Detail of The Million, by Dorothea Gerard, from a digital collection of publishers’ bindings.
**Director’s Note**

As the days lengthen and the world is made luminous by snow, the Boston Athenæum offers its own illumination. Countless titles await your discovery, including now-rare volumes little known beyond our library. Rare materials are even easier to see, following enhancements to the online catalog that allow readers to build a wish list and schedule an appointment with a few clicks of the mouse. Our winter programs range across subjects, from the ethics of Martin Luther King, Jr. to the legacy of Emily Dickinson; from the art of storytelling in the podcasting age to the music of Benjamin Britten; from the enduring values of the Enlightenment to Alfred Hitchcock’s *Rebecca*. Make 2019 the year in which you experience the introspection (the “revery” so essential to Dickinson), wonder, and delights of membership. Whatever the weather, a warm welcome always awaits you through the red doors at 10 ½.

Elizabeth E. Barker, Ph.D.
Stanford Calderwood Director

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**NEW DIGITAL COLLECTION: PUBLISHERS’ BINDINGS**

*To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee, One clover, and a bee. And revery. The revery alone will do, If bees are few.*

Emily Dickinson

“To Make a Prairie”

Those who browse the Athenæum’s shelves know the thrill of discovering a book with an unusual or distinctive cover. In December, 169 such notable works joined our digital collections, becoming available via our website even when the library is closed. They are the first installment of a digital publishers’ bindings collection, featuring creatively designed book covers that employ a variety of artistic techniques and reflect the aesthetics of their time.

The cover of this newsletter features a bright detail from the binding of *The Million*, a 1901 novel by Scottish writer Dorothea Gerard. The initials T.W.B. stand for binding designer Thomas Watson Ball, a Connecticut artist and art editor for *Harper’s Magazine*.

On this page: an 1883 edition of James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Deerslayer* and *The Moon Metal* by Garrett P. Serviss (1900).

Want to see publishers’ bindings or other treasures up close?

A new Special Collections appointment booking service is available on our website. The software behind this new resource, Aeon, is designed especially for libraries and archives, and will enable us to respond more efficiently to your requests for rare materials.

*The Arthur & Charlotte Vershbow Special Collections Reading Room
Tuesday - Friday, 10 am - 4 pm, by appointment only*

www.bostonathenaeum.org/collections/research-appointment

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**A WARM HAVEN IN THE CITY**

As winter blasts the city with cold and darkness, we hope you will find the Athenæum shining brightly and welcoming you warmly. We remind you that members’ annual giving provides vital funds for the care of books, art, special collections, and our building at 10-½ Beacon Street. When you make a contribution to the Annual Fund, your unrestricted gift underwrites essential aspects of running the library. Please give generously.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration!

To donate, contact Director of Annual Giving Dawna Burrus at burrus@boston-athenaeum.org or by calling 617-720-7629, or visit us online.
Continuing enthusiasm for the Venetian exhibitions leads us to highlight an item currently on public view. *Epistole devotissime* by Saint Catherine of Siena, published by Aldus Manutius in 1500 (image at right), is the oldest printed book by a woman in the Athenæum’s collection. Its provenance adds luster: the Athenæum received it in 1962 as the gift of another extraordinary woman, Boston artist Polly Thayer Starr, whose self-portrait presides nearby.

If you haven’t yet seen the treasures of *Stampato a Venezia/Printed in Venice*, please come in for a visit.

**Ecce Venezia!/Behold Venice!**, in the Sitting Room display cases, continues to enchant visitors. The guest book contains fascinating comments, including this, from an anonymous viewer with the initials “GR” and a green pencil: “I have been to Venice several times including on my honeymoon… it was the city where creatives and entrepreneurs from all over the world gathered and mingled… Venice is, always has been, and always will be an endless variety of experiences.”

Stop by and record your own impressions; both Venice exhibitions will be on view through February 19.

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**Work in Progress**

THE KING’S CHAPEL LIBRARY

Slated to open in spring 2019, the first installment of this two-part exhibition will investigate the story behind an extraordinary collection of books that came to Boston in 1698. The oldest intact colonial library in Boston, the King’s Chapel Library has been safeguarded at the Boston Athenæum since 1823, and housed in a magnificent bonneted bookcase on the third floor since 1883. Curator of Rare Books and Head of Special Collections John Buchtel leads this project in partnership with the Chipstone Foundation.
EYE OF THE EXPERT: ECCO VENEZIA/BEHOLD VENICE
Tuesday, January 15, 12 pm
$20, Registration required

Join Curator of Rare Books and Head of Special Collections John Buchtel, William D. Hacker Head of Reader Services Mary Warnement, and Director of Education Hannah Weisman for a journey to Venice via the special collections. An intricate, hand-colored panorama of the Grand Canal and other rare objects will transport participants to the historic Italian city and help explain why it has captivated artists, writers, and travelers.

