



More Books for Women

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- December 2006 -
Volume 2 Number 11

This issue of **More Books for Women** brings you both new book recommendations and some timeless favorites that our bookseller reviewers recommend for holiday (or other) giving. You'll find compelling novels and titles with healing and spiritual themes as well as several fun books for kids of all ages. Enjoy!

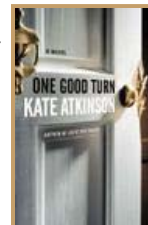
Suzanne Corson
for Books To Watch Out For

Books

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Ann Christophersen recommends...

Kate Atkinson is a contemporary British writer who I just love. She is very inventive, offers fresh characters and voices, and is so clever and witty I read each page with great pleasure. Her recently published novel, **One Good Turn**, picks up where her last one left off. In *Case Histories* (Little, Brown/Back Bay, \$13.95, 9780316010702) her central character, Jackson Brodie, finished up tying together the three different criminal cases he more or less found himself in, one of which involved helping - and befriending - a rather cranky old gal who needed his decent treatment as much as his skills. In the beginning of *One Good Turn*, Jackson has left his occupation as a private eye - it turns out that the old gal left him a million bucks and he is free to live his dream. But he finds himself rather at loose ends: he may be playing out his dream, but he's doing it having lost his sense of self. A private investigator in instinct as well as habit, he can't seem to help himself from getting involved in another intricate set of crimes, even though he's no longer technically a P.I. All the characters are engaging, but Gloria Hatter is my favorite in this one. Oh, and just so I don't leave you with the idea that the novel is all games and fun, there's a compelling thematic thread helping to pull all the disparate plot elements together. The novel is about people who are different from who they used to be, pretend they are, intend to become - or whose identity is simply unclear or mysterious. There is a wealth of performing, dissembling, disappearing, and searching going on, and identity is a slippery thing. But the best of the lot not only discover the identity of others but also some truths about themselves. Little, Brown and Company, \$24.99, 9780316154840.



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 women in print movement and mainstream publishing. Written and compiled by Suzanne Corson.

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There are people in the United States (and Canada, and Mexico, and Europe, and probably everywhere) who are very disturbed by the rapid growth of national and international retail corporations that increasingly dominate the landscape - quite literally - and so, too, the global economy. Everyone knows a handful of the problems involved: diminishing wages and benefits that are pulling down the middle class in this country and exploiting cheap labor elsewhere; the loss of independent businesses and the corresponding damage to local economies; the strain big boxes put on our physical environment; the demands they place on public infrastructure; the diversion of local revenues to incentive payments to companies already making millions (or billions) in profit. But now there's a book that provides the whole, complex picture of what the level of chain development really is, where it fits historically, exactly how high the costs really are, and where we are headed if this development continues unabated. That book is **Big-Box Swindle** by Stacy Mitchell, a senior researcher with

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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the Institute for Local Self-Reliance and advisor to communities on how to effectively challenge this tide. Along with a wealth of information and valuable perspective, she also provides a number of success stories, individuals and communities that have used the available tools to change public policy and private views. This is a terrific book. I highly recommend it. Beacon, \$24.95, 9780807035009.



Linda Bubon is reading...

Ellen Burstyn has always been one of my favorite actors, delivering unforgettable performances in movies like *The Last Picture Show*, *The Exorcist*, and *Resurrection*.

Alice Doesn't Live Here Any More came out when I was in the thick of my waitress/student career, so I was especially fond of that one and thrilled when she won the Academy Award for her performance. Imagine my delight in being able to host a reading for her new memoir, **Lessons in Becoming Myself!** It was a memorable evening: she *glowed* as she spoke about the long process of creating the book and patiently and thoughtfully answered many questions from the audience. And the book is wonderful! Her memory for fascinating details about the films she worked on and the directors and actors with whom she worked is amazing. Her life story is inspiring, too, because she grew up with truly lousy parents, and like most people with childhood wounds, picked some pretty lousy partners who threatened her career, and, in the case of her third husband, her life. She is also a deeply spiritual person, and she shares her search for truth openly and thoughtfully. *Lessons in Becoming Myself* is a rich read, full of heart and wisdom. Riverhead, \$25.95, 9781594489297.



It was celebrity week at Women & Children First as the actor Meg Tilly followed Ellen Burstyn. Tilly's **Gemma** is a novel, but its heat and drama come out of Tilly's experience as a child who was physically and sexually abused. *Gemma* is a tough read but very brave and compelling. Gemma is only twelve when she is abducted by a pedophile. Her harrowing weeks with her captor, graphically detailed, are almost unbearable to read except that you know she will escape and you have to find out how she does it. Most of the book is written in Gemma's tough, little girl, I'm-not-gonna-let-him-see-me-cry voice, but some chapters take us into the mind of her predator, and they made my skin crawl. This is not a book for the delicate, but anyone who works with abused or at-risk kids must read it. Tilly's first book, *Singing Songs*, has also been re-released and is, according to her, more truly autobiographical. Rosie O'Donnell praised it to the skies on *The View*, and I'm sure it's another powerful survivor's story. *Gemma*: Syren Book Company, \$15.95, 9780929636610. *Singing Songs*: Syren Book Company, \$14.95, 9780929636627.

