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McGregor, Jon. So Many Ways to Begin

As a child, David Corter happily dug up artifacts from the war and haunted the local museums, dreaming of running his own museum one day. He collected artifacts from his own life almost obsessively, cataloging them and preserving them, building a history of his and his family's lives. When, at the age of 22, a family friend suffering from early-onset Alzheimer's reveals the long-held secret that David was actually adopted, he finds himself having to reevaluate everything he thought he knew about his history. Coupled with David's quest are his wife's problems...her abusive relationship with her family has left her prone to debilitating bouts of depression.

While the story itself, of two dysfunctional people finding their way in life, is not a new or original one, the way in which the story is told is unique. Each chapter takes as its center an item from David's collection, using that item as a jumping-off point for a story about his past. These stories jump around in time, weaving together slowly into a complete picture of his life and struggle for identity. A quiet, slow-paced, melancholy title, this book is nevertheless engaging.

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