THE ART AND CRAFT OF STORYTELLING

Through the proliferation of technology, we share stories and ideas more easily than ever. New media, such as The Moth podcast and the Humans of New York blog, attest to storytelling’s renewed popularity, allowing us to explore personal vignettes that honor the range and commonality of human experience. Join us for the final event in a series that has explored the allure and art of narrative across diverse media platforms, history, and cultures.

WAYS OF HEARING
Lecture with musician and writer Damon Krukowski
Thursday, January 17, 6 pm
Members $10, Visitors $15, Registration required

How has the shift from analog to digital audio altered our personal experiences, shifting perceptions of time, space, love, money, and power? Damon Krukowski, author of The New Analog: Listening and Reconnecting in a Digital World and host of the Ways of Hearing podcast (featured in the New Yorker’s inaugural podcast column in 2017), will draw on his experiences as a musician to lead a conversation on the history of sound and how we listen in our modern lives.

TO REGISTER FOR AN EVENT
please call 617-720-7600 or email events@bostonathenaeum.org
MARTINI MOVIE NIGHT:
SCREENING OF ALFRED HITCHCOCK’S
REBECCA

Wednesday, January 23, 5:30 pm

Members $40, Registration required

A naive young woman (Joan Fontaine) meets a mysterious, brooding, aristocratic widower (Laurence Olivier) whom she marries after a whirlwind romance. The young woman, determined to be the perfect wife, is tormented with feelings of inadequacy. Her inner turmoil is compounded by her husband’s temper and a strange housekeeper.

UNDERMINING RACISM

This three-program series presents thoughtful examinations of people who found ways to navigate, undermine, and change social structures designed to limit their rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The series invites discussion on how we can apply lessons from the change-makers of the twentieth century to address the crises of our own time.

MARTIN LUTHER KING NOW: TOWARD A PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY OF JUSTICE, DEMOCRACY, AND PEACE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Lecture with Assistant Professor of African and African American Studies at Harvard University Brandon M. Terry
Thursday, January 31, 6 pm

Members $10, Visitors $15, Registration required

Brandon M. Terry will explore the ethical and political thought of Martin Luther King, Jr. In interrogating King’s body of public philosophy, as well as its leading critics and interpreters, Terry will point toward indispensable resources to navigate our current political crises and confusions.

FAIR GAME: SURVIVING A 1960 GEORGIA LYNCHING

Film screening and conversation with documentary filmmaker Clennon King
Thursday, February 7, 5:30 pm

Members $15, Visitors $20, Registration required

While John F. Kennedy was running for the White House in May 1960, James Fair, Jr.—a 24-year-old black Navy veteran from New Jersey—joined a friend on a road trip and made a fateful pitstop in rural Georgia. In the space of three days, he would be arrested, jailed, tried, convicted, and sentenced to the electric chair for the rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl. Fair Game chronicles the 26-month campaign that Alice Fair spearheaded to rescue her son from a county notorious for lynching.

DRIVING WHILE BLACK: AFRICAN AMERICANS ON THE ROAD IN THE ERA OF JIM CROW

Presentation by the documentary’s senior historical advisor, Dr. Gretchen Sullivan Sorin
Thursday, March 7, 6 pm

Members $15, Visitors $20, Registration required

The newest documentary from PBS veteran Ric Burns (Steeplechase Films), Driving While Black explores the history of African Americans on the road from the 1930s to the 1960s, and the genre of travel literature aimed at helping black travelers navigate Jim Crow America. Join historian Gretchen Sullivan Sorin, Director of the Cooperstown Graduate Program and senior advisor to the film, for a discussion of mobility and race in America.

NEW MEMBERS’ RECEPTION

Wednesday, February 6, 5:30 pm

Members Free, RSVP by January 30

Meet fellow members of the Athenæum’s engaged, curious community over wine and cheese. Explore our one-of-a-kind building through playful activities and docent-led tours. Members are welcome to bring a guest.

