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Literary life

(Filed: 24/08/2004)

Mark Sanderson peers into the world of books.

Gerard Jones has had enough. The man behind [Everyone Who's Anyone in Adult Trade Publishing](#), an enormously useful website which provides details on approximately 2,300 of the best agents, editors and publishers in the United States, United Kingdom and Canada, has posted a farewell note on the site's homepage.

He starts by quoting T. S. Eliot - "This is the way the world ends/Not with a bang but a whimper" - and finishes thus: "I'm bagging the thing. Nobody's given me any money in a month. My sister's too busy to fiddle with it. What I've done so far I'm leaving alone, but all in all it's been more trouble than it's been worth." Part of the problem is that browsers do not have to pay to use the site, donations are voluntary, and struggling authors do not usually have much spare cash.



Followers of John Kerry, the Democratic presidential candidate, may like to know that [abebooks.com](#), the online second-hand books website, is offering a first edition of his 1971 book, *The New Soldier*, for sale at \$2,500 (£1,397).

The hardback, published by Macmillan, was written in conjunction with a coalition known as Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Two copies of the paperback first edition, published by Collier Books, are also for sale. However, one costs the same as the hardback and the other costs \$1,200 (£670). Such prices may appear steep now but they should prove to be absolute bargains if Mr Kerry wins the election in November.

Even though it was the biography of a racehorse, Laura Hillenbrand's first book, *Seabiscuit*, won several awards and subsequently became a successful film. The subject of her next work will also be a runner, but this time of the two-legged variety.

The American athlete Louis Zamperini, who says he was inspired by *Seabiscuit* (the horse, not the book), has certainly led an eventful life. The fastest American competitor in the final of the 5,000 metres at the Berlin Olympics in 1936, he left the Third Reich without a medal but with a German flag - which he had stolen from the

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Chancellery.

He was clearly a fast talker as well because, although arrested by the Gestapo, he was released and allowed to keep the swastika as a memento. A bombardier in the Second World War, he was shot down over the Pacific in 1943 and survived 47 days in a life-raft before being picked up and imprisoned by the Japanese. Now aged 87, he is a "religious educator" in California.

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