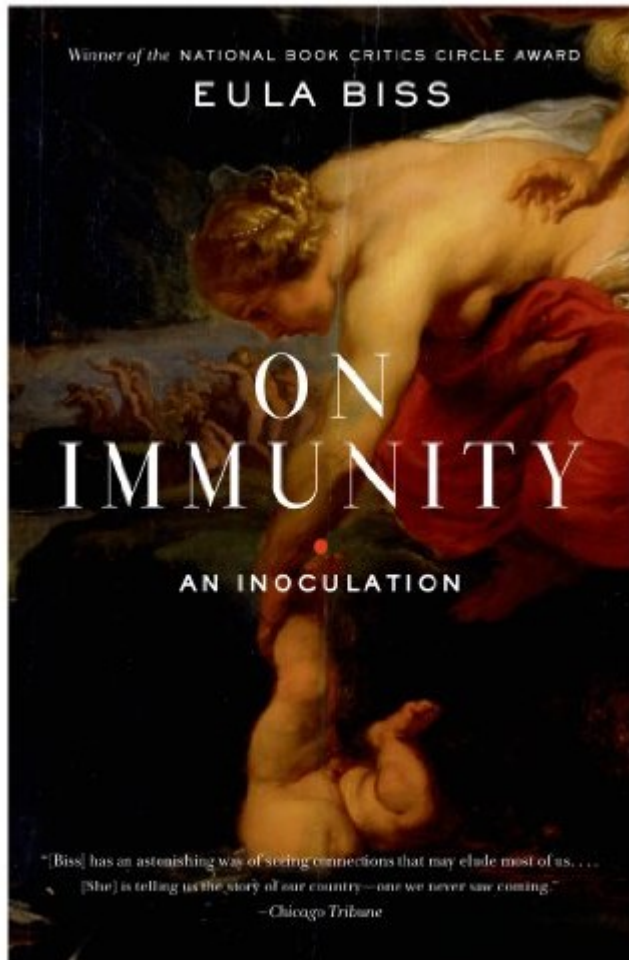


Steve Thorngate's Christmas list

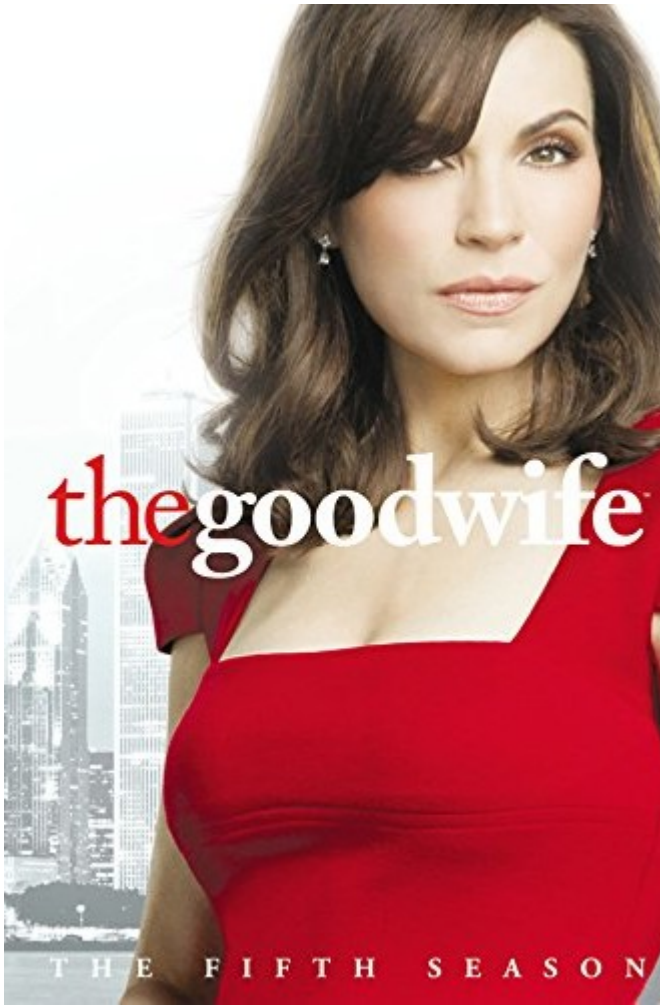
by [Steve Thorngate](#) in the [December 10, 2014](#) issue

