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About BTWOF

Books To Watch Out For publishes monthly e-letters celebrating books on various topics. Each issue includes new book announcements, brief reviews, commentary, news and, yes, good book gossip.

More Books for Women

covers the finest in thinking women's reading, plus mysteries, non-sexist children's books, and news from women's publishing. Written by the owners and staff at Women & Children First, and friends.

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The Lesbian Edition

covers both lesbian books and the whole range of books lesbians like to read. It covers news of both the

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**The Whole World Was Watching:
Living in the Light of Matthew Shepard**
by Romaine Patterson

All it takes to change the world is a single voice. How the shocking murder of her best friend, Matthew Shepard, transformed Romaine Patterson into a leader in the fight for gay rights.

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More Books for Women

- Fall 2005 -
Volume 1 Number 2

Welcome to the Second Issue of More Books for Women

Welcome to the second issue of *More Books for Women*. This issue features recommendations from the booksellers at Women & Children First, our first "For the Kids (and Young Adults)" and news sections, and a mysteries column. And, for readers who like to give books as gifts for the upcoming holidays, this issue will be followed shortly by a quick collection of holiday gift suggestions.

Because some readers from our other editions have teased us by saying it's not kind to tell them about books that they can't always find locally, we're offering *MBW* readers a new option: click-through online ordering for all the books we review. Orders will be filled by Women & Children First. (Yes, with secure online ordering, safe credit card transactions, and UPS delivery; in-stock books are generally shipped within 2 days.) For those of us without a good local bookstore it's an easy alternative to chain store ordering, and a great way to support a wonderful community resource. To give it a try, just click through on any title or book cover.

And please, help us spread the word about *More Books for Women* and Books To Watch Out For: tell your friends and colleagues, tell your favorite elists about it (they can sign up for a free three-month trial subscription at www.btwof.com/MBW/), [give a gift subscription](#), or [subscribe](#) if you don't already - and help us celebrate women's writing and publishing.

Yours in spreading the words,
Carol Seajay



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women in print movement and mainstream publishing. Written and compiled by Carol Seajay.

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The Gay Men's Edition

announces and reviews new books by and about gay men as well as other books of interest and gay publishing news. Written and compiled by Richard Labonte.

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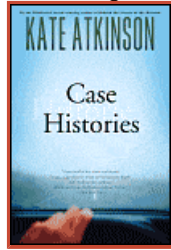
Send books for review consideration for the **Lesbian Edition** to the San Francisco address above.

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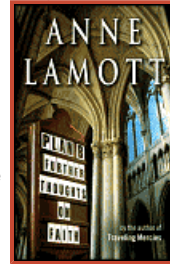


Ann Christophersen is reading...

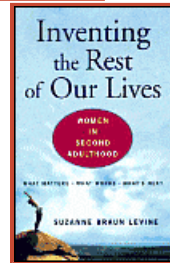
Kate Atkinson is a British writer with a terrific wit and a keen ability to create and manage very complicated plots. Her most recent novel **Case Histories**, just out in paperback, displays these qualities to a T. There are three narrative lines chronicling three seemingly unrelated events, which are ultimately tied together by a main character, an investigator. Jackson, the detective, is a thoroughly sympathetic and likeable character in his own right, as is each of the main characters in each "case." This is a wonderfully engaging literary "thriller." Little Brown, \$13.95.



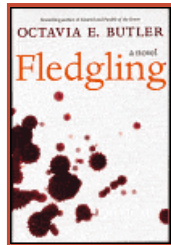
It won't be very long until **Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith** by Anne Lamott will be out in paper. But for her fans, any wait—whatever its duration—is always too long. What I loved about this book—and all her non-fiction—is her simultaneous recognition of how important her subject matter is (in this case, her faith) and how irreverent her treatment of it. Her appeal is that she comes across as absolutely honest and, in many cases, wise while her sense of the absurd and the comedy of everyday life is right there with her. I laughed out loud reading **Plan B**, as I did *Traveling Mercies* (Anchor/Doubleday, \$13.95), the book just before this one. An earlier book, *Operating Instructions* (Anchor/Doubleday, \$13.00), is, to this day, the funniest book I have ever read. Riverhead Books, \$24.95.