Another tough but very important book I just read is **Cry Rape: The True Story of One Woman's Harrowing Quest for Justice** by Madison, Wisconsin, journalist Bill Leuders. Leuders spent years following the story of Patti, a visually-impaired woman who was raped at knife point in her home early one morning in 1997. The young detective assigned to her case very quickly decided she was making a false accusation, and with the tunnel vision not uncommon in law enforcement, proceeded to charge *her* with a crime. It took seven years and an heroic amount of perseverance for Patti to be acquitted and for her rapist to be found and charged. What is truly shocking and makes this a must-read for anyone working in the law or with rape victims is the extent to which the detective's fellow (and sister) officers and superiors supported him, even in the face of irrefutable evidence to the contrary. She still has not received an apology from the Madison P.D., but Patti triumphs in this book. Leuders, admirably, steps out of the way while giving us all the details of the case, and lets this be Patti's story. University of Wisconsin Press, \$29.95, 9780299219604.



After all this heavy reading last month, I was fortunate that our book group had picked Dawn Powell's **The Locusts Have No King** for our November selection. What a wickedly funny delight! Powell perfectly captures the New York literary scene circa 1946 in the most acerbic prose I've read in a long time. Mix a cocktail, light an imaginary cigarette, and sit back and enjoy her skewering of publishers, editors, advertising men, career gals, "pooh on you" girls, playwrights, and hangers on as they dash from bar to bar, party to party. Zoland Books, \$14.95, 9781883642426.

Catherine Jacquet loves...

The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry may well be the best book I've ever read. The Little Prince himself is widely recognizable; his image is found on popular greeting cards, postcards, posters, etc. But the heart and charm of the Little Prince are found only in the book.



This is a story of imagination, creativity, and profound love. When the author finds himself stranded in the desert, the last person he expected to run into was the "extraordinary little fellow" we all recognize as the Little Prince. Out in the middle of nowhere, this little fellow doesn't ask for water or food but rather a drawing of a sheep. The author obliges and we are then taken on an incredible journey through the past weeks of the Little Prince's life. Here we encounter, among others, a Turkish astronomer, baobab trees, a precious rose, a king, a very vain man, and a businessman, each with their own lesson to teach us.

The illustrations are beyond comparison. The Little Prince himself is charming and adorable. The lessons in this book are great for children and even better for adults. I highly recommend it for all the adults in your life, especially those who need to be reminded of the most important elements of life: laughter, friendship, and love. English translation by Richard Howard. Harcourt, \$10, 9780156012195.

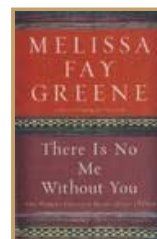


Chelsey Clammer is up all night reading...



Emma Goldman's autobiography, **Living My Life**, was originally published in 1931. With more than 900 pages in two volumes, readers have been a little intimidated by the massive length of Goldman's retelling of her life. Penguin's new edition, however, has condensed Goldman's original words almost in half; but don't worry - Goldman's story does not diminish with the lost pages. Her fiery spunk is present on every page, and readers will fall in love with her amazing life, again. From the words of a rebellious exiled woman and birth control advocate, Goldman's story inspires every reader to get out there and do something amazing. Penguin Classics, \$18 paper, 9780142437858.

Two-time National Book Award Finalist Melissa Fay Greene's newest book uncovers the lived experience of the AIDS crisis in Africa. **There Is No Me Without You** depicts the life of Haregewoin Teferra, a grieving mother who took in over 60 children who had lost their parents to AIDS. This is not a tale of a white woman trying to save Africa's children; instead, Greene shows the reader how adoption is not the answer to the AIDS crisis, but a starting point for action. This book is also not specifically about Greene's journeys to Africa, but rather it is a history of AIDS and a description of the current-day situation in Ethiopia. Greene gives a voice and a face to the AIDS crisis, and her telling of Teferra's life is unforgettable. Bloomsbury \$25.95, 9781596911161.



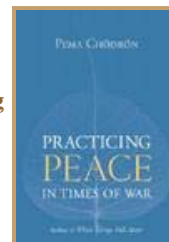
Mary Ellen Kavanaugh is enjoying...