MEMBER’S CHOICE

The Trustees’ Room awaits you from 6:30 to 7:30 pm on the second Tuesday of each month. Members organize one-time discussions, host speakers, or offer presentations, observing just a few requirements: the subject must pertain to the Athenæum’s mission, and the session must be open to all members. To organize an event, contact Director of Education Hannah Weisman at weisman@bostonathenaeum.org or 617-720-7617. Share with her the essentials: title, description, speaker biography, and illustration.

MEMBER’S CHOICE:

More than Gold in California
Tuesday, February 12, 6:30 pm, Trustees’ Room
Free, Registration required

Gesa Kirsch, PhD, will speak about the courage, determination, and advocacy of Dr. Mary Bennett Ritter, an early California physician and women’s rights activist.
ENLIGHTENMENT NOW
Book talk with experimental psychologist Steven Pinker
Wednesday, February 20, 12 pm
Members Free, Visitors Free with admission ($10)

The world seems to be sinking into chaos. But this is an illusion: our lives have become longer, healthier, safer, richer, happier, and more peaceful. This progress is the gift of a set of ideas that many of us embrace without even realizing it: the Enlightenment ideals of reason, science, and humanism.

THE BLACK INTELLECTUAL IN THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE
Lecture with Harvard Assistant Professor Jesse McCarthy
presented in honor of Black History Month
Wednesday, February 20, 6 pm
Members Free, Visitors Free, registration required

If the role of the intellectual is to speak on behalf of those who are disempowered, then the black intellectual tradition arguably constitutes the original and most enduringly vital intellectual tradition in the United States. How should those who work within that tradition confront the political and cultural landscape around us today? By looking to the past to make sense of the present, McCarthy conveys the urgency of rekindling the best of the black intellectual tradition.

We recommend...

DESTRUCTIVE SUBLIME: WORLD WAR II IN AMERICAN FILM AND MEDIA.
Tanine Allison

This book traces a new aesthetic history of the World War II combat genre by looking back at it through the lens of contemporary video games.

THE FIELD OF BLOOD: VIOLENCE IN CONGRESS AND THE ROAD TO CIVIL WAR
Joanne B. Freeman

Drawing on an extraordinary range of sources, Freeman shows a Capitol rife with conflict in an explosive era.

UNSHeltered: A NOVEL
Barbara Kingsolver

The story of two New Jersey families, in two centuries, navigating what seems to be the end of the world as they know it.

A TERRIBLE COUNTRY: A NOVEL
Keith Gessen

A wise, sensitive story about exile, family, love, history, and fate.

APP
Civil War Photo Sleuth
This website-based resource promises to use facial-recognition technology and the power of community to rediscover lost identities in Civil War-era photographs.

PODCAST
Ways of Hearing
A medical doctor, audio engineers, artists, a bookstore director, and Joe Castiglione, the radio voice of the Boston Red Sox, all make appearances in this six-part series about the nature of listening.
SUPERHERO MOVIE PARTY WITH INCREDIBLES 2
Tuesday, February 19, 3:30 pm
P Members $5 and Visitors $7, registration recommended
Join us for a special screening of Incredibles 2 at 4:00 pm and discover your own superpowers with superhero activities before and after the movie.

LITTLE ONES
BABY PLAY TIME (ages 0-18 months)
Alternate Wednesdays at 9:30 am
NURSERY RHYME TIME
(ages 0-18 months)
Fridays at 10:30 am
SPANISH STORY TIME (ages 0-5)
Alternate Fridays at 11:00 am
VISITOR STORY TIME (ages 0-5)
Fridays at 11:30 am
FAMILY STORY TIME (ages 0-5)
Saturdays at 10:30 am
STORIES, SONGS, AND ACTIVITIES (ages 1-3)
Thursdays at 10:30 am
PRESCHOOL STORY TIME (ages 2-4)
Tuesdays at 10:30 am
LEGO®, CHESS, AND PUZZLE CLUB (ages 5-8)
Alternate Saturdays at 2:30 pm
INDEPENDENT READERS' BOOK GROUP (ages 6-8)
January 8: The Infamous Ratsos by Kara LaReau
February 5: The Year of the Dog by Grace Lin

TEENS
Registration required for all teen programs.
YOUNG READERS' BOOK GROUP (ages 9-13)
Fourth Wednesdays at 6 pm
January 30: The First Rule of Punk by Celia C. Pérez
February 27: The War That Saved My Life by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley
TEEN READERS' BOOK GROUP (ages 14-18)
Third Wednesdays at 6 pm
January 23: Friendship
February 20: Mental Health
TEEN WRITING GROUP (ages 12-18)
Last Saturday of the month at 3 pm
January 26, February 23
FRIDAY DIY (ages 8-18)
Last Friday of the month at 3:30 pm
January 4: Catapults
February 1: Slime
COMICS CLUB (ages 9-13)
6pm, January 17, February 14
SECOND SATURDAY PROGRAMS
STORY TIME (ages 0-5)
Saturdays at 10:30 am, January 12, December 9
P Free
CRAFTS
Saturdays at 2:30 pm, January 12, December 9
P Free

Please visit our website and subscribe to our Children’s Library e-newsletters to learn more.