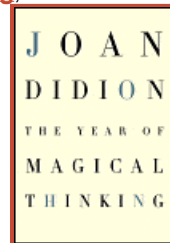
I always want there to be a good book to read on whatever subject is currently on my mind; sometimes I find it, sometimes I don't. At age 57, what's been on my mind lately is the next stage of life and what changes I might want (or need) to make. I found the perfect book for helping my thinking along, **Inventing the Rest of Our Lives: Women in Second Adulthood**, by Suzanne Braun Levine. One of the things that intrigues me is that women around fifty experience hormonal changes affecting their brains very similar to those which occur during adolescence. In complex ways, then, women aren't simply older versions of themselves but new women, in many respects, urged on by neurological changes to revisit former life decisions and create new directions for themselves. Moreover Levine, who was an editor of *MS* magazine from 1972 until 1989, brings a strongly feminist perspective to bear on her information and analysis. Viking, \$24.95.



I have long admired Octavia Butler's work, and when she received a MacArthur "genius" grant a few years ago I was delighted. Bold, imaginative, moral, political, and visionary—these are some of the words that come to mind to describe her novels. And all apply to her newest, **Fledgling**, in which she creates her own vampire mythology. Having immersed myself in Buffy-myth for the last few years, I was primed for All Things Vampire. Butler's version, though, is particularly fascinating: in her world, vampires (Ina is her name for the extended tribe) are much beloved by the humans they become intimate with and the conflict at the center of her story is an internal one between two vampire family groups, a conflict resolved by the community council according to the rules and traditions governing Ina life. The hero, a young girl measured in Ina terms, is passionate and powerful, another plus of this absorbing novel. Seven Stories Press, \$24.95.



Joan Didion, in her new book **The Year of Magical Thinking**, writes of the first year after her husband's death and her only daughter's life-threatening illness. After reading an excerpt of it in the *New York Times Magazine*, I knew this was a book I had to read: the poignancy of significant loss and the absolutely time-out-of-time experience of moving through it held a deep resonance for me, as I think it will for all readers. If we haven't already visited the world she describes, we surely will some day. Didion's excellent, eloquent writing is an invaluable guide. Knopf, \$23.95.

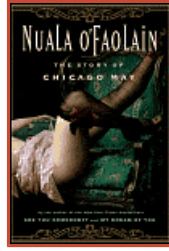




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Linda Bubon suggests...

I loved Nuala O'Faolain's historical nonfiction, **The Story of Chicago May**, about a notorious woman, Irish by birth, bold of temperament, and a world traveler, con artist, prostitute, and thief who gained her reputation in Chicago's infamous First Ward in the years following the Chicago World's Fair. Nuala's voice and Irish feminist sensibility make this a great read. Her other books include *Are You Somebody?* and *My Dream of You*. Riverhead, \$24.95.



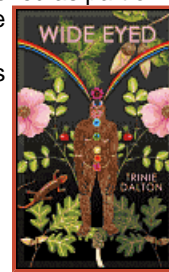
For more of Linda's recommendations, see [For the Kids](#), below.



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Pam Harcourt suggests...

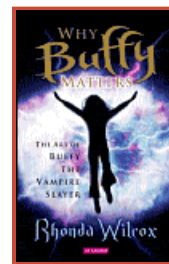
I flew through **Wide Eyed**, a collection of short stories published as part of Dennis Cooper's "Little House on the Bowery" series. These wholly original stories involve videogames, cats, elves, hummingbirds, monster movies, and wonder. If you think it's riveting (as I do) to start a story by stating "My face is not exactly like two dogs humping, but it's just as fascinating and embarrassing," then you should totally check out **Wide Eyed**. Akashic Books, \$13.95.



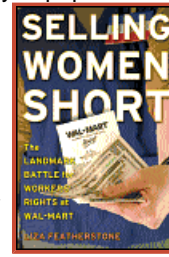
In Lydia Millet's **Oh Pure and Radiant Heart**, the three physicists who were key to inventing the atomic bomb, Oppenheimer, Szilard, and Fermi, show up in Santa Fe in 2003 with no idea how they arrived there – and then. One librarian believes them immediately, and this is her story as well as theirs. The spectacle of the scientists navigating this world is both unexpectedly funny and deeply heartbreaking, while the world's reaction to the scientists is completely over the top. There is historical and political info about nuclear weapons interspersed with the story passages, all in Millet's clear and lyrical prose, making it nearly impossible to finish this book

and not come out of it with a new awareness of these issues. Soft Skull Press, \$25.00.