I'm always influenced by the context of my life when I am reading a book, and reading **The New Single Woman** by E. Kay Trimberger (now out in paperback) fell in at a most interesting time. I started this on a little getaway weekend I took earlier this month - some friends were indeed puzzled that a single woman who lives alone needed to "get away" - they sincerely wanted to know what from. As if getting away is only about that. I finished the book days after I learned my job had been eliminated. And those same friends, understanding this piece of my life, have rallied round to support me in my job search. Currently, in the U.S., there are 42 million single women over the age of 18, and yet seldom do we appear in the media, unless it's a story about desperation (read: looking for a mate) or struggle (the single mother). Let's just say this book is a breath of fresh air! Trimberger approaches this work both as an "ever-single" woman (a phase I love and am about to adopt) and a sociologist. Her research is well grounded and her explorations deep. The voices of

the women she interviewed are strong and they are presented as evidence how "(t)urning to one's own account a life not envisioned or chosen is not passive acceptance but a process of active exploration and change...creating a single life - like building a good marriage - is a process of development, self-discovery, and work." What I most appreciate is that she has shined this light on the well-lived single life but not done so at the cost of bashing marriage. While she does show statistics that favor the longevity and good mental health of remaining single, she does a great deal to show alternate ways of being coupled and does much to expand traditional notions of family - most eloquently expressed by a lesbian couple who live in Massachusetts and are not getting married, so as not to be "contributing to the perpetuation of a norm of coupledness in our society." What I am concerned about is that only single women will be attracted to this book. And that would be a shame, since it offers many possibilities for how we can be in relation to self and others in a way that makes for happy, secure lives. Beacon Press, \$16, 9780807065235.

One of the things I like best about reading writings by Buddhist teachers is that, whatever the topics, the exploration is deep and builds slowly from one point to another - quite in contradiction to our sound bite culture. Pema Chodron's latest offering, **Practicing Peace in Times of War**, exemplifies this perfectly. Her premise - that the origins of violence, oppression, etc., no matter how they are played out, begins in our hearts - leads to an exploration of how our responses to such experiences contribute to a culture of violence. It is, of course, an old concept that "peace begins with us," and can be a hard position to hold in the world today, but it's one that good thinking people need to be reminded of - regularly. There is such good teaching here about recognizing when our hearts harden, learning to be patient, and not attaching to our reactions - this will make a lovely holiday gift as well as a memorable birthday, graduation, or cheering up present. Shambhala, \$12.95, 9781590304013.



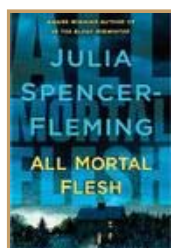
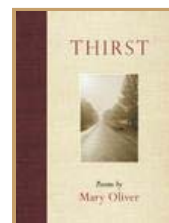
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Linda Bryant suggests...



Alice Walker's newest book, **We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For: Inner Light in a Time of Darkness**, is beautiful. At our Charis Books event with Alice, author Pearl Cleage said to me: "I needed this book," and that was echoed over and over. These meditations call us to find our own inner light and to live from that place of fierce love and gratitude. It is a book to be read aloud - most of the pieces were originally talks given to graduating classes, yoga teachers, midwives, or others fortunate enough to be in Alice's luminous presence. As is true in Walker's fiction, poetry, and essays, this book weaves together politics, spiritual practice, connection to the earth, humor, and beauty. And it is a lovely trim-size hardback perfect for gift-giving. New Press, \$23.95, 9781595581372.

For many years, Mary Oliver has consistently been Charis Books' best-selling poet. Her new book, **Thirst**, is dedicated, like all the others, to Molly Malone Cook, Oliver's beloved partner for more than forty years, who died in 2005. Many people I know have long used Oliver's poems as guides for or glimpses into their own spiritual journeys. Her connections with the earth and all her creatures are always at the heart of Oliver's work, and her poetry is incredibly accessible. This collection has more specifically Christian symbols and experiences than her earlier ones, including references to Jesus and a meditation on a Psalm, yet most poems speak to anyone open to spirit. From the epilogue, which is a prayer: "Love for the earth and love for you are having such a long conversation in my heart." Beacon Press, \$22, 9780807068960.



Sometimes I just need a good mystery, something that will take me away from the immediate. Julia Spencer-Fleming is one of my favorite mystery writers - her main characters are an Episcopal priest (who used to be a helicopter pilot) and her love interest, the very married police chief in their small town. **All Mortal Flesh** is the fifth in this series and includes deep moral struggles alongside the investigation into the death of the police chief's wife. St. Martin's/Minotaur, \$22.95, 9780312312640.

From the backlist, I finally picked up Canadian Miriam Toews's novel, [a complicated kindness](#), and was mesmerized from the first chapter. Sixteen-year-old Nomi Nickel is the voice of this coming-of-age story that takes place in a Mennonite community. Abandoned by her mother and sister, Nomi and her father cope as well as they can. He drives around at night for hours and gives away their furniture piece by piece. Nomi's connections are all quite fragile, but her insights into Mennonite life are priceless. She is saving herself, she hopes, by writing this book, not willing to abandon her father, yet knowing that she is dying, trying to live within the confines of this (to her) pretend town. Counterpoint, \$13.95, 9781582433226.



