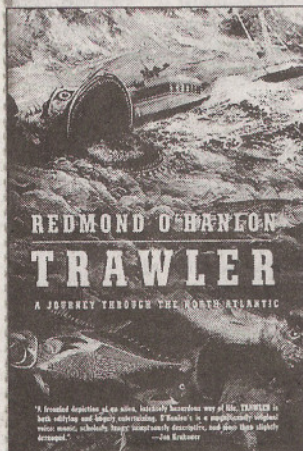


NEW AND NOTABLE

Anne Stephenson/Special for The Republic



'Trawler'

Redmond O'Hanlon
(Knopf, \$25)

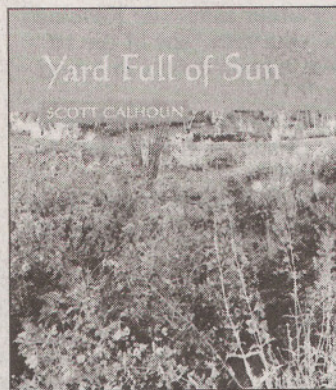
If you're new to O'Hanlon (*No Mercy: A Journey into the Heart of the Congo*), you might find him unsettling at first, with his unwieldy sentences and a manic storytelling style that substitutes exclamation points and italics for the flamboyant gestures you'd see if you were with him by the campfire. But then — and this is the oddest thing — affection creeps in. You warm up to his unrestrained voice and his effusive way of describing every detail of an adventure, and you're happy to set off with him on the rusty trawler *Orlan* and head straight into a hurricane. The January weather is deadly, but O'Hanlon has located a captain named Jason Schöfield, who is so deep in debt that he must fish despite the weather. So O'Hanlon becomes the "unhinged writer" who goes to sea north of Scotland at the most dangerous time of year, fulfilling a contract to write about "The Wild Places of Britain." Along the way he finds seasickness, sleep deprivation (the men of the crew sleep an average of three hours out of 36) and lots of rambling conversation.



'Committed'

Edited by Chris Knutsen and David Kuhn
(Bloomsbury, \$24.95)

Jerry Seinfeld says that the answer to the burning question women always ask — What are men *thinking*? — is "nuthin," but you'd never know it from these essays. Here are men who have scrutinized the effect that love, commitment and marriage have had on their lives, and they offer their conclusions with an honesty that is both ruthless and sweet. There's a pattern to many of their stories: It begins with their resistance (inspired by other relationships that went sour or their parents' bad marriages), which eventually succumbs to the inscrutable pleasures of companionship and affection. Contributors include Rick Moody, James McManus and Louis Begley. Andy Borowitz and Geoff Dyer are here to make you laugh, although David Sedaris has the best line when he reveals that he has never cheated on a partner during a relationship: "Sometimes the sins you haven't committed are all you have to hold on to." The book ends with Colin Harrison's heartbreaking description of his father's death, which becomes a tribute to two marriages: his parents' and his own.



'Yard Full of Sun'

Scott Calhoun
(Rio Nuevo, \$22.95)

We heard about this pretty and provocative book from a savvy desert gardener, who heard about it from another savvy desert gardener. If you're interested in conserving water and creating a desert landscape around your home, that's all the recommendation you need. Calhoun and his family live in Civano, a Tucson community devoted to resource conservation and traditional neighborhood living. He built an adobe house there, and around it created an argument against, as he puts it, "a lot of old, tired ideas of what a yard should look like." With agaves, Parry's penstemon, prickly pear cactuses, ocotillo and a salvaged paloverde tree, he made a wild landscape on his 6,000-square-foot lot and attracted *Sunset* and *Horticulture* magazines. This is the story of his home, the plants he loves and his family's way of living, with suggestions about how you might do it, too. There's a resource section and many photos. The book will be in chain stores in February, but is available now at the Desert Botanical Garden, Southwest Gardener and other local outlets.



'Skyscraper'

Susan E. Goodman and Michael J. Doolittle
(Knopf, \$16.95)

"If you're afraid of heights, this ain't for you," says a crane operator. "But people in this building are going to pay a lot of money for the view that I see every day." His words are paired with a photograph of ironworkers on a beam high above New York City, and it's true, the view is grand. Written for kids in grades 1-4, this book will also please adults with its dramatic color pictures and a story that follows the evolution of a building from the arrival of the first bulldozer to its completion more than three years later. There are lots of interesting facts along the way. The giant hammer that breaks through bedrock to form the basement hole "makes waves in toilets a block away," and it would take nearly five years to fill that hole with a garden hose. Best of all are quotes from the men who scramble so nonchalantly over the skeleton, so high in the air. Says one: "On windy days, we try to pick stuff up so it doesn't go over the side. But you've got to be careful. A sheet of plywood can catch the wind and sail like a kite. If you don't let go, you go with it."