



Print It Out

- [PDF of this issue](#)

In This Issue...

News

- [Books Into Movies](#)
- [Online with Our Authors](#)
- [Young Adult BTWOF](#)
- [Awards](#)

Books

- [Ann Christophersen](#)
- [Linda Bubon](#)
- [Chelsey Clammer](#)
- [Mary Ellen Kavanaugh](#)
- [Sara Luce Look](#)
- [Linda Bryant](#)
- [Suzanne Corson](#)
- [Science Fiction & Fantasy](#)
- [Mysteries](#)
- [New in Paperback](#)

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.
 » [Click here](#) to **subscribe**.
 » [Click here](#) for **more info**.

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.

More Books for Women

- May 2007 -
Volume 3 Number 5

When Women and Children First, the bookstore home of many of the More Books for Women reviewers, announced in mid-April that they were facing financial difficulties and might have to close at the end of the summer, the response was huge: both in-store and online sales doubled (one staff person's time is largely devoted to online sales now), they've received both small and large donations, four different groups have offered to do fundraisers for the store, and more than sixty people have signed up for new memberships (benefits of membership include a subscription to *More Books for Women*). Their MySpace page (www.myspace.com/womenandkids) has received more traffic and shows a record of the supportive messages they've received. The store has also received quite a bit of media attention, with articles in the *Windy City Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and *Publishers Weekly*, and an appearance on PFLAG-TV, a local cable access show. Fortunately the store is no longer in imminent danger of closing, and things overall are "extraordinarily better," according to Linda Bubon.

We hope that people continue to support Women & Children First in Chicago, [Charis Books](#) in Atlanta (home of MBW reviewers Sara Luce Look and Linda Bryant), and their sister stores, not just during times of crisis, but year-round. These stores provide such valuable services to us as women and as readers with their community building, resources, knowledge, and enthusiasm. We can honor their important work with our shopping choices and gratitude.

Suzanne Corson



Ann Christophersen recommends...

That fabulous Irish lesbian writer Emma Donoghue has a new book out, a novel called **Landing**. Like all her previous books, *Landing* is a great pleasure to read. It's a love story featuring two lively, likeable characters, Jude Turner, a butchy and beautiful 23-year-old woman living in her small hometown of Ireland, Ontario, and Síle O'Shaughnessy, a 40-year-old gorgeous woman of Indian ancestry born and raised in Dublin, Ireland. Síle is a seasoned flight attendant and very much a jet-setter, thrilled by travel and deeply involved in urban life. She and Jude couldn't be more different, but after they meet during a quietly dramatic event mid-air, they fall in love during a courtship by email. The novel unfolds as they move through the perils of a long-distance relationship, during which time we meet the important people in their lives and begin to understand how rooted each is in her own environment. I won't tell you how it ends, but Donoghue pulls you in and keeps you riveted to the final pages. Donoghue's last book, a collection of short stories called *Touchy Subjects*, has just come out in paperback. The sparkling humor and wit in those stories is also evident in *Landing*. I predict any reader will love both. *Landing*: Harcourt, \$25, 9780151012978. *Touchy Subjects*: Harcourt, \$12, 9780156032612.



- » [Click here](#) to subscribe.
- » [Click here](#) for more info.

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.

- » [Click here](#) to subscribe.
- » [Click here](#) for more info.

.....

Advertising & Sponsorships

Email [Maddy Mathews](mailto:Maddy.Mathews) for ad rates and information.

.....

Housekeeping

If you want to change your BTWOF email address or other contact information, [click here](#) to update:

- » your subscriber profile
- » whatever has changed.

Finding BTWOF

BTWOF is published by Carol Seajay and Books To Watch Out For. www.BooksToWatchOutFor.com
Email: Editor@BTWOF.com
PO Box 882554
San Francisco, CA 94188.

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

Send books for review consideration for the **Gay Men's Edition** directly to Richard Labonte at 7-A Drummond St W Perth, ON K7H 2J3 Canada.