New in Paperback

Fiction

Sex Wars: A Novel of Gilded Age New York (reviewed in [MBW #11](#)), Marge Piercy, Harper Perennial, \$14.95, 9780060789879.

Freshwater Road, Denise Nichols, Simon and Schuster/Pocket, \$14, 9781416524823.

Missing Mom, Joyce Carol Oates, Harper Perennial, \$14.95, 9780060816223.

Nonfiction

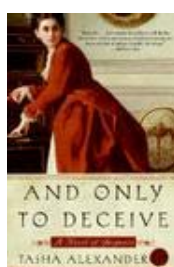
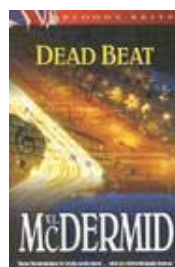
The Story of Chicago May, Nuala O'Faolain, Riverhead, \$14, 9781594482175.

The Woman at the Washington Zoo: Writings on Politics, Family and Fate, Marjorie Williams, Public Affairs, \$14.95, 9781586484576.



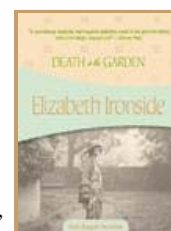
Mysteries

By Nan Cinnater



Not that long ago, award-winning mystery writer Val McDermid was named one of the fifty most influential people in British publishing (number 15, in fact). Now the influential McDermid and her partner Kelly Smith have launched Bloody Brits Press, an imprint of Bywater Books, specifically to bring to the American market British mysteries that have been overlooked in the U.S. First on their list is [Bleak Water](#) by Danuta Reah (9781932859218), followed closely by Sarah Diamond's [The Spider's House](#) (9781932859270) and Joyce Holms's [Payment Deferred](#) (9781932859317). They are also bringing back into print all six of McDermid's wonderful Kate Brannigan novels, beginning with [Dead Beat](#) (9781932859188). Kate Brannigan is a feminist, punk (pre-riot grrl), private eye from Manchester, whose best friend is a lesbian. If you missed these the first time around, run-don't-walk to your local feminist, mystery, or general independent bookstore for your copies. Better yet, put them on your holiday wish list (or gift list)! (All are \$13.95.)

Mystery specialty bookstores and mystery small presses have much the same kind of symbiotic relationship that women's bookstores and feminist presses (used to) have. In some cases, mystery booksellers have become publishers in order to fill the demand generated by their customers. Felony & Mayhem Press, for instance, was established by the owners of the New York City store Partners and Crime to bring back out-of-print books that they wanted to sell. One of their prime finds is Elizabeth Ironside, who writes very literary British mysteries with traditional and



non-traditional elements. **Death in the Garden** (\$14.95, 9781933397177) begins with the sentence: "Today at half past two in the afternoon I was acquitted of the murder of my husband." At the birthday party of beautiful, bohemian Diana Pollexfen in 1925, Diana's husband drank a poisoned cocktail and died. Seventy years later, Diana's grand-niece, Helena, goes through her aunt's papers to determine who did it. Felony & Mayhem Press has just published Ironside's **The Accomplice** (\$14.95, 9781933397504).

On the other hand, Poisoned Pen Press, the brainchild of the Poisoned Pen Bookstore in Albuquerque, publishes mostly new mysteries - small gems that don't have a chance in a high-stakes industry fixated on blockbusters. In **Witch Cradle** (\$24.95, 9781590582541) by Kathleen Hills, an ice storm has immobilized St. Adele, Michigan, but the hard freeze also serves as a neat metaphor for the tenor of the times: January, 1951. Back in the thirties, a number of Communist sympathizers in Finnish-American St. Adele had emigrated to the Soviet Union to help build the workers' utopia. McIntire has suspicions about what happened to two of these emigrees, and he has an FBI agent asking questions about Communists in the county. The best thing about *Witch Cradle* may be the careful and exquisite writing:

"Frosted silver stillness. Saplings twisted into grotesque sculptures; spruce trees turned to slender spires, bowing to one another in a graceful dance, jeweled boughs sweeping the snow; wires transformed into a criss-cross of swags strung with miniature icicles. Soft white and crystal."

Witch Cradle is the third mystery by Hills featuring John McIntire, following *Past Imperfect* and *Hunter's Dance* (both \$14.95).



It is a truth universally acknowledged that most authors who attempt to write in the style of Jane Austen should be preemptorily shot. Not, however, Stephanie Barron, whose "Jane" series actually comes close to reproducing Austen's own dry, delightful voice. (Apparently Barron does this by borrowing liberally from Austen's letters and other writing. I don't care. I think it's magic.) Now we have the eagerly awaited new hardcover, **Jane and the Barque of Frailty**, ninth in the series. Everything about the period is right, and Barron's plots dovetail neatly with the known facts of Austen's real life, but the mysteries

themselves are almost inconsequential. This one involves the death of a Russian princess in London. Bantam, \$24.95, 9780553802269.