Why Buffy Matters by Rhonda Wilcox: The bookshelves of Buffy lovers get fuller and fuller every year, as more and more fans discover the BtVS pantheon of feminist icons, and those of us who are watching episodes for the 50th time are yet uncovering shiny new layers. As co-editor of both academic anthology *Fighting the Forces: What's at Stake in Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*, and co-organizer of the 2004 Slayage Conference, Rhonda Wilcox has been instrumental in creating, encouraging, and organizing the body of scholarly work that is Buffy Studies. It's exciting to finally have an entire Buffy book in her voice, and as the title makes clear she is making a specific argument that Buffy Is Important Art. No disagreement here – in fact, the stronger part of the book is the focused second half that forgoes any intention of converting newbies and simply plunges into deep readings of single episodes. This book is fun, stimulating, and nearly as chockfull of literary allusion as BtVS her/itself. I highly recommend it for all watchers. And, of course, slayers. I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., (distributed in the U.S. by Palgrave Macmillan), \$14.95.



Contributing Nation editor Liza Featherstone's **[Selling Women Short: The Landmark Battle for Workers' Rights at Wal-Mart](#)** is newly in paperback. I picked it up last year when she was here for a reading and, because of these women's incredible personal stories, I could not put it down. These women were completely into the idea of being part of "the Wal-Mart family" and put up with a staggering amount of unacceptable treatment before coming together in a sex-discrimination lawsuit. I find it fascinating that women workers who the Left would have had an extremely hard time reaching were pushed so far by this particular company that Wal-Mart is essentially radicalizing their workers for us! Featherstone's analysis is satisfying – she doesn't advocate a simple boycott of Wal-Mart, instead she offers a variety of strategies for action that acknowledge the complexities of working-class communities that may not have many other options for employment or shopping.



When she read here, Wal-Mart actually sent women workers to make what were clearly scripted remarks. Having just read the book, it was chilling to hear the same corporate lingo from the book in their statements. Liza dealt with it wonderfully, thanking them for their perspectives. I'd love to hear if they showed up elsewhere on her tour. Basic Books, \$14.95.

I've really enjoyed skipping around in **[The Believer Book of Writers Talking to Writers](#)**. These are good, looong conversations with so many of the writers I'm interested in hearing from.

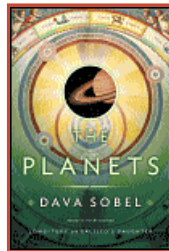
Some of the interviews appeared in *Believer* magazine, some are here for the first time. Michelle Tea with Felicia Luna Lemus was a great talk that I remembered from the magazine, while Zadie Smith with Ian McEwan was one I'd missed but heard about. Jamaica Kincaid discusses how easily black women's writing is characterized as angry. Haruki Murakami ponders why woman musicians have such a hard time in his work. You'll find Marilynne Robinson interviewed, Siri Hustvedt, Grace Paley, August Wilson, and many more. Your list of to-read authors will quickly grow a lot longer. Edited by Vendela Veda, Believer Books, \$18 paperback.



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Tish Hayes recommends.....

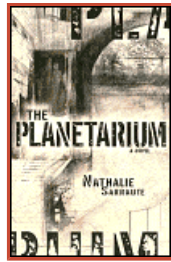
I have a vivid memory of researching Pluto for a second-grade assignment and from that moment on I was in love. It was such a mysterious and exciting planet, and Dava Sobel's fascinating look at our little solar system has revealed that the decades-old encyclopedia I was using for research provided just the barest glimpse of what scientists would discover about that distant planet. In **[The Planets](#)**, Dava Sobel beautifully weaves history, mythology and science to reveal the heavenly bodies that orbit our sun. Her prose captures the same imagination that fueled a second grader's flimsy research and can fill even the most jaded with awe when considering the night sky. Viking, \$24.95.



The revival of burlesque makes one wonder why it ever went away. With

[Striptease: The Untold History of the Girlie Show](#), Rachel Shteir takes us back to the middle of the 19th century and leads us through a fascinating history of beautiful women, stunning costumes, money-grubbing managers, the thrill of fame, the more common story of hard work and survival, and the eventual disintegration of striptease to just strip. This academic perspective is anything but dry, and it offers a feminist take on an art form that has had a wide-ranging social and cultural impact. Oxford University Press, \$17.95 paperback.





Dalkey Archive specializes in bringing back to print important experimental and literary fiction. One of their most recent releases is by the important French writer Nathalie Sarraute, best known as a proponent of the Nouveau Roman, or the New Novel. **The Planetarium**, originally published in 1959, is propelled by the internal conflicts of each of the characters, and the perspective of the novel is continually shifting between these characters. If you enjoy Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* or *To the Lighthouse*, I recommend trying **The Planetarium**. Dalkey Archive Press, \$12.95.

