Off the Shelf
Recent books with Harvard connections

**Anthill**, by E. O. Wilson, Pellegrino University Professor Emeritus (W.W. Norton, $24.95). The Pulitzer Prize-winning myrmecologist, sociobiologist, and biodiversity advocate has a new trick: a novel. Raff Cody, the protagonist, shares the author’s Alabama roots, but his Harvard experience, in defense of wildlife, is at the Law School.

**Last Looks, Last Books**, by Helen Vendler, Porter University Professor (Prince- ton, $19.95). Drawing on the Irish custom of “taking the last look,” the preeminent poetry critic assesses the terminal books, and their coming to terms with life’s end, of Stevens, Plath, Lowell, Bishop, and Merrill.

**The Politics of Happiness**, by Derek Bok (Princeton, $24.95). Harvard’s prolific president emeritus continues his quest for an improved public life by exploring recent social-science discoveries that point to enduring sources of satisfaction and fulfillment (rather than earning quick riches)—and linking them to suitable policies for family support, retirement security, and, yes, education.

**The Devil in the Holy Water**, by Robert Darnton, Pforzheimer University Professor (University of Pennsylvania, $34.95). The director of the Harvard University Library (see page 36), an historian of the book, here indulges his scholarly appetites in a juicy subject: “the art of slander” as deliciously perfected in France from Louis XIV to Napoleon.

**For All the Tea in China**, by Sarah Rose ’96 (Viking, $25.95). A story of industrial espionage: the British East India Company’s 1840s dispatch of a Scots botanist into forbidden territory to steal the secret of tea cultivation and processing.

**Crisis and Command**, by John C. Yoo ’89 (Kaplan, $29.95). The author, now a law professor at Berkeley, helped frame the Bush administration’s controversial legal response to terrorism after 9/11 (see “The War and the Writ,” January-February 2009, page 24). Here he completes a trilogy making his case for expansive executive power.

**Rule of Law, Misrule of Men**, by Elaine Scarry, Cabot professor of aesthetics and the general theory of value (MIT, $14.95). The author’s collected essays from 2001 to 2008 assailing the “deformation” of law—“relentless and ruthless acts of lawbreaking, actions designed to extend executive power”—contra John Yoo, above.

**One Flight Up**, by Susan Fales-Hill ’84 (Atria, $25). The author, writing from a suitable Park Avenue address, confects a novel of four privileged Manhattan women—a divorce lawyer, a gynecologist, a gallery owner, and an heiress—and their menfolk. Among the acknowledgments: “to my psychiatrist.”

**Cervantes’ Epic Novel**, by Michael Armstrong-Roche ’84, Ph.D. ’00 (University of Toronto, $70). The Wesleyan associate professor rehabilitates a great prose epic (and wonderful quiz stumper): not Don Quixote, but the overshadowed Labours of Persiles and Sigismunda.


**Bargaining with the Devil**, by Robert Mnookin, Williston professor of law (Simon & Schuster, $27). The chair of the program on negotiation dissects when to negotiate and when to duke it out, drawing on examples from Churchill to IBM to the San Francisco Symphony’s contract talks (an example plumbed in “Peacemakers,” March-April 2004, page 52).

**The Neural Imagination**, by Irving Massey, Ph.D. ’54 (University of Texas, $55). An emeritus professor of English and comparative literature at SUNY Buffalo shows how neuroscientific and aesthetic approaches to art can reinforce, rather than reduce, one another.

**The Two Hendricks**, by Eric Hinderaker, Ph.D. ’91 (Harvard, $35). From the University of Utah history department, Professor Hinderaker peers across space and time to the Colonial frontier to untangle a revealing tale of Anglo-Iroquois interactions in colonial America.

**Girl in Translation**, by Jean Kwok ’90 (Riverhead, $25.95). In this debut novel, a girl with “a knack for school” moves from Hong Kong to New York and a life shaped by a strange new language and work in a sweatshop. The plot in part mirrors the author’s own experiences.