Truth being famously stranger than fiction, Barron is actually a former CIA analyst who has written contemporary espionage thrillers and historical intrigue under the name Francine Mathews. In *The Cut Out* and *Blown* (both Bantam, \$7.99), Mathews follows the fate of CIA analyst Cathleen Carmichael in her struggles against a neo-Nazi terrorist organization known as 30 April. Mathews' latest, **The Alibi Club**, is set in Paris in 1939, featuring lawyers, physicists, Baroness Von Rothschild, and a character based on Josephine Baker. Bantam, \$24, 9780553803310.



Even those of us who despise imitation Austen sometimes long for the guilty pleasures of the drawing room and the London season. I've become addicted to historical mysteries, especially those set in 18th and 19th century London. Tasha Alexander's Victorian debut novel, **And Only To Deceive**, introduces a wonderful heroine in Emily Ashton. A widowed Viscountess, Emily relishes the great freedom of her unencumbered state. She increasingly flaunts convention - learning Greek, studying art, and befriending bluestockings - as she solves the mystery of her late husband's legacy and discovers her true self. Alexander walks a thin line between mystery and romance, but her heroine is such a proto-feminist that it's hard to object. Harper, \$13.95, 9780061148446.



At first glance, **What Angels Fear** by C.S. Harris (Signet, \$6.99, 9780451219718), set in 1811, appears even more traditionally romantic. The pistol-dueling hero, Sebastian St. Cyr, is a classic Byron wannabe. But it turns out to be a sturdily plotted whodunit about the murder of a prostitute in a church, with a worthy heroine, a smart and successful actress named Kat Boleyn. In **When Gods Die**, Sebastian and Kat are reunited to solve the mystery surrounding the death of Sebastian's own mother. NAL, \$23.95, 9780451219688.

In *Murder Never Forgets* (Berkley, \$6.99, 9780425209035), Pulitzer Prize-nominated novelist and poet Diana O'Hehir introduced twenty-something Carla Day and her much older father, a renowned Egyptologist suffering from Alzheimer's. In ***Erased from Memory*** the two are back, involved in a series of murders at a private museum. The mystery is fairly predictable, but the characters are not. From the bipolar scholar in residence to the Southern femme fatale lawyer, they behave like real people with all their quirks and contradictions. Carla is a spunky sleuth, but it is her father Edward, with his fragmentary memories and telling wisdom, who is totally endearing. Berkley, \$23.95, 9780425212165.



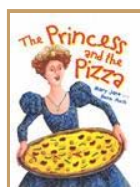
For the Kids



Recommendations from Linda Bubon

We are always being asked for "alternative" or strong princess stories, and I thought it might be time again to list some of my favorites. The titles listed below are all in paperback or hardcover, although we sell them much better in paper, so I'll give you those ISBN's and prices. I'd recommend them for bright 3's and 4's up to age 7 or 8. These princesses are all the heroes of their own stories, and they are very good problem-solvers. That doesn't mean that they don't have pretty dress/sparkly shoes appeal!

Chickerella by Herm and Mary Jane Auch features fabulous costuming of chickens who play the traditional roles in this story that has a very modern ending: The gal, the prince, and the "fairy goosemother" open their own fashion business. Holiday House, \$6.95, 9780823420155.



The Princess and the Pizza by the same authors features a busy princess who really doesn't have time to do all this cooking to impress the queen, but throws together some classic ingredients to not only win the prince but create the first pizza. Holiday House, \$6.95, 9780823417988.

In ***Princess Furball*** by Charlotte Huck and Anita Lobel, the princess uses her wits to escape a greedy king's destiny for her. HarperTrophy, \$6.99, 9780688131074.

Princesses Are Not Quitters by Kate Lum and Sue Hellard presents a not-so-subtle lesson in labor relations in this story of three bored princesses who trade places with their servant girls for the day. Bloomsbury, \$6.95, 9781582349879.

Trapped in a tower for her own protection, the resourceful princess in ***The Red Wolf*** by Margaret Shannon makes herself a wolf suit out of magic red wool to escape her overbearing father. Exuberant with a very clever ending. Houghton-Mifflin, \$6.95, 9780618737444.



In ***The Storytelling Princess*** by Rafe Martin and Kimberly Root, an adventurous princess travels around the world and has quite a story to tell that wins over a reluctant prince. Penguin, \$6.99, 9780142500859.

The Paper Bag Princess by Robert Munsch and Michael Martchenko is an oldie-but-a-goodie. This 1980 story about a determined princess who confronts a haughty dragon to get her prince back continues to delight new audiences. Young enough for 2- to 5-year olds. Annick Press, \$5.99, 9780920236161.



