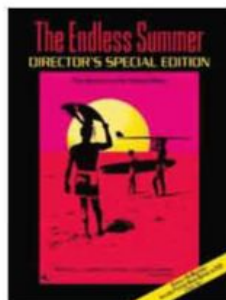
The Last Days of Ptolemy Grey

By Walter Mosley
(Riverhead, 288 pages, \$26)

» The new novel from L.A. native **Walter Mosley** takes place in South-Central, where a confused and neglected nonagenarian named Ptolemy Grey sleeps under a table in his junk-filled apartment. After a miracle drug restores his mind (but hastens his death), Grey spends his final days meting out revenge for bygone injustices. The bluesy prose is what we've come to expect from the author of the 11-book Easy Rawlins series. That Mosley sets this powerful tale about historical forgetfulness in L.A. makes perfect sense.

// W.W.

4.



[DVD]

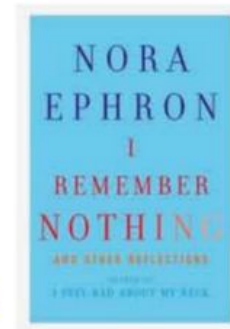
The Endless Summer

(Monterey Media, \$25)

» When Bruce Brown's *The Endless Summer* was released in 1966, it spawned outrage from surfers, who realized their secret was out, and envy from everyone else. It also ignited a surf film industry that would produce such puffery as *Blue Crush* and genius as *Step into Liquid*. Forty-four years and a digitally remastered version later, those harboring a *Mad Men*-inspired nostalgia can escape to a time when a couple of boyish, board-toting vagabonds from Huntington Beach jumped from continent to continent and the danger was more imagined than real—and paradise wasn't lost, it was just waiting to be found.

// ANN HEROLD

5.



[BOOK]

I Remember Nothing: And Other Reflections

By Nora Ephron
(Alfred A. Knopf, 160 pages, \$23)

» One could easily dismiss yet another collection of essays by Nora Ephron about aging women. But the writer-director of *When Harry Met Sally* and *Julie & Julia* has more to say, and we're happy to oblige. With grace, humor, and vulnerability, Ephron confronts post-menopausal realities like memory loss and bald spots (she calls hers "Aruba"). Ephron exposes the bizarreness of her Beverly Hills upbringing, mourns her alcoholic mother, and erupts into Seinfeldian rants about egg whites, e-mail, and Teflon.

// L.B.S.

Spot On



Walter Mosley: *The Last Days of Ptolemy Grey* is informed by the L.A.-born writer's experience of caring for his mother, who suffered from dementia before her death in 2009. "It's not a particular thing she said or did. It's more the frustration," says Mosley. "Trying to explain to somebody what's going on, or you're pushing the tele-phone but you want to change the tele-vision. She understood that she didn't understand. It was very complex. Hopefully I got that complexity into the novel."