

June 2017

Keepers: Marking the Value of the Books on my Shelves

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Recommended Citation

Veros, Vassiliki (2017) "Keepers: Marking the Value of the Books on my Shelves," *Proceedings from the Document Academy*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 1 , Article 4.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35492/docam/4/1/4>

Available at: <https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/docam/vol4/iss1/4>

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KEEPERS

marking the value of the books on my shelves

by Vassiliki Veros

I am told that my reading
is escapist.

It is light.

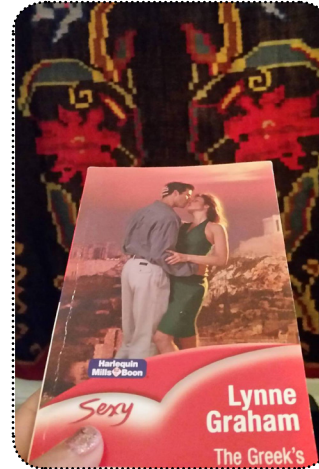
It is trash.

It is disposable fiction.

I guess someone forgot
to send me that memo to
throw out my books.

These are my keeper
shelves:

The weight of my
paperbacks are making my
shelves bow.



My shelves are keepers in
their own right.

I bought them from a
second-hand romance
book exchange store. It
closed down when the
ebook world burst onto the
scene.

Digital files are not stored
on these shelves.

I mourn for the ebooks I
have read that don't have
a physical manifestation
to signal that I have read
them.

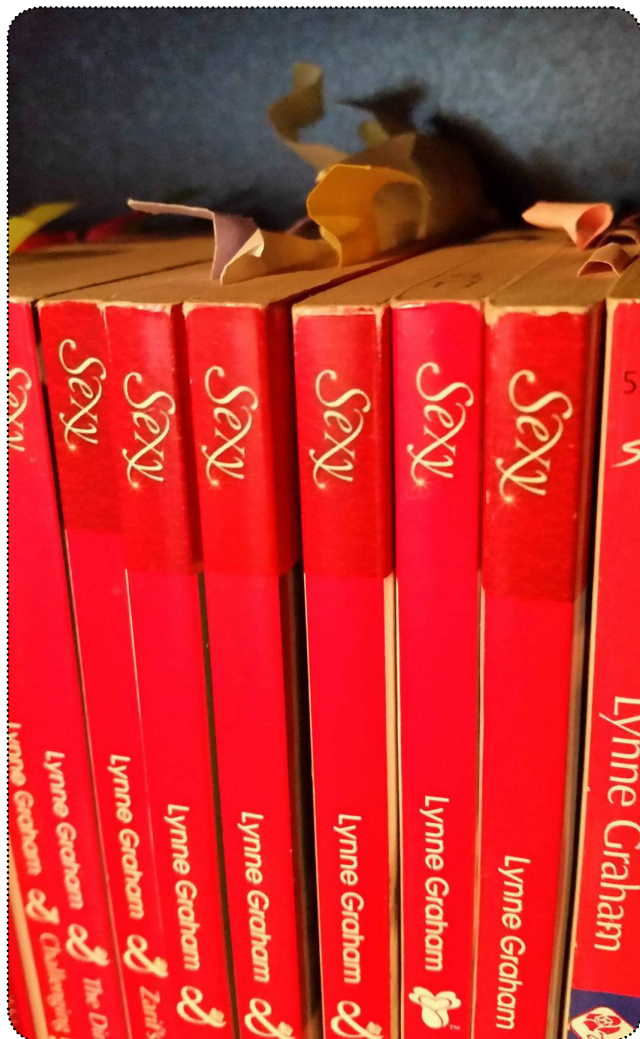
I have a digital record
of my reading online. It
barely puts any pressure
on these laden shelves.



I was sorting through
my shelves to find my
favourites books. It is a
given that they are all
keeper books that I will
never dispose.

Though I own many
books with aesthetically
pleasing covers, the ones I
choose to photograph are
the ones whose stories
have touched me the most.