Also for younger ones, the three (hardcover) books from Rising Moon Press by Carmela Lavigna Coyle are a big hit with our staff and remind little girls that princesses can do anything, wear anything, and bring their own magic with them:

[Do Princesses Really Kiss Frogs?](#), \$15.95, 9780873588805

[Do Princesses Scrape Their Knees?](#), \$15.95, 9780873589093

[Do Princesses Wear Hiking Boots?](#), \$15.95, 9780873588287

Recommendations from Angelique Grandone

Pop-Up Extravaganza

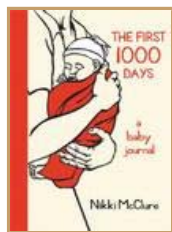
The run up to the holiday season always brings a wealth of amazing new specialty books for young readers. In recent years, the art of the pop-up book has been elevated to incredible new vistas, particularly by "paper engineers" such as David Carter, Robert Sabuda, and Matthew Reinhart. This year brings a particularly spectacular collection, and I'd like to share a few of my favorites, which are great for 4- to 7-year-olds:

The endlessly talented Maurice Sendak has been a much loved children's author and illustrator for decades with favorites such as *Where the Wild Things Are*, *In the Night Kitchen* and, more recently, *Bears!*. His newest work, [Mommy!](#), co-created with Arthur Yorick and paper engineer Matthew Reinhart, is an incredible collaboration that began as a piece for the stage. They saw potential in Yorick's quirky, disarmingly charming story about a young boy looking for his mother in a house full of monsters and ghoulies. Sendak's playfully spooky sets create the backdrop for Reinhart's clever paper tricks including an ingenious spinning mummy, a werewolf depants-ing, and a sweet surprise ending featuring the bride of Frankenstein! Scholastic, \$24.95, 9780439895262.

In a follow-up to his clever abstract pop-up *One Red Dot*, David Carter has returned with [Blue 2: A Pop-Up Book for All Ages](#). This particular creation is sophisticated, artful, and way fun! Spurred on by clues in the text, readers search Carter's elaborate structures for the elusive blue 2: Suspended? Reflective? Twirling? Where could it be?? The inventive design integrates the alphabet into the text as well, adding an element of rhythm to the hunt. Simon and Schuster, \$19.95, 9781416917816.



With her strong feminist and humanist themes and starkly beautiful images, Nikki McClure has long been one of my favorite artists and now she is branching out into books! Her newest endeavors, both released this month from Sasquatch Books, convey her characteristic charm and simplicity through cut paper images featuring the maternal-child bond. [Awake to Nap](#) is a "beginning" alphabet book written while her newborn son, Finn, napped. Both a calming meditation and a perfect bedtime book, the narrative gently winds down midway through the alphabet, as if the author has nodded off to sleep while writing. It is my new favorite gift for new babies. Sasquatch, \$8.95, 9781570615078.



Its companion book, [The First 1000 Days: A Baby Journal](#), is even more beautiful for its unique take on what is memorable about a baby's first experiences. In addition to pages devoted to each of the first 24 months, the book asks for details about baby's first adventures: first puddle, first rainbow, first laugh, and first blueberry to name a few. I'm particularly fond of a section entitled "How You Communicate and Tell Your Stories" with subsections of "Signs You Use," "First Words," and "First Drawings." Though the book is petite, there is plenty of room for recording all the special firsts in a new child's life. Additionally, the book is blessedly vague about gender and family themes, making it appropriate for many kinds of families, especially those that value McClure's strong connection to nature, community and, of course, the adventure of being a baby. Sasquatch, \$12.95, 9781570615085.

I got so excited when [On the Night You Were Born](#) by Nancy Tillman came in because it is the *perfect* new baby book. Featuring birds, ladybugs, and dancing bears, Tillman's illustrations are lush and gorgeous, with a moon on every page. The sweetly lolling text affirms a new child's unique place in the world, and reminds them where to look in the world should they forget that "you are the one and only ever you..." I imagine this becoming a bedtime favorite for generations of children. Feiwel & Friends, \$16.95, 9780312346065.



Calendars and Datebooks

Mother Tongue Ink brings back their popular *We'Moon: Gaia Rhythms for Womyn* line. This year the theme is "On Purpose." The datebook, again available in layflat, spiral bound, and unbound (so you can use it in your DayRunner-type binder) formats, features colorful art, inspiring poems and prose, sun and moon signs and transits, a planetary ephemeris, and much more. The 12"x12" wall calendar has larger versions of twelve of the beautiful art pieces and shows the phase of the moon each day. The 5.25"x8" datebooks are each \$17.95 (layflat: 189093139X, spiral: 1890931381, unbound: 1890931403), and *We'Moon on the Wall* is \$13.95 (1890931411).

Luna Press also returns with their '07 *Lunar Calendar: Dedicated to the Goddess in Her Many Guises*. Their pages show the moon's phases in a unique spiral format - beautiful, but not much room for writing, so it is best viewed as a piece of art rather than a place to jot down appointments. In addition to full astronomical and astrological data, it also includes an excellent bibliography. \$23, 1877920177.