In Review



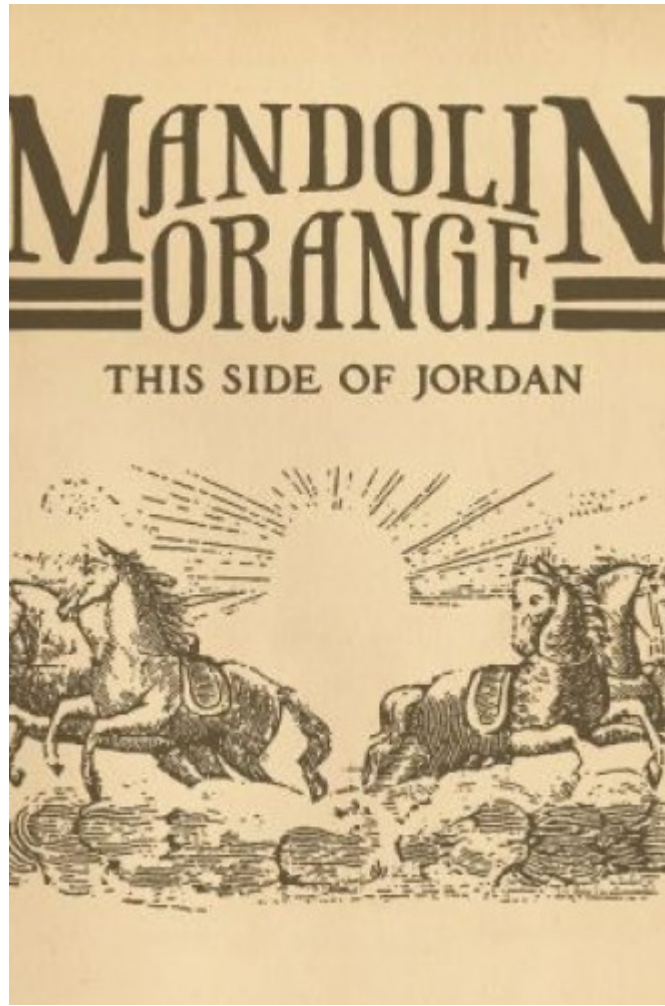
On Immunity

by Eula Biss
Graywolf



The Good Wife

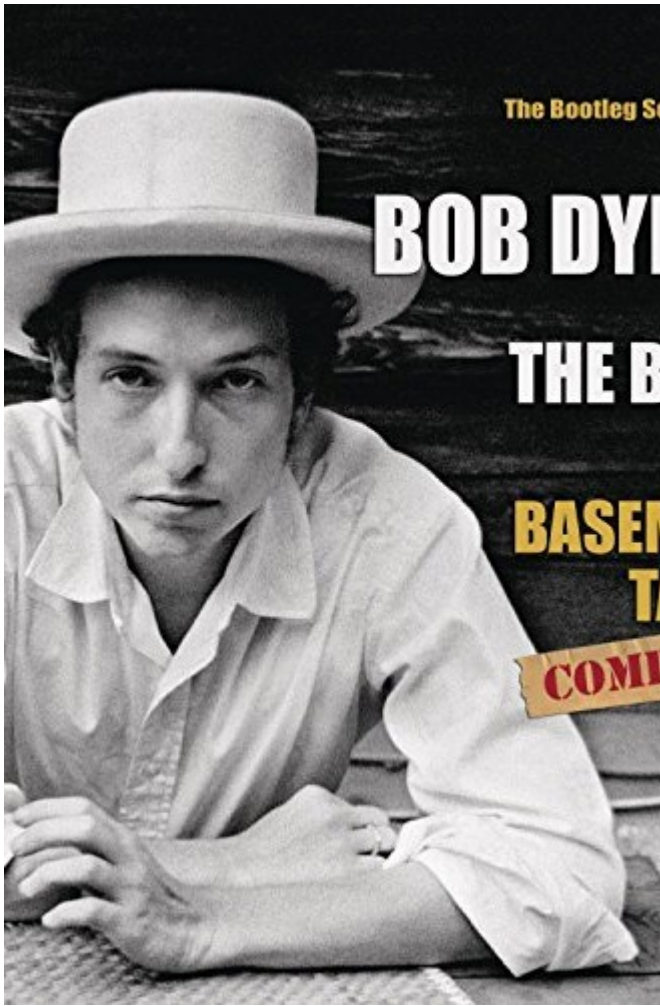
Paramount



This Side of Jordan

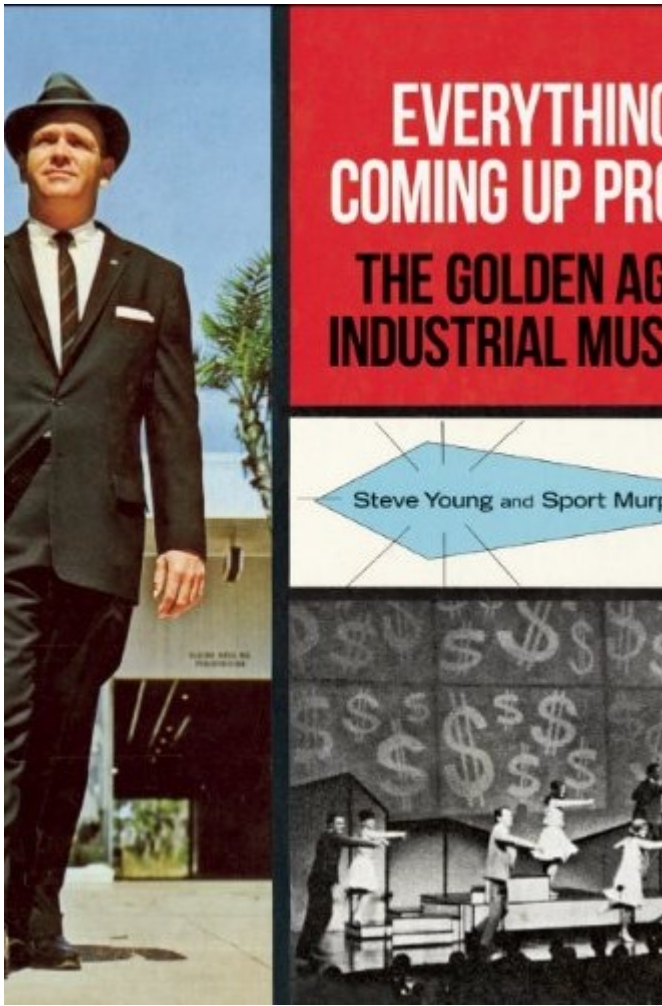
Mandolin Orange

Yep Roc



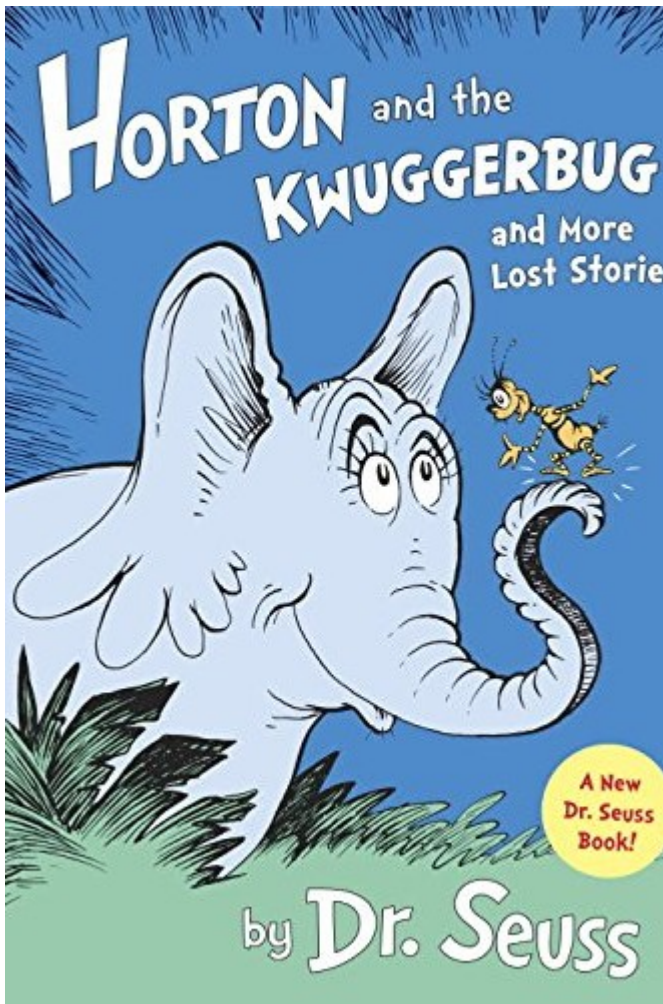
The Basement Tapes Complete

by Bob Dylan & The Band
Legacy



Everything's Coming Up Profits

by Steve Young and Sport Murphy
Blast



Horton and the Kwuggerbug and More Lost Stories

by Dr. Seuss
Random House

To give

In *On Immunity*, Eula Biss writes about our fear of immunization in the manner of early Annie Dillard: boldly, philosophically, with a startlingly ambitious scope that in lesser hands would fast go off the rails. Biss's prose exudes curiosity and wisdom, plus it's a delight to read. Top of my gift list for anyone who loves big ideas, great writing, and not having to choose between the two.

Recently there has been a welcome increase in TV shows that aren't groundbreaking, daring, or subversive, but just really good. *The Good Wife*, the saga of attorney Alicia Florrick (Season 5), is an old-fashioned network series that will be immediately familiar to anyone who's ever binged on courtroom procedurals or

political dramas, but that also makes most of those other shows look pretty dumb.