After reading a thoughtful review by Francine Prose in the *Washington Post* and learning that Mary Gaitskill's new novel **Veronica** had earned a National Book Award nomination, I couldn't resist pulling it off the shelf and moving it up on my list of things to read. Set in the 80's at the height of the AIDS crisis in New York, **Veronica** promises to be as dark and honest and character-driven as Gaitskill's best fiction. Pantheon, \$23.00.



And the latest book in Tish's passion for all things Le Guin?

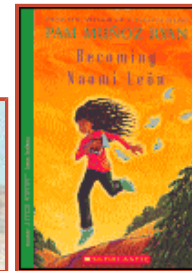
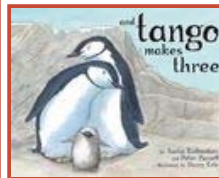
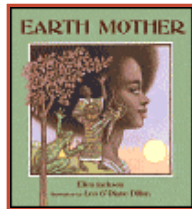
New Utopian Politics of Ursula K. Le Guin's "The Dispossessed", ed.

Laurence Davis & Peter Stillman. I have been looking forward to this collection of essays for months. When I finished Le Guin's *Dispossessed* earlier this year, I immediately regretted not taking notes or at least reading armed with a highlighter. The book questions so many of our political and social systems and is satisfied to let the questions stand without simplistic answers. Finally, in the first collection of essays to examine Le Guin's *Dispossessed*, scholars provide discussion of topics such as: Post-Consumerist Politics, Anarchist Politics, Temporal Politics, Revolutionary Politics, and Open-Ended Utopian Politics. This won't be a light read, but having finished the introduction, I'm sure that it's well worth the time and effort for any Le Guin admirer. The most exciting part, though, is the original essay by Ursula K. Le Guin, herself, in response to all of these critical examinations of her work. Lexington Books, \$24.00 paperback.



For the Kids

Recommendations from Linda Bubon



We have some great new girl stories in paperback this year. Here are three of my favorites:

Kate and the Beanstalk by Mary Pope Osborne and illustrated by Giselle Potter is only \$6.99. It's a wonderfully illustrated version of the beanstalk tale with a little girl playing Jack's part – and she has a wonderful personality. Most of the story is fairly traditional, but the illustrations really bring it to life. Aladdin Paperbacks, \$6.99, oversize, full-color paperback.

Princesses Are Not Quitters, written by Kate Lum and illustrated by Sue Hellard, has all the foofiness of a real princess book but has a wonderful message. Three very pampered princesses, with very fancy dresses and hair, are bored and decide that the castle's maids are having all the fun. So they change places with the maids for the day, but all is not as they had

imagined: the head housekeeper keeps them hip hopping from task to task and they have work from morning until night and then into the night to get all the work done. Our princesses just can't get over how much work there is at the castle - but they also discover that it's quite lovely to eat a pie that they made themselves. So they call the maids together and say, "You know what? We need a better division of labor. It's fun to do some work but it's also important to have some playtime and rest time." And so they arrive at a very happy solution for everyone. Bloomsbury, \$6.95, oversize full-color paperback.

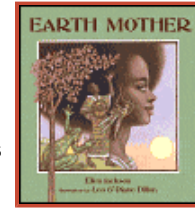


And probably my very favorite, as a Midwesterner, is **Clever Beatrice** by Margaret Willey, illustrated by Heather Solomon. Set in "The Uppers" (Michigan's Upper Peninsula) it's one of those "we've come to the end of our porridge" tales and the mother says, "Eat, eat, my girl, but not too fast, this is the last you're going to get." So Beatrice decides, "I have to go out and earn some money." And her mother says, "Well, the only work here is to be a lumberjack, and that's no work for little girls. But there is a rich giant on the other side of the woods who likes to gamble on his own strength...." And of course, Beatrice is very clever and bests him. It's a very funny story and is an ALA Notable book. Aladdin, \$6.95, paperback.



And this year we have a sequel, **Clever Beatrice and the Best Little Pony**, which is still out in hardcover, in which our clever Beatrice, with the help of the French Canadian town baker, catches a *lupin*, a leprechaun-like being who's been sneaking into her barn and riding her beloved pony ragged in the middle of the night. Beatrice is a wonderful character and I hope we see more Beatrice stories. Atheneum, \$16.95, hardcover.

