

reduced to "underpaid and overworked people sweating bullets day by day so that wealthy men can have emerald green manicured oases on which they whack little white balls into holes." (June)

### Fanatic: 10 Things All Sports Fans Should Do Before They Die

JIM GORANT. Houghton Mifflin, \$24 (240p) ISBN 978-0-618-61298-7

All true obsessives, whatever their object of adoration, love making lists. It's a way of trying to organize (or at least make sense of) the sprawling, life-controlling nature of their obsession. *Sports Illustrated* editor Gorant, being the kind of self-described "idiot" who has spent far too much of his life watching televised sports (any kind, "the more obscure, in some ways, the better") took his particular list and made it into a book. If Gorant's genial account of attending the 10 ultimate sporting events seems at times like little more than an excuse to get out of the office and make random alcohol-based friendships with assorted strangers, so much the better. As an exercise in vicarious frivolous fandom, Gorant's year-plus-long odyssey—he starts at the Eagles-Patriots Super Bowl in February 2005 and ends with Fenway Park's Opening Day on April 11, 2006—is serenely satisfying reading in the manner of a lengthy magazine article. Gorant's selection trends toward the obvious (a Packers game at Lambeau, the Masters, the Daytona 500) and the decision to include only one non-American event (Wimbledon) comes off as a little lazy. All that to the side, Gorant brings a fresh and appreciative eye to each event, whether it's the days spent lazing around an RV at the Daytona 500 with a self-described "family" of NASCAR fans or discovering how a relaxed afternoon game at Wrigley "could be all the romance a man needs." (June)

### Barefoot Runner: The Life of Marathon Champion Abebe Bikila

PAUL RAMBALI. Serpent's Tail, \$20 paper (316p) ISBN 978-1-85242-904-1

Abebe Bikila, a soldier in the imperial guard of Ethiopia's Haile Selassie, wasn't just the first

African athlete to win a gold medal in Olympic competition. He won the marathon in the 1960 games while running barefoot, then defied odds to win again in Tokyo four years later. Between the two victories, however, he nearly faced execution after being used as a pawn by leaders of an unsuccessful coup against Selassie. His life has all the makings of a compelling story—and despite being billed as a biography, Rambali's account takes a highly novelistic approach, imagining the inner thoughts of Bikila (1932–1973) and other figures in every scene. The technique is suspect, given the failure to cite documentation for such speculation when all the major players have been dead for decades. Furthermore, key historical details are inexplicably bypassed; when a German philanthropist donates hundreds of running shoes to Ethiopia's athletic program, for example, the name of the shoe company is never mentioned. Rambali also falls short as a dramatist, awkwardly juxtaposing Bikila's career against the personal turmoil of his trainer, Onni Niskanen, and the declining years of Selassie's reign. (June)

### Connected: 24 Hours in the Global Economy

DANIEL ALTMAN. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$24 (304p) ISBN 978-0-374-13532-4

Altman's overview of the world's economic workings is useful and informative, though surprisingly dutiful considering the author's promise of a "whirlwind tour." Moving briskly between topics—pegged to an hour-by-hour timeline gimmick—he discusses many concepts: exchange rates, trade deficits, international deals, currency markets, corruption, financial derivatives, technological innovation, the importance of oil. While addressing the outsized role of the U.S., Altman offers valuable glimpses of key foreign economies and leaves us with a solid understanding of how they fit into "the world trading system." "If you want to cope with connectedness," journalist Altman writes, "you have to be as connected as you can—in other words, you have to pay

attention to what's happening in the rest of the world." Granted, anyone who's already paying attention will find much of the book's information somewhat remedial. And Altman's attitude toward globalization is so studiously evenhanded and argument-free that the reader may long for the glossy zeal of an advocate like Thomas Friedman or a detractor like Lou Dobbs. Still, as global macroeconomic primers go, this is a quick read that reminds us that we're all in this together—and that many of us have an awful lot to learn to keep up with the global economy. (May 1)

### The Price of Liberty: Paying for America's Wars

ROBERT D. HORMATS. Times, \$27.50 (384p) ISBN 978-0-8050-8253-1

Exploring the idea that the need to pay for wars often drives financial innovation, Goldman, Sachs & Co. managing director Hormats traces the fiscal decisions made in American wars from the revolution to today's war on terror. Customs duties often fall off with hostilities, he observes, leading to increased reliance on excise and other consumption taxes. These cut civilian demand, freeing up resources for war, but may be unduly burdensome on the poor, who also do most of the dying. Taxes on businesses and the rich are more popular, he notes, but don't reduce consumption and may discourage energetic investment in war industries. Printing money is easy, but stimulates demand and inflation. Borrowing requires faith in the ability of the government to prosecute the war and its willingness to honor the debt afterwards. If broad-based, debt can cement support for the war, but if not, it can create a class of creditors with excessive political power. Hormats shows that, despite their differences, each treasury secretary seems to pick up where his predecessor left off, refining the old ideas and adding new wrinkles. Moving from history to current events, the author strongly criticizes the Bush administration for failing to adhere to the principles that have paid for 230 years of American liberty. (May 1)