Another day, another God-haunted Americana songwriter. Andrew Marlin may no longer claim a faith, but his tuneful songs retain a deeply Christian vocabulary. In *This Side of Jordan*, Marlin and Emily Frantz (Mandolin Orange) sing together with subtlety and warmth, and they play their acoustic instruments with understated competence. I've been listening to this quiet, simply produced record all year.

To receive

Some entries in Bob Dylan's sprawling Bootleg Series are of interest only to the most obsessively completist fan. After all, his official studio albums generally sound better, and there are enough really good ones to keep most of us busy. But I'd like to spend a weekend listening to *The Basement Tapes Complete*, a comprehensive collection of Dylan's remarkable time in the Catskills with The Band.

I never knew that industrial musicals existed until I found Steve Young and Sport Murphy's *Everything's Coming Up Profits*. Apparently musical theater composers and performers used to do hack work for corporate events—private, highly specific little musicals meant to pump up the staff. In addition to the book there's a website with audio excerpts. The shows aren't half bad—not really surprising given the steady supply of talented musicians who need work.

What can I say: the year I became a dad, along came *Horton and the Kwuggerbug and More Lost Stories*, a new book by Dr. Seuss, despite his being dead for 23 years. Once I get a copy, it'll be the only thing I ever want to read to my daughter, poor kid.