Earth Mother by Ellen Jackson is a beautiful new picture book – a creation story – with outstanding illustrations by Leo and Diane Dillon. The Dillons are noted for their lush depictions of African stories and African American stories and characters. *Earth Mother* starts off as a story about a man, a mosquito and a frog. The mosquito annoys the man, the frog is annoyed by the man, and the mosquito is plagued by the frog, so they all complain to the Earth Mother. But in truth, they all need each other: the man, it turns out, feeds off the frog, the frog off the mosquito, and the mosquito off the man. It's an ecological tale, of course, simply told with beautiful illustrations. I love that the Earth Mother is a beautiful African woman. Walker, \$16.95, oversized hardcover. Jackson also wrote a great girl story called *Cinder Edna* about a resourceful Cinderella.



And for the boys, we have a great boys' story, **Sleeping Bobby**, in which the sleeping beauty role is played by a handsome prince, and the rescuer is the feisty princess who wakes Bobby from his enchanted slumber. It's delightful and has lots of funny details. Giselle Potter is one of my favorite illustrators; the text is by Will and Mary Pope Osborne. Atheneum, \$16.95, hardcover.



Chickerella by Mary Jane and Herm Auch is a great retelling of the Cinderella story. The Auchs have done a number of chicken stories over the years and the illustrations are fabulous. They create these chickens out of wire and feathers and fur, make clothing for them, pose them, and then photograph them, and also tell readers how they did it. Chickerella's stepmother, for instance, appears in a leopard-skin bodysuit with a incredibly fancy beady glasses, big jewelry and a gold lamé purse – just fabulously tacky. This version of the story features glass eggs, rather than slippers and an alternate ending in which the fairy goose mother who's into fashion design, the prince who's into accessories, and Chickerella, the esteemed seamstress, all go into the fashion business together. What a great ending! Holiday House, \$16.95, hardcover. Look for their other chicken titles including **Poultrygeist** Holiday House, \$6.95.



And Tango Makes Three is a wonderful story about two male penguins who are best friends. They spend all their time together and are disinclined to mate with anyone else. They're quite content with each other, but they desperately want an egg to raise like the other penguins have. So they get a stone and keep it warm, but nothing materializes from it. Eventually a very nice zoo-keeper who has observed their behavior gives them an egg that needs nurturing, and they are wonderful parents. It's a charming story by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell. The illustrations by Henry Cole are soft and lovely. Everyone is into penguins this year, - and it's based on a true story about a penguin family living in New York City's Central Park Zoo. Simon & Schuster, \$14.95, cloth. For preschoolers through second graders.



Veteran feminist cartoonist Nicole Hollander and writer Robie Harris have teamed up to create the "Just Being Me" series for the 2- to 4-year-old set. All of the books are about kids expressing strong emotions – and getting emotional, but balanced, responses from their parent or parents. In each book, there's a point where the child absolutely doesn't do what the parent wants and the parent(s) aren't doing what the child wants – both kids and parents will see themselves in these pages. Each book also includes a "word to the parents" page that is quite useful, but never preachy.

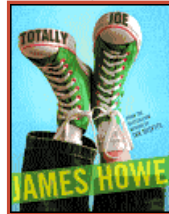
I'm Not Sleepy! features a little light-skinned, blond boy, **I'm All Dressed!** features a dark-skinned boy, **I'm So Mad!** features a brown-skinned girl, and **I Love Messes!** has a pink-skinned girl; and all kinds of people are represented throughout the books.

Robie Harris, if you're unfamiliar with her work, is a real advocate for multiculturalism in our schools and libraries and also excels at developing ways to communicate with very young children about the mysteries and awesomeness of birth.

Little Brown Kids, \$7.99 each, sturdy paper-over-board covers.

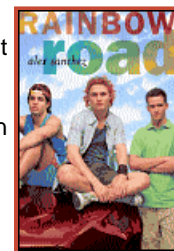
Middle School & Young Adult

I'm totally thrilled with James Howe's new book, **Totally Joe**, a sequel to the popular *The Misfits*, the tale of four sixth-graders who band together to get their school to outlaw name calling. Inspired by the book, No Name Calling days have sprung up all over the country. There's a kid in *The Misfits* who is very flamboyant and is just coming out to himself, and realizing that he likes boys, not girls, and that there's nothing wrong with that. And there's a very bright, but maybe too outspoken young gal, who's very feminist and in everyone's face all the time, and two others who band together to get their school to change. \$5.99, Aladdin.



