Hillary’s politics, on the other hand, are (let’s call it) complicated and really sort of Republican at times, and she smirks a lot, and her presidency would be dynastic in a not-so-subtle way. And too, frankly, Fighting for us is nowhere near as fun a campaign slogan as #FeeltheBern. That message, to be succinct, is this: Remember when things were simple and we were all happy? Well, if you elect Trump, we’ll go back to that again! You could make the argument that ALL politicians are attempting to sell something: that this is just the way our election process works. Ian McEwan’s Saturday endorses precisely the kind of scenario to which these theorists allude. The novel illuminates a desire to empathize, to recognize its importance, and expresses an assuredness in the civilized individual’s capacity for forbearance, understanding, and magnanimity. Its protagonist, the neuro-surgeon Henry Perowne, is confronted while already in a state of heightened alert by an other, a street tough named Baxter, in whom he recognizes anger and hatred, but also suffering—urgent conditions for the exercise of empathy. The novel’s dynamics, however, inadvertently demonstrate Ian McEwan’s subversive and entertaining new novel poses fundamental questions: what makes us human? Our outward deeds or our inner lives? Could a machine understand the human heart? This provocative and thrilling tale warns of the power to invent things beyond our control. Machines Like Me is published on 18 April 2019 by Jonathan Cape in the UK and on April 23, 2019 by Nan A. Talese/Doubleday in the US.

The London Review Bookshop is pleased to announce a special limited and hand-numbered First Edition of Machines Like Me, signed by t

Politics, the Domestic and the Uncanny Effects of the Everyday in Ian McEwan’s Saturday

McEwan’s Saturday (2005) begins and ends in the edgy border zones between sleeping and waking, the public and the private, night and day. The main plot action concerns a violent threat to the domestic security of its protagonist Henry Perowne, while its setting draws on contemporary political events. It is a novel which can be seen to develop aspects of earlier works, including A Child in Time (1987), Black Dogs (1992) and Enduring Love (1997). As a novel set on a single day, it can be compared with a closely contemporary American work, Don de Lillo’s Cosmopolis (2003) and the modernist day novel such as James Joyce’s Ulysses (1922) and Virginia Woolf’s Mrs Dalloway (1925). Saturday communicates its political themes in terms of family life, celebrates the power of the novel to explore both pathological and political states of the mind and draws on uncanny politicising effects in representing the everyday.