Unless otherwise indicated, events are free to members, registration not required.

TO REGISTER FOR KIDS EVENTS EMAIL crickman@bostonathenaeum.org

Put on your superhero suit and fly over to the Athenæum for an afternoon of celebration.
OCTOBER 2018 BY THE NUMBERS

**ACQUIRED**

102 ITEMS

**ASSISTED**

309 REFERENCE INQUIRIES

**CATALOGED**

46 NEW CIRCULATING ITEMS
146 ALREADY-HELD CIRCULATING ITEMS
16 NEW SPECIAL COLLECTIONS MATERIALS
47 ALREADY-HELD SPECIAL COLLECTIONS MATERIALS

**CIRCULATED**

1,116 BOOKS, INCLUDING:
104 CHILDREN’S LIBRARY BOOKS

**ATTENDANCE**

2,820 MEMBERS
108 MEMBERS’ GUESTS & 280 VISITORS

**PROGRAMS**

9 EVENTS
13 PUBLIC TOURS
7 PRIVATE TOURS &
4 1ST FLOOR INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

**ANNUAL FUND**

RECEIVED $10,307 FROM 38 DONORS

**Our Vision**

The Boston Athenæum aspires
to spark conversations of critical importance,
foster an engaged, diverse membership,
and cultivate our library’s dynamic collections
for research and enjoyment.

**Our Mission**

The mission of the Boston Athenæum
is to engage all who seek knowledge
by making accessible our library’s collections and spaces,
thereby inspiring reflection, discourse,
creative expression, and joy.

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**WELCOMING NEW PROPRIETORS**

At a gathering on November 29, we welcomed more than twenty new Proprietors and celebrated our historic shareholders. Proprietors’ support over the past two hundred years has enabled the Athenæum to grow from its origins as a newspaper reading room in the early 1800s into the nation’s most illustrious membership library. This group’s ongoing generosity helps sustain 10-1/2 Beacon Street as a unique haven for books and ideas. The afternoon featured a ceremony to award new shares, encased in handsome custom-made folders at the North Bennet Street School. Stanford Calderwood Director Elizabeth E. Barker offered an illustrated presentation, prepared in collaboration with the New England Historic Genealogical Society, of the history of Share No. 640.

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**THE GIFT SHOP MAY HAVE WHAT YOU NEED**

Visit the relaunched gift shop to find useful items emblazoned with our seal: green canvas tote bags, Moleskine notebooks, and a nifty stainless steel bottle (similar to the popular Swell brand bottles). The shop is also stocked with books, postcards, coasters, and pencils—which we’re told are the best deal in town. Ask to see items and make your purchases at the Circulation Desk.

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**THOUGHTS ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER?**

We have received, and continue to be interested in, members’ feedback about this mailing. Director of Communications and Patron Services Maria Daniels welcomes your views via daniels@bostonathenaeum.org, 617-784-9488, or in person.

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**TRANSITIONS**

We welcome new colleague Robert Sanford, Jr., reader services intern.

With gratitude we bid farewell to Ismael Alvarado, building caretaker and Evan Knight, associate conservator.

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**BOOK DISPLAYS**


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**NEWS FROM THE NEOMARICA ON THE 2ND FLOOR**

In mid-November library visitors witnessed the rare, one-day bloom of a walking iris—also known as apostle plant—next to the reference desk. These plants have resided happily in the Athenæum for four decades or more.

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**NEWS**

**Happy 2019!**

The library will be closed on December 31 and January 1.

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**A COMMUNITY OF CONVERSATIONS**

As fitting finale to a year of thought-provoking book talks, longtime Proprietor and lauded popular historian Nat Philbrick spoke about his latest Revolutionary War-era work, In the Hurricane’s Eye, in early December. We thank all of the year’s accomplished speakers, the inquisitive audiences, and the smiling events staff.