The *Women Artists Datebook* from Syracuse Cultural Workers is also back, featuring art and poetry by Susan Davitti Darling, Ellen Bass, and Rachel Guido deVries, among others. Spiral bound in a 5"x7" size, it also includes a menstrual calendar, the lunar cycles, and a list of women's resources. \$13.95, 0935155597.

Pomegranate brings back its *Reading Woman Calendar* and hardcover engagement calendar, each with reproductions of paintings showing women with a book and featuring quotations by women about reading. The engagement book contains both weekly and monthly grids. Engagement calendar: 6 5/8" x 8", \$14.95, 076493564X. Wall calendar: 12"x13", \$13.99, 0764935682.



News

Thirty Years of CALYX

CALYX: A Journal of Art and Literature by Women recently published their 30th anniversary issue. *CALYX* uses a collective to decide what is published in each issue. The all-volunteer Journal Editorial Collective is comprised of writers, editors, teachers, and artists. As Margarita Donnelly, one of the founders, said in her essay in this anniversary issue, "*CALYX* has provided the public with a conversation by over 3,500 women authors and artists that is a collective expression of the different realities of women's lives, visions, and dreams." For more information about *CALYX* and how they're celebrating this important milestone, check out www.calyxpress.org.



WIMN's Voices

If you're interested in media coverage of women, check out WIMN's Voices, a women's media monitoring group blog. About fifty women contribute to this blog with commentary on social, cultural, and political issues about women and the media. Below are two interesting recent entries.

Gender and media ownership:

www.wimnonline.org/WIMNsVoicesBlog/?p=302.

Women journalists at prominent magazines:

www.wimnonline.org/WIMNsVoicesBlog/?p=308.



Books To Watch Out For

There hasn't been a new Lisa Alther (*Kinflicks*) book since 1995's *Five Minutes in Heaven*. So I'm pleased to share the news that 2007 will bring the publication of *Kinfolks: Falling Off the Family Tree, In Search of My Melungeon Ancestors*, a humorous travelogue memoir. For more information about Lisa, check out her website, www.lisaalther.com.

It's also been awhile since we've had a new book from Ursula Hegi (*Stones From the River*) - last was *Sacred Time* in 2003. Simon and Schuster imprint Touchstone Fireside will publish *The Worst Thing I've Ever Done* in October 2007. It's about a friendship between three childhood friends which becomes too close - and the impact of that friendship once they are adults.

Sigrid Nunez, whose *The Last of Her Kind* we reviewed in [MBW #7](#), will have a new novel out from Riverhead next year called *Salvation City*. In it, "a viral epidemic has killed off large numbers of people, including the liberal, intellectual parents of the 13-year-old protagonist and his sister, who are then sent to live with a charismatic Christian fundamentalist pastor and his wife, preparing for the Rapture."

We'll have to wait until Summer 2008 for *Ape House* from Sara Gruen, author of *Water for Elephants* (reviewed in [MBW #9](#)). The forthcoming book is about "a family of apes who are thrust into the limelight and irrevocably alter the lives of the people around them."



Awards

The Washington Center for the Book in Seattle recently named Ursula K. LeGuin recipient of its annual Maxine Cushing Gray Award, which recognizes a "a writer of serious intent and noteworthy talent" who is a resident of the Northwest. LeGuin accepted the award on behalf of Literature, who was "too busy to come collect her prize." In her acceptance speech, LeGuin remarked that "(a) government can silence writers easily, yet Literature always escapes its control. Literature cannot control a government; poets, as poets, do not legislate. What they can do is set minds free of the control of any tyrant or demagogue and his lies and disinformation." And: "Because literary skill is the rigorous use of language in the pursuit of truth, the habit of literature, of serious reading, is the best defense against believing the half-truths of ideologues and the lies of demagogues." Amen.

Read the entire speech here:

www.ursulakleguin.com/MCGrayFellowship-Speech.html.

Marisha Pessl has won the Mercantile Library Center for Fiction's inaugural John Sargent Sr. First Novel Prize for *Special Topics in Calamity Physics*. The Sargent Prize was created by the Center (based in New York City) as part of its mission to promote the art of fiction in the United States. The prize was named for John Sargent Sr., lifelong reader and President and CEO of Doubleday and Company for many years.

Learn more:

www.mercantilelibrary.org/awards/sargent.php.



Passings

Cancer has claimed far too many of us, including these wonderful book women:

Bebe Moore Campbell

Novelist and NPR commentator Bebe Moore Campbell died recently due to complications from brain cancer. Her novels, including *Your Blues Ain't Like Mine*, *Brothers and Sisters*, *Singing in the Comeback Choir*, and *What You Owe Me*, skillfully and poignantly explored issues of race and gender as played out in friendships, romantic relationships, and families. Recently she began writing about mental illness, with her novel *72 Hour Hold*, a play titled *Even With the Madness*, and children's book *Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry*. Her most recent book, released earlier this year, was also for kids - *Stompin' at the Savoy*.

