

stein reflects on the often misunderstood journey through “the torments of being saved” in a stirring story of survival and unyielding love. (*Oct.*)

**Last Night I Dreamed of Peace:
The Diary of Dang Thuy Tram**

DANG THUY TRAM, TRANS. BY ANDREW X. PHAM, INTRO. BY FRANCES FITZGERALD. Harmony, \$25 (225p) ISBN 978-0-3073-4737-4

In 1970, while sifting through war documents in Vietnam, Fred Whitehurst, an American lawyer serving with a military intelligence dispatch, found a diary no bigger than a pack of cigarettes, its pages handsewn together. Written between 1968 and '70 by Tram, a young, passionate doctor who served on the front lines, it chronicled the strife she witnessed until the day she was shot by American soldiers earlier that year at age 27. Whitehurst, who was greatly moved by the diary and smuggled it out of the country, returned it to Thuy's family in 2005; soon after, it was published as a book in Vietnam, selling nearly half a million copies within a year and a half. The diary is valuable for the perspective it offers on war—Thuy is not obsessed with military maneuvers but rather the damage, both physical and emotional, that the war is inflicting on her country. Thuy also speaks poignantly about her patients and the compassion she feels for them. Unfortunately, the writing, composed largely of breathless questions and exclamations, is monotonous at times, somewhat diminishing the book's power. (*Sept.*)

Lost Genius: The Curious and Tragic Story of an Extraordinary Musical Prodigy

KEVIN BAZZANA. Carroll & Graf, \$27.99 (384p) ISBN 978-0-78672-088-0

Ervin Nyiregyházi (1903–1987) dazzled concert audiences in the early 20th century with his volcanic performances, playing so intensely that his fingers bled on the keys. Alas, his keyboard virtuosity was drowned out by a discordant symphony of neuroses. Unable even to tie his shoes properly, Nyiregyházi, who was born in Budapest, Hungary, and settled in L.A., wrestled with crippling stage fright; drank

and womanized compulsively (his seventh wife was a prostitute he met six days before marrying her in Vegas); exhausted others with his neediness, paranoia and grandiose posturing; and sabotaged a potentially brilliant career in the name of artistic purity. Bazzana, biographer of eccentric pianist Glenn Gould, follows Nyiregyházi's life from early acclaim through decades of poverty, obscurity and debauchery to his brief, celebrated comeback in the 1970s as the “skid row pianist.” Although Bazzana can be reductionist—he diagnoses Nyiregyházi with borderline personality disorder brought on by a domineering stage mother—he tells this lurid story sympathetically, without excusing Nyiregyházi's excesses. Even better, he writes about his subject's music in a lucid and evocative way. A tormented, self-destructive artist and the creator of thrilling, emotionally supercharged music, Nyiregyházi is, in Bazzana's compelling portrait, a study in the upside and downside of romanticism. Photos. (*Sept. 17*)

**Paper Tiger:
One Athlete's Journey to the Underbelly of Pro Football**

TED A. KLUCK. Lyons, \$24.95 (256p) ISBN 978-1-59921-043-8

A less-than-mediocre football player turned ESPN.com columnist refuses to give up at age 30, playing for the Battle Creek Crunch in the Great Lakes Indoor Football League, which he describes as “the end of the football world.” His dream turns to nightmare on the poorly managed team that sees players—who all work such day jobs as cops, teachers and fry cooks—go without getting paid and scramble to find enough jerseys, helmets and pads. Kluck loses his job as long snapper in the second game and gets very little playing time until the final game of the regular season, when he actually makes a tackle. Of this glorious culmination of the book's journey, he writes, “I'm in the record books. I'm a statistic.” Kluck recounts a litany of mundane details such as what the players do to kill time before the games start, what they get to eat at gas station stops or what radio stations he listens to on the way to practice. He refers to the movie *Slapshot* so many times he even parenthetically asks

how many times he can get away with quoting it. And as if trying to fill space within the narrative, he includes the full text of e-mails he wrote and received while working on the book. (*Sept.*)

**Twelve Mighty Orphans:
The Inspiring True Story of the Mighty Mites Who Ruled Texas Football**

JIM DENT. St. Martin's/Dunne, \$24.95 (320p) ISBN 978-0-312-30872-8

Dent, who told the story of Bear Bryant's brutal preseason training of the 1954 Aggies in *The Junction Boys*, turns to the incredible story of Rusty Russell and his undersized team of orphans who dominated the gridiron of Texas high school football for the better part of the 1930s. True underdogs, most boys from the Masonic Home never held a real football; they used two socks stuffed together as footballs and, when Russell first took over, used Clabber Girl baking cans during practice. But the lean, scrappy Mighty Mites—as they were later dubbed—achieved an 8-2 record their first season of play in Class B. A few years later, in 1932, they moved up to Class A, the big leagues of high school football at the time. There, the Mites would face teams that outweighed them by as much as 50 pounds per man and fielded 47 players to their 12, and the orphans would win. Dent's strength is his play-by-play accounts of key games, but descriptions of personal interactions are often forced and lifeless. Also, many characters and events that are introduced at length don't factor significantly into the larger story line. Dent does more to mythologize the team and its players than to give them flesh and blood. (*Sept.*)

Dave Barry's History of the Millennium (so far)

DAVE BARRY. Putnam, \$22.95 (224p) ISBN 978-0-399-15437-9

Although Barry retired his column in 2004, he continues to examine current events with his annual “Year in Review” surveys, and the ones he wrote between 2000 and 2006 are collected here. He opens with a 33-page outline of history (from 1000 to 1999) in which we learn that the first book Gutenberg mass produced in 1455 was *Cod-*