Totally Joe takes up the story of the gay kid, who has his first boyfriend – another seventh grader who's a jock and a popular kid, and cute who leaves a note in Joe's locker saying, "I want to be more like you...." They become friends, then boyfriends. All four kids team up with someone during the year, and the boyfriend/girlfriend behavior is all very age-appropriate, innocent, really, and suitable for sixth, seventh, and even fifth graders. This is the age when the name-calling starts in earnest and it's also the age when many kids discover that they like the same sex; there's a dearth of material for 10-14 year olds in these situations, even though we have more, now, for older teens. Joe is so winning that teachers and parents and all kinds of kids will like Joe. He's a very funny and entertaining guy. Atheneum/Simon & Schuster, \$15.95, cloth.

The Rainbow Road, the third book in Alex Sanchez' Rainbow High Series (*Rainbow High*, *Rainbow Boys*), is just out. Here the three friends are on a road trip. One of the kids, who took a boy to the prom and got a lot of media coverage for it, has been invited to speak at a high school in California for gay kids, so off the three go. In these books Alex portrays the range of behaviors from very out to very closeted, from very jock to geeky-nerdy, to very effeminate, and helps kids express their comfort levels with different kids expressions of themselves. The books are also very popular with teen-age girls, perhaps because they are very romantic, but also, I think, because girls are very curious about boys – straight boys, gay boys, and bi- boys, too. And also, perhaps, because girls are skilled at being



able to read themselves into books about boys – a skill that isn't yet generally taught to boys. I'm excited about these books being out there for kids. Simon & Schuster, \$16.95, cloth.

Naomi Shihab Nye, who has done so much good work with children's poetry, published a young adult novel last spring, **Going, Going**. It's about a young girl in Texas whose parents own a Mexican restaurant. She has become aware of how superstores, super-hotels, and super-restaurants are driving out locally owned businesses, and she starts a campaign in her school to support the locally owned businesses and boycott the chains. Booksellers everywhere should take this book to their hearts! It has very engaging characters and, again, kids with a variety of responses: kids who are comfortable with the protests, kids who have to be pulled into it – the whole range. Greenwillow, \$15.99, cloth.



Tamora Pierce writes stories about medieval teens and has several series starring warrior girls and clever girls. She writes in the sword and sorcery genre, but with a decidedly feminist twist. Her primary goal in each book, she revealed at a recent book-and-author breakfast, is to make sure that girls kick butt. Her new book, **The Will of the Empress** (Scholastic Press, \$17.99, cloth) is almost Harry-Potter size. Her last book, **Trickster's Queen**, is out in paperback. Random House Books for Young Readers, \$8.95, paper.



Pam Muñoz Ryan's latest book, **Becoming Naomi León**, is just out in paperback. Like her earlier book, **Esperanza Rising**, it's available in Spanish (*Yo, Naomi León*) and English. Naomi León and her little brother were living with their parents in Mexico, but there was trouble and their mother, who we come to understand has a drinking and substance abuse problem, takes the children and leaves them with her grandmother. So the kids grow up in a trailer park in New Mexico with their great-grandmother. She cleans them up, nurtures them, and helps them grow up – Naomi was not speaking and, by now, has become a rather normal ten or eleven-year-old girl. When their mother reappears, with her scary-looking boyfriend, and wants to take Naomi away, Gran and the kids must devise a way to keep both kids safe – which includes journeying to Oaxaca to find their dad who is both delighted to see them again and willing to sign papers to let them stay with their grandmother. Scholastic, \$5.99.



Esperanza Rising is also a compelling story about immigration and assimilation, class migrations, and leaving to escape familial difficulties. Scholastic, \$5.99.



Mysteries

By Nan Cinnater



As a rule, I have only two problems with comic mysteries: they aren't comic and they aren't mysterious. Susan Kandel's **I Dreamed I Married Perry Mason** (\$6.99, Avon), first in a series featuring writer Cece Caruso, is an exception to the rule. Cece's trendy L.A. patter is actually funny, and even

her obsession with vintage designer clothes is more amusing than annoying. In addition, Kandel's retro Fifties mystery plot is truly suspenseful. Cece is working on a biography of Earle Stanley Gardner, the creator of Perry Mason, when she unearths an unsolved case of Gardner's (a real criminal attorney) which has all the sordid atmosphere and doomed passion of classic drugstore fiction. In Kandel's second mystery, **Not a Girl Detective** (\$23.95, Morrow), Cece is researching the history of Nancy Drew. Here, the contemporary mystery plot is not nearly as compelling. But the scene at a Palm Springs hotel where Cece and her sidekicks mistake a Dinah Shore Golf Tournament party for a Nancy Drew convention is hilarious.

