

## "Rilke became my constant companion"

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*When Laura Marling gazes across the room at concerts, her guitar in her hand, over the heads of her listeners into the supposed emptiness, at first she seems very absent-minded, almost cool, and only after a few songs one realizes her over-presence. And that's how the folk musician sounds: haunted, intrinsic, wise. Wise! When her first album "Alas, I Cannot Swim" appeared in 2008, the Briton was 18 years old.*

*She won a Brit Award, was compared to Joni Mitchell, toured the world, was further compared to Joni Mitchell, produced several albums, could not at some point, but this was not due to the Joni Mitchell comparisons. She made a music break, tried her hand at yoga as a yoga teacher in Los Angeles, and started a podcast about the male-dominated music industry. Last year her sixth album "Semper Femina" was released, to which Rainer Maria Rilke served as inspiration. Everything about Rilke and books in her life, she reveals here - these seven books have a special meaning for her:*

### 1) Alberto Moravia: " The conformist "

I remember exactly how I found this book in my older sister's bedroom. She had just returned from her year in Italy and had read the book for her studies. It seemed so grown up to me. I was a naive teenager at the time and was unfamiliar with the complex and horrendous issues that are dealt with.

I knew nothing about fascism in Italy and did not understand the book until years later. Specifically, it is about a psychopathic man who tries to hide his unusual temperament and his traumatic childhood. He wants to adapt to normality. Emotionally, the book is rather monotonous, except for a grandiose section at the very end, but that alone is worth it.

## **2) Rainer Maria Rilke: " Letters to a Young Poet "**

My aunt gave me this book when I was 19 years old. It was the first copy of many more that I would own later. I read it again every year. And it's still the only recommendation I can give to people who are looking for meaning in their artistic work. Rilke became my constant companion, but his importance to me has changed over the years. "Letters to a Young Poet" is a lamentation about the value of art, the purpose of expression, the very existence of the soul, and finally, that no one can approach Rilke.

I've read some Rilke biographies in the past few years and am a bit obsessed with the idea of becoming the writer he was. One interesting point that I came across is the fact that his mother dressed him as a girl in the early years of childhood and called her Sophia. That would have been it.

## **3) Carolyn Martin: " Woman and Modernity "**

My interest in Rainer Maria Rilke led me to Lou Andreas Salomé, the woman who was to become his mentor and part-time muse. When Salomé realized that Rilke idolized all the women he loved, she decided to introduce him to the Russian Orthodox Church. Rilke should have such an infallible female icon, Mary, to worship. Salomé's academic work eventually led her to become a psychoanalyst and work closely with Freud.

Martin's biography of Salomé is a kind of metapsychanalytic critique of a life. A life so inspiring because Salomé demanded autonomy over herself, her body, and her education - at a time when it was much easier said than done. To understand her and to resolve the misunderstandings of her life has become my passion. It may sound silly, but I feel like a friend of hers.

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## **4) Robertson Davies: " The Rebel Angels "**

I came to this book because my dad read it on a Christmas holiday and laughed out loud. "The Rebel Angels" is part of the "Cornish" trilogy. The focus is on a group of eccentric academics at the University of Toronto, who are faced with the task of dividing the estate of a deceased professor.

So they come across an art forger's family, a hitherto undiscovered text by François Rabelais, who suddenly disappears, and a shady monk. Many aspects of this book can be found in my album "A Creature I Do not Know", which I wrote, just 21 years old, shortly after reading it. In particular, my song "Sophia" refers to a part of the book in which one of the characters is described as a female counterpart to God, to emphasize the strength, objectivity and logic of women.

## **5) Chris Kraus: " I Love Dick "**

I was 22 when I moved to Los Angeles. Most days I'd walk from my apartment in Silver Lake to a street in Los Feliz, to a bookstore called Skylight. The shop has two shop windows: one shows novels and non-fiction, the other a film and art books.

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In the Department of Art Criticism, I discovered Chris Kraus, a legend of the hyperhippic art people. I think that usually these books fall under the category "Creative Non-Fiction". At any rate, "I Love Dick" has completely changed my idea of how non-fiction literature might look like. The story is about female lust and fantasy, presented in letter form. And despite all the rudeness and despite all the realism, the book at that time had something very romantic for me.

## **6) Alejandro Jodorowsky: " The Spiritual Journey "**

I also discovered this book in my bookstore in LA Jodorowsky through the documentary "Jodorowsky's Dune". It is about his failed attempt to film the science fiction novel "Dune" by Frank Herbert. At that time, I tried out some of the new New Age personalities that were so much in demand for the young and lost souls of California.

Dealing with Jodorowsky's surreal adventures felt so timely. Part of his "Spiritual Journey" was, among other things, the learning of Buddhism with the help of a Zen master in Mexico City. Jodorowsky presents such encounters as destinies, which in the end result in a life. The book has shown me an alternative understanding of the world. I like to vacillate between two concepts: the world as chaos and the world as a series of destinies.

## **7) David Sedaris: " Theft By Finding: Diaries (1977-2002) "**

For the past five years, I've always carried around at least one of David Sedaris's books with me. And if I do not read him, I listen to him reading his own books. "Theft By Finding," a collection of his diaries, is my newest. In tone, it differs from Sedaris' other, more humorous books, but even here I had to laugh in some places. His writing style is great, playful and funny, especially his observations of supposedly trivial occurrences .

*Minutes: Lukas Hermsmeier*