

Beat the winter blues



This month, we're focusing on books to make you laugh, cry, write and reflect your way out of the winter blues.

How to be Famous – Caitlin Moran

Snort-your-tea-out-of-your-nose-funny, *How to be Famous* centres around 19-year-old Johanna Morrgan aka the writer Dolly Wilde. It's 1995, Britpop has taken over the music scene and there's no better place to be than London. Until, that is, Johanna finds herself the subject of malicious gossip and has to decide whether to flee or fight back.

The Accidental Memoir – Eve Makis and Anthony Chopper

If you've ever thought about capturing moments of your life using the written word but have no idea where to start, you need this book. Prompts range from 'Is there a mystery in your family? A story rarely spoken about?' to 'What posters did you have on your bedroom wall?' and 'Write a letter to your younger self.' There are also extracts from other memoirs, writing tips and more.

Slow – Gizzi Erskine

Comfort eating doesn't have to mean chocolate, shop-

bought pies and a vat of ice cream. It can mean taking the time to show yourself some self-care by preparing delicious, wholesome, hearty dishes. *Slow* has plenty of recipes to help you do just that, from warming winter stews to slow-roasted meats and decadent desserts. They're all written in Gizzi's usual easy, unaffected style. Salt Beef Brisket anyone? Or Lemon Sherbet Meringue Pie? Yum.

Why Mummy Drinks: The Journal – Gill Sims

Frazzled parents everywhere will find something to relate to in *Why Mummy Drinks*. Humorous reflections on parenting in the modern world precede spaces to jot down your own thoughts each day. If you like journals (and laughing), and have ever wondered whether you should just record yourself shouting 'Teeth! Hair! Shoes! Hurry up!' to save having to speak in the morning, this book is for you.

Down to Earth – Monty Don

One of the easiest ways to lift your spirits is to get out into nature. There are few

things more satisfying than growing something yourself and spring is just around the corner. *Down to Earth* is a useful book for beginners and experienced gardeners alike. It doesn't matter whether you have acres of land or a tiny courtyard, you'll find advice, tips and inspiration on everything from garden design and plant choice to pest control.

Reasons to Stay Alive – Matt Haig

An estimated 10% of people will suffer from depression at some point in their lives. If you're waging your own battle against this debilitating illness, *Reasons to Stay Alive* may help. Matt Haig chronicles his own fight against depression and shares what worked for him. It's an honest, warm, humorous and very relatable read. You may also find Haig's *Notes on a Nervous Planet* of interest if you suffer from anxiety or panic attacks.

For other mood-boosting or self-help books, check out Reading Well's recommendations at www.reading-well.org.uk