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Literary Life

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Mark Sanderson at large in a world of books

One of the unexpected spin-offs of the Human Genome Project is Gillian Ferguson's ma opus, *The Human Genome: Poems on the Book of Life*. The 1,000-page sequence of po 'interconnected with short extracts from interviews, newspaper reports, academic pape books', runs to a daunting four volumes and is now available for perusal [online](#).

It has taken her five years to complete, aided by a grant from the Scottish Arts Council Here's a sample: 'The Human Genome is a poem/conjured syllable by syllable -/from liq water, earth -/such agonising millennia/for the red word of the heart'. It might take as unravel as the genome itself.

advertisement

Joseph Wambaugh, the veteran American crime writer, whose latest novel, *Hollywood Crows*, is published later this month, has been revealing his research technic invites groups of police officers to dinner meetings where they can 'drink and ventilate'.

Women, he says, were 'more willing to reveal powerful emotions' and proved to be 'che dates': 'the men needed about two-and-a-half drinks to really cook, but the women on needed to smell the cork to catch fire. Moreover, at the end of our chats, the women ne failed to hug me - a definite bonus.'

Book collectors with money to burn may like to know that Bonhams in Oxford will be h an auction on behalf of Oxfam on 20 May. Choice items found in boxes of books left at charity's shops include first editions of Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* (estimated pric £7,000-£9,000), C. S. Lewis's *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (£800-£1,200), Rudyar Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (£600-£800), D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (£300-500) . K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (£300-£500).

The *Harry Potter* seems especially good value when compared with the signed edition o same book currently available at [abebooks.com](#). That will set you back £5,000.

Carlos Ruiz Zafón's first novel, *The Shadow of the Wind*, was such a success - selling m than a million copies in the UK alone - that booksellers coined a new word: Zafónmania prequel to the novel, *The Angel's Game*, has just been published in Spain and there is r that Zafónmania is on the wane: 250,000 copies were sold over the first weekend and 600,000 copies in the first week, making the original print run of a million copies seem somewhat unambitious. Weidenfeld & Nicolson will publish *The Angel's Game* next sprin

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Serpent's Tail has sent out a wooden spoon with each proof copy of Bethan Roberts's second novel, *The Good Plain Cook*, which it will publish in July.

At the risk of stirring, did no one recall that such objects are awarded to the worst performances?

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'Sell in May and don't come back till St Leger's Day'.



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David Jenkins is entranced by Havana's vibrancy.



FASHION
Shipping forecast
Hilary Alexander proves navy fashion can suit anyone.



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