True Nancy Drew aficionados will much prefer the non-fiction book, **Girl Sleuth: Nancy Drew and the Women Who Created Her**, by Melanie Rehak (\$25, Harcourt), an excellent social history and dual biography of the two women most responsible for the Nancy Drew phenomenon. Rehak strikes the perfect note between popular and scholarly, making **Girl Sleuth** a remarkably good read. This would be a great gift for many mothers, sisters, and other female relatives.

As for grown-up detectives – real-life federal prosecutor Michele Martinez introduces fictional federal prosecutor Melanie Vargas in **Most Wanted** (\$6.99, Harper Torch). A Puerto Rican girl from a poor Brooklyn family, Melanie is smart and ambitious, but she hasn't forgotten her roots. Estranged from her cheating husband, Melanie has a baby girl, an interfering mother, a princess sister, the boss from hell, and a crush on the FBI agent assigned to her latest case. The crime, the torture-murder of a hotshot Manhattan attorney, is a tad grim for my taste, but the crisp writing and the appealing cast of characters make up for it. Melanie Vargas is back in **Finishing School** (\$23.95, Morrow), in which she investigates the apparent overdose of two teenagers from New York's snobbiest girls' school, found dead in a Park Avenue apartment.

Victoria Blake walks a line somewhere between Dashiell Hammett and P.D. James in **Bloodless Shadow**, introducing Oxford-bred judo champion and private investigator Sam (Samantha) Falconer, who runs the Gentle Way detective agency (\$14.00, Berkley Prime Crime). As a favor to her brother, Sam agrees to help therapist John O'Connor find his missing wife; but the more intriguing mystery involves fierce, enigmatic Sam herself. That mystery starts to unravel when Sam receives a letter purporting to be from her father, who died when she was four.



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News Flashes

From Carol Seajay

Where have all the feminist publishers gone?

Ruth Gottstein, founder of Volcano Press and the publisher of the first book in America on domestic violence (*Battered Wives* by Del Martin, 1976) went to the mountains where, at 82, she's brought her son on board as associate publisher. The press continues to focus on domestic violence issues. The most recent book? *Child Abuse and Neglect: Guidelines for Identification, Assessment, and Case Management*. The most popular? *Learning to Live Without Violence: A Handbook for Men*, which sells, by the thousands, to the military.

Photos and a recent article:

<http://www.sacbee.com/content/news/story/10428774p-11348320c.html>

More about Volcano:

<http://www.volcanopress.com/>

TRIVIA: *A Journal of Ideas*, has been relaunched as an online publication. Issue #2 in its new format, *TRIVIA: Voices of Feminism* is just out. Read it at: <http://www.triviavoices.net/>

Gone to Movies....

Brokeback Mountain, Ang Lee's film based on Annie Proulx's much-loved short story by the same name, is due to hit theaters December 9 and is predicted to be a block buster success, although some are still questioning

whether (straight) men can cope – or learn how to cope – with a brilliant love story if both of the protagonists are men.

Proulx's publishers aren't worried: They're publishing 100,000 copies of the 55-page story as a stand-alone volume in cloth and another 17,000 in paperback in slim, elegant, editions with French flaps. Why do a stand-alone edition when the story is already available in *Close Range*? A stand-alone edition did well in Europe. And perhaps they're thinking that giving moviegoers something short and sweet, in this attention-deficit era, is a better way to entice them to consider, gee, reading as an entertainment form....

Good Marketing/Bad Marketing

Penguin has just launched *Essential Editions*, which collects some of the best books in recent years in \$15.95 gift/collectable editions and BTWOF has to give them credit for getting it right – five of the first ten books are classics by women writers: *Bastard Out of Carolina* by Dorothy Allison, *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison, *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* by Julia Alvarez, *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd, and *The Stone Diaries* by Carol Shields. And the books by men include two that have been reviewed in BTWOF's pages: *Disgrace* by J. M. Coetzee and *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini.

Let the ~~buyer~~ user beware: AOL is telling its subscribers that its new AOL Coaches program is "here to help." But they're telling publishers it's "a powerful online marketing platform" to put their "life improvement authors...in front of a larger, loyal audience." (Text from a 6-page *Publishers Weekly* cover-wrap ad.) "AOL," the hype continues, has "112 million users (and) fresh new ways to engage readers and maximize the impact of your authors' messages...." including interactive quizzes, mobile messaging, interactive workshops, newsletters....

