"I can’t pretend to keep up with new books—I don’t even try—but this year a few leapt off my desk and refused to be put down. Gabrielle Bell’s graphic memoir *The Voyeurs* got me through a sad rainy Thursday evening as if I’d just made a friend. Karl Ove Knausgaard is the Proust of the Walkman generation; the first volume of his magnum opus, *My Struggle*, kept me up late for a week and remains the best novel I read all year. Maureen McLane’s *My Poets* was the continuing ed. class I needed in poetry but never expected to love. Everything I know about gospel music I’ve learned from Anthony Heilbut’s compilations and writings; thanks to his crazy compendium *The Fan Who Knew Too Much*, he has now, also, taught me everything I know about radio soap operas, Aretha Franklin, and homosexuality in the black church. All by itself, David Foster Wallace’s essay on David Markson makes *Both Flesh and Not* the best book ever written on David Foster Wallace (plus, it’s written by David Foster Wallace), and Masha Gessen’s *The Man Without a Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin* is the darkest, bravest, and wittiest biography I read this year. Finally there was John Jeremiah Sullivan’s *Pulphead*. I knew all the essays already, but reading them all in one place was so much fun I’ve done it a few more times since then.” —Our editor Lorin Stein, from Yahoo News’ "Holiday Gift Guide: What do you give a book lover?"