BARLOW, Kate, ‘The Abode of Love’ February
It’s a biography and presents the author’s story of growing up in a religious cult. Founded in the 19th century by a charismatic priest, the Agapemone gained notoriety when the author’s grandfather, who led the community, claimed to be the reincarnation of Jesus Christ. This book describes the controversial claim and rumours of sexual scandals, spiritual brides and peculiar rituals.

BURROUGHS, Augusten, ‘Possible Side Effects’ March
A collection of short stories described on his web site as “This book is approved for consumption by those seeking pleasure, escape, amusement, enlightenment, or general distraction. This book is not approved to treat disorders such as eBay addiction or incessant blind dating. In studies, some people reported inappropriate, convulsive laughter, a tingling sensation in the limbs, and sudden gasping. Fewer than 1 percent reported narcolepsy.

Doll collectors may experience special sensitivity, as may discourteous drivers, candy-company brand managers, and nicotine-gum users. This book has been shown to be especially helpful to those with parents, grandparents, life partners, and incontinent dogs. People with dry, cracked skin have responded well to this book, as have people with certain heart conditions.

Do not operate heavy machinery while reading this book, until you know what effects it may have on you. This text is contraindicated in those suffering from certain psychiatric disorders, including---but not limited to---readers afflicted with anhedonia, which is the inability to experience pleasure.

CROWTHER, Jasmine, ‘Saffron Kitchen’ April
Sara, growing up in modern London, has always found it hard to connect with her Iranian mother Maryam. When a family tragedy occurs both women realise they must reconcile with their past before they can live for the future. The odyssey takes them back to Iran where Sara will finally understand what forced her mother to flee into exile all those years ago. This is a beautiful story of mothers and daughters, exile and homecoming and a fascinating look into exotic and mysterious Iran.

GARDAM, Jane, ‘Flight of the Maiden’ May
The story of three young women in the summer between school and University 1946 (set in North of England)

HORNBY, Nick, ‘High Fidelity’ June
Rob is a pop music junkie who runs his own semi-failing record store. His girlfriend, Laura, has just left him for the guy upstairs, and Rob is both miserable and relieved. After all, could he have spent his life with someone who has a bad record collection? Rob seeks refuge in the company of the offbeat clerks at his store, who endlessly review their top five films (Reservoir Dogs); to five Elvis Costello songs (“Alison”); top five episodes of "Cheers" (the one where Woody sang his stupid song to Kelly). Rob tries dating a singer whose rendition of "Baby, I Love Your Way" makes him cry. But maybe it’s just that he’s always wanted to sleep with someone who has a record contract. Then he sees Laura again. And Rob begins to think (awful as it sounds) that life as an episode of "thirtysomething", with all the kids and marriages and barbecues and k.d.lang CDs that this implies, might not be so bad.
HYLAND, M J, ‘How the Light Gets In’ July
In many of the best books with a precocious teen protagonist, the hero/ine tries to figure out who they are and get away from where they come from. Lou Connors doesn't have to do either - she knows very well who she is and has already succeeded in making it to the USA, at least for a summer as an exchange student. Leaving behind her sedentary, TV-fixated family, she dreams of a new life in America with her host family. The Hardings are the ubiquitous middle-class of America, a SUV-driving, white teeth-owning edifice of what's supposed to be good and proper. Lou comes from a background of intellectual deprivation, bitterness and smutty jokes; she doesn't know how to be tactile because no one has ever shown her. She is also slightly older than her host brother and sister who greet her with a mixture of curiosity and derision. So, what happens to uncannily smart girl, who's just as at odds with her new environment as the one she couldn't wait to get away from?

JONES, Lloyd, ‘Mr Pip’ August
The 1990 blockade of Bougainville provides fertile territory for Lloyd Jones' imaginative riff on a classic Dickens novel.

“With Mr Pip, Jones, former journalist and prolific award-winning novelist, is the first New Zealand writer to have cracked the magical million-dollar book contract. Reading this hushed, complex book, it is not difficult to see why.”

McGAHAN, Andrew 'Underground' September
Blistering, brilliant, corrosively sharp and blackly comic - the new novel from the Miles Franklin Award winner, Andrew McGahan. Underground is both an adrenalin fuelled thriller and a barbed political satire. Andrew McGahan takes us on a wild ride through the not so far off dystopic Australia, to a future where Canberra has been laid to nuclear waste, the Yanks have taken over the town and political opportunism abounds.

NEMIROVSKI, Irene, 'Suite Francaise' October
Sixty-two years after its author died in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, a remarkable and previously unpublished wartime work by an emigré Russian Jew in France has taken the world of publishing by storm. Suite francaise, the first two parts of what Irène Némirovsky originally intended to be a five-volume epic, has been hailed by ecstatic French critics as "a masterpiece" and "probably the definitive novel of France in the second world war.

PRETOR-PINNEY, Gavin, ‘The Cloud Spotters’ November
It's non-fiction, and it's about clouds (no surprises), and it's really good (surprisingly!).