Awards

Joan Didion received the National Book Award for nonfiction for *The Year of Magical Thinking*, one of Ann's picks in the last issue. Jeanne Birdsall won the Young People's Literature award for *The Penderwicks: A Summer Tale of Four Sisters, Two Rabbits, and a Very Interesting Boy* (Knopf, \$15.95 cloth).

Lambda Literary Award Nominations

The Lambda Literary Foundation is alive and well and accepting nominations for the 2005 Lambda Literary Awards at www.lambdaliterary.org. The Foundation's Board of Directors (Katherine V. Forest, Karla Jay, Jim Duggans, and Don Weise), spent the summer rethinking, reprioritizing, and moving the organization. The results include a shiny new website (<http://www.lambdaliterary.org>), the appointment of Charles Flowers as executive director, new digs (PO Box 1957, Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113; phone 646-239-9790; email asklambda@earthlink.net). Download the nominations form at <http://www.lambdaliterary.org/awards.html>.

Snarky Reporting Award

And last but not least, a special, one-time (we hope!) **Snarky Reporting Award** to the *New York Times* and everyone involved in the "paper of record's" Nov. 9 fiasco of a story, allegedly about a the tension between Andersonville (Chicago) coffeeshop owners and under-supervised children.

The "report" wildly conflated stories and locations, and in so doing, implied that one of the country's most child-friendly bookstores (yes, we're speaking of our own Women & Children First) is a den of child- and mother-haters.

OK, I exaggerate, but only slightly –. We'll start with what the paper admits:

In the published correction, the *Times* acknowledged that due to "an editorial error" the paper had "misstated" "the site of an incident in which a woman was asked to stop breast-feeding in a store in Chicago" adding, "It was not the Women & Children First bookstore, but another business in the neighborhood." *Duh!*

The story also erroneously implied that WCF "ejects" children from its (very popular and well attended) Story Hours and reported that mothers who are boycotting a neighborhood bakery are also boycotting the feminist bookstore because of the store's "rules" – which the *Times* acknowledged, in its correction, it has also misreported. *Duh!* Or maybe we should say, *Double Duh!*

Never mind that women have been breastfeeding in the store for decades, never mind that such an article might want to point out that the store's long-running story time for children might just provide an excellent model for how

other neighborhood businesses could choose to create child-friendly spaces, and never mind that any story that critically cited one of their advertisers' rules for children's behavior (think, perhaps, Barnes & Noble) would have included a fact-checking call to make sure the paper was reporting them accurately.... *Triple Duh!*

What really impresses me is the *Times* staffers' collective willingness, and apparent eagerness, to blame child-unfriendly behavior on a feminist institution. One might think that the intelligent response to such a story would be to note an apparent contradiction between the store's name and the behavior they were reporting and to take a few minutes to do a double-check.

The only explanation I can come up with for the convolutions that it took to come up with the many errors in the story it published is pure, well, snarkiness. But, perhaps I'm wrong. Perhaps it's not a get-the-feminists thing at all. Perhaps it's just part of corporate-owned and corporate-beholden media's increasing irresponsibility to anything that isn't corporate (profit) based. In either case, to the *New York Times*, BTWOF's **Snarky Reporting Award** for cruel and vicious, anti-woman and anti-feminist, and independent-business bashing and misreporting!

Celebrations:

Congratulations to Charis Books and More, the Atlanta feminist bookstore, on their 30th anniversary celebration. Details at <http://charis.booksense.com>.

And to *off our backs* for staying the distance for 35 years! Send them a celebratory note at www.offourbacks.org or 2337B 18th St. NW, Washington, DC 20009



I hope you've enjoyed the second edition of *More Books for Women* and will join us for many issues to come.

Yours in spreading the words,
Carol Seajay



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We hope you've enjoyed this issue of **More Books for Women**.

If you like it, please tell all your friends and colleagues about **More Books for Women** (and our sister publications, **The Lesbian Edition** and **The Gay Men's Edition**) and encourage them to subscribe as well.

If you give holiday gifts, and can [give some subscriptions to More Books for Women](#) as a way to spread the word about it and to help us launch it far and wide, that would be a wonderful way to support this new publication. But if you don't like it, or have suggestions for improvement, please tell us before you tell your friends.

If you *really* like **More Books for Women**, and would like to join 50 women in making monthly pledges (\$100-\$25) for a year to help finance its first year, please call or email Maddy@BooksToWatchOutFor.com or give me a call.

We look forward to hearing from you about this exciting new publication.

Yours in spreading the words,

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