

TBR

Inside the list

By DWIGHT GARNER

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CRYSTAL LITE: Every so often a best seller comes along that, as Michael Korda put it in his book "Making the List," makes us "question our sanity, or at least that of the American reading public." One of those head-scratchers has got to be Masaru Emoto's spectacularly eccentric book "The Hidden Messages in Water," which argues that water has feelings, too -- and that the crystals that form in frozen water change shape when an onlooker shows the water words, or beams thoughts in its direction. Emoto's book is filled with photographs of the shiny, happy crystals that form when water is shown phrases like "You're cute" or "Thank you," and also of the deformed, sorry-looking crystals that result when you show it "You fool!" or "Satan." Emoto's book has sold some 400,000 copies internationally, and it has lingered on the upper reaches of the Times [extended paperback advice list for months, rising this week](#) to No. 13. Emoto, who has studied alternative medicine in Japan, also notes that water is picky about the music it likes. Mozart and the Beatles' song "Yesterday" made it perk up, while heavy metal music freaked it out, making its crystals look malignant. All of this has broad implications for personal happiness and world peace, Emoto suggests, when you consider that our bodies are 70 percent water. "When you have become the embodiment of gratitude," Emoto writes, "think about how pure the water that fills your body will be. When this happens, you yourself will be a beautiful, shining crystal of light."

GONZO REDUX: [Hunter S. Thompson](#), who [committed suicide last month](#) in Colorado, is back on the [nonfiction paperback list](#) -- his early classic "[Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas](#)" is No. 11. That book, published in 1972 and based on articles he'd written for Rolling Stone, was not an instant success; it sold only about 18,000 copies in hardcover. (In a letter to his mother at the time, Thompson wrote, "I find myself getting 'famous,' but no richer than I was before people started recognizing & harassing me almost everywhere I go.") Thompson's last book to make the Times hardcover list was "Kingdom of Fear: Loathsome Secrets of a Star-Crossed Child in the Final Days of the American Century," a grab bag of memoir and contumely that rose as high as No. 10 in [February 2003](#). By that point, as Jack Shafer pointed out in his [review](#)

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NOTE

This column refers to the best-sellers list dated [March 13](#). On the Web, the lists are available one week ahead of the print edition of the Book Review.

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of "Kingdom of Fear" in these pages, Thompson was pretty far gone, filling his books with predictable rants and reprints of subpar journalism. "As a consequence," Shafer wrote, "a new Thompson title isn't the literary event it should be -- it's a biennial yard sale."

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