New York Times obituary:

www.nytimes.com/2006/11/28/books/28campbell.html?_r=2&ref=books&oref=slogin&oref=slogin

San Francisco Chronicle story:

www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2006/11/27/entertainment/e133538S97.DTL

Links to some of her NPR commentaries:

www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6548122

Sherry Emory

Former Charis Books co-owner Sherry Emory passed away in November. From the note Charis sent to the community: "Sherry was a warrior, living for over two years with stage 4 breast cancer. For many years, Sherry was at the heart of Charis Books, offering a warm smile along with insightful book guidance to so many people. She did so much for Charis, staffing almost all of the programs in the early years, doing all the bookkeeping, and doing her share of book-ordering and all the other things that it takes to not only keep a business going, but also to serve the community in unspoken ways day after day." After leaving Charis in 2001, she served as a librarian in a Jewish school and later moved to Florida, where her twin sister lives. An education fund has been set up for Sherry's 16-year-old daughter, Rivka, in Sherry's memory. Donation checks should be made payable to Sherry's sister, Susan Garlock, with "Rivka" on the subject line and mailed to 1737 NE 26th Dr., Wilton Manors, FL 33334.

Southern Voice obituary:

<http://sovo.com/2006/11-24/news/obits>.

For more on Charis Books:

charis.booksense.com.

Ellen Willis

Pro-sex feminist, founding member of Redstockings, writer, and editor Ellen Willis recently died of lung cancer. She was the first pop music-critic at the *New Yorker* and served as writer and/or editor at the *Village Voice*, the *Nation*, *Dissent*, and *Rolling Stone*, among others. Her pieces were collected in the books *Beginning to See the Light*, *No More Nice Girls: Countercultural Essays*, and *Don't Think, Smile!: Notes on a Decade of Denial*.

The New York Times obituary:

[www.nytimes.com/2006/11/10/arts/10willis.html?](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/10/arts/10willis.html?ex=1320814800&en=7df5ac657f731a9e&ei=5090&partner=rssuserland&emc=rss)

[ex=1320814800&en=7df5ac657f731a9e&ei=5090&partner=rssuserland&emc=rss](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/10/arts/10willis.html?ex=1320814800&en=7df5ac657f731a9e&ei=5090&partner=rssuserland&emc=rss).

The Nation's collection of remembrances:

www.thenation.com/doc/20061127/ellen_willis.

"Lust Horizons: The 'Voice' and the Women's Movement," an essay written for the *Village Voice's* 50th anniversary:

www.villagevoice.com/specials/0543_50thewill.69320.31.html.

Articles by Ellen Willis published in *Dissent*:

www.dissentmagazine.org/article/?article=716.

Her 1976 article on Janis Joplin:

www.salon.com/mwt/feature/2006/11/13/ellen_willis.

**Calls for Submissions**

Editors Hanne Blank and Moira Russell are seeking essays and creative nonfiction for their forthcoming anthology *Breakthrough Bleeding: Essays on the Thing Women Spend A Quarter Of Their Time Doing, But No One's Supposed To Talk About*, to be published by She Devil Press, an imprint of Suspect Thoughts Press, in Fall 2008. They're not looking for coming-of-age or "first time" stories, but rather work that will "analyze, question, and explore all aspects of menstruation and menstruation culture." Submissions should be 1500-5000 words in length, and the deadline is March 20, 2007.

For more information:

www.hanneblank.com/blog/category/calls-for-submissions.

FemTAP: A Journal of Feminist Theory and Practice has announced the call for papers for its Summer 2007 issue, *Feminist Pedagogy: New Paradigms, New and Old Places*. Questions they'd like to address include: "How does the theory of transformative pedagogy relate to the practice of teaching *and* communal and/or social change? What theories and strategies are being developed and utilized outside of the classroom and the academic institutional paradigm?" They welcome essays from both academic and non-academic scholars and will accept both traditional and experimental essays as well as creative work. Deadline is March 12, 2007.

Additional information can be found at:

www.femtap.com/id22.html.



We hope you've enjoyed this issue of **More Books for Women**. We'll be back next month with our reviewers' picks for their favorite books of 2006.

If you exchange gifts during the winter holidays - or any time for that matter - please consider a gift subscription to **More Books for Women** (and our other publications, **The Lesbian Edition** and **The Gay Men's Edition**). Your literature loving friends will appreciate it!

And as always, we appreciate your assistance in spreading the word about Books To Watch Out For. It's helpful when you add us to your list of favorite links on your own website and places like MySpace and Tribe, tell your friends, colleagues, and book group(s) about us, and ask your local independent bookstore to carry our flyers. It all helps.

With thanks,

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