Book Marks



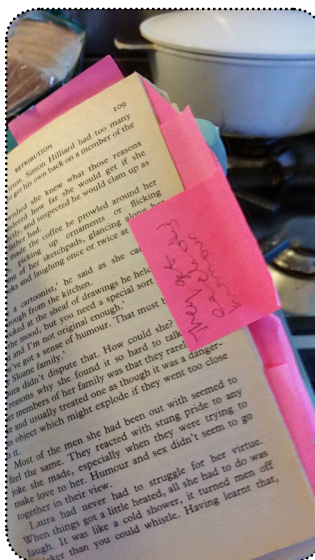
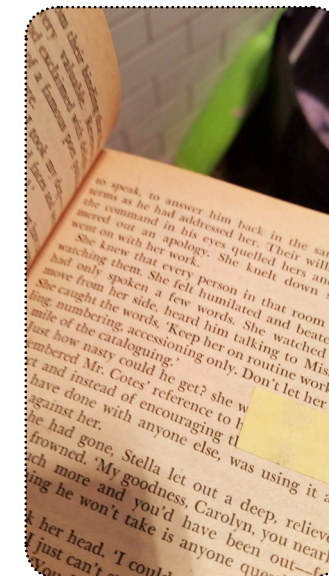
Post-it notes mark my books. I in turn mark my post-it notes

I prefer markers to marginalia. They are the visual representation of the moment I was thrown out of the story. They are the exosomatic indications of a thought that needed attention.

They mark the moment I paused to note.

They mark my need to speak to the author.

They mark my caught breath as the author speaks to me.



Assumptions can be misleading. Consider this:

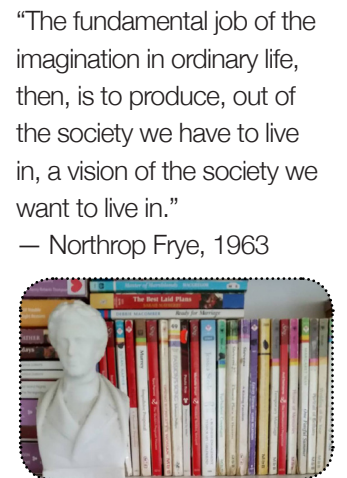
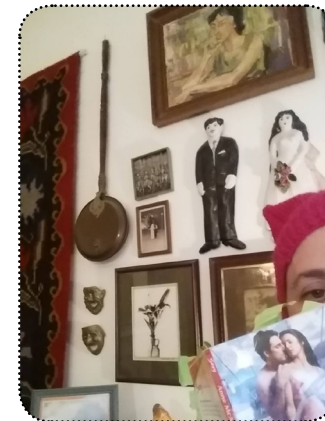
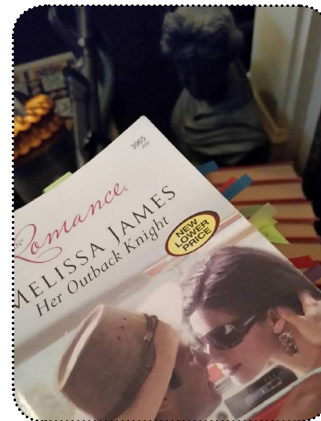
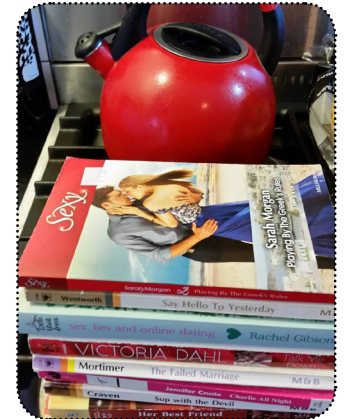
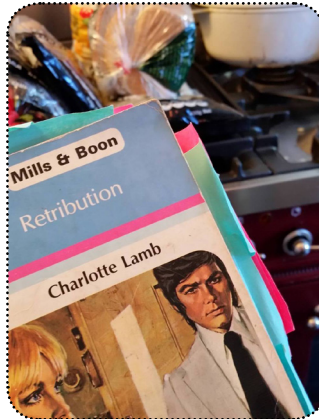
An unmarked book is unremarkable in its inability to elicit a marked up marker from me.

An unmarked book is remarkable for its ability to transcend me beyond its pages, allowing me to forget to mark my markers.

I guess someone forgot to tell me that romance is not a critically engaging fiction.

SuperMe^{nial}

I am castrated
I am exploited
I have been manipulated
I am deceived by the patriarchy



Redacted

I am an "Intellectual waste
lazing in the backwaters of
low quality literature"
— Rudolph Bold, 1980

"After all, they're all bad
books. It's not like people
are reading romances for
their literary quality."
— Annoyed Librarian 2012

"The trouble is that we have
a bad habit, encouraged by
pedants and sophisticates,
of considering happiness
as something rather stupid.
Only pain is intellectual,
only evil interesting."
— Ursula K. Le Guin, 1973

"Alas, disdain for popular
romance fiction remains
a way to demonstrate
one's intelligence, political
bona fides and demanding
aesthetic sensibility..."
— Eric Selinger, 2007

**My bookshelves show the
the vision of the society I
want to live in. One where
romance and happiness is
valued. One where mutual
respect and consent is core
to community values.**