A Feminist Hullabaloo: Reuniting the Wild Sisters!

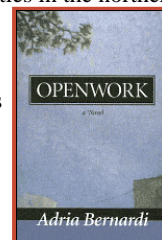
June 22-24, 2007 in Santa Fe, New Mexico
Paula Gunn Allen, Mary Daly, Sonia Johnson, Cherrie Moraga
+ 10 more dazzling presenters.

See www.feministhullabaloo.com or call 505.583.2470 for further information.

.....

Linda Bubon loves...

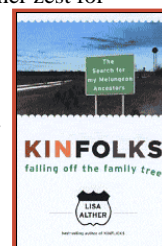
Openwork is the perfect title for Adria Bernardi's rich, poetic new novel about three generations of Italian immigrants. The novel is broken into three sections, set in three different time periods: 1913, 1968, and the present. While different family members re-appear in each section, there isn't a clear (or predictable) narrative that flows from mother to daughter to granddaughter. Bernardi shows us, rather, a community in the Tuscan hills of cousins and neighbors, many of whom have relatives who have emigrated to the U.S. and elsewhere. Two of these men, Egidio and Antenore, end up at the Dawson Coal Mine in New Mexico. Antenore goes on to Colorado and then the Midwest, organizing miners. Later he settles in the northern suburbs of Chicago, becoming a stone mason, and something of a patriarch to an extended family of Italian sons, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren. In the second section, Bernardi focuses on the second generation and their children, particularly Rina and Ray, as they struggle to accommodate their aging, dolorous parents, and their slang-y, rebellious children. One of those children, Adele, returns to Italy in the third section to find her great aunt, Imola, (whose narrative begins the book) in a nursing home, and she attempts to connect the threads that interweave the women in their family, some of whom have fallen prey to mental illness in their middle years. Bernardi's ability to capture time and place is formidable, and she uses her characters' voices and vocabulary to make us see and hear them. There are beautiful insights, moving revelations, and gentle humor, throughout *Openwork*; more than once I was moved to tears. I highly recommend this book, particularly if you share a European immigrant background (as I do). Southern Methodist University Press, \$22.50, 9780870745102.



I loved Cynthia Kaplan's *Why I'm Like This*, a collection of short, humorous essays reminiscent of David Sedaris, so I was excited to read her new collection, **Leave the Building Quickly: True Stories**. I was, once again, thoroughly charmed and entertained. Kaplan's mind works like no one else's, but I think she may have some of Woody Allen's genes. No one's paranoia is as extreme or extremely funny as Kaplan's. Doubtful about taking that treacherous Disney cruise? Cindy would definitely back you up. Her perspective is also uniquely female. I especially liked "The Squirrel Stores His Nuts," in which she shows no sympathy for her husband not getting sex because she has just given birth and is breastfeeding: "No woman who is nursing full-time feels like having her nipples teased or licked or rubbed or even looked at by anyone who does not measure his age in months." She muses that her former identity as a sexy, fun-loving gal has been crowded out by the new mom identity. I've never read anything that so frankly addresses this issue and made me laugh too. This book is just a treat to read, and the poignant stories are more touching because of the humor surrounding them. HarperCollins/William Morrow, \$23.95, 9780060548513.



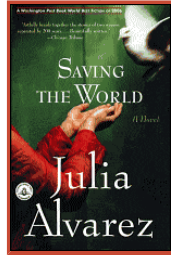
I promised a review of **Kinfolks: Falling Off the Family Tree: The Search for My Melungeon Ancestors** by Lisa Alther. Well, she's lost nothing of her zest for humorous Southern-inspired storytelling, and I zipped right through this fascinating story of her roots in the eastern Tennessee hills. If you want to know about genetic research - it's amazing what a DNA test can tell you about where your people come from - you'll find it here. But the most interesting part of the book is her memoir of growing up in Tennessee, the daughter and granddaughter of country doctors, who emerge as wonderful, funny, heroic men, and a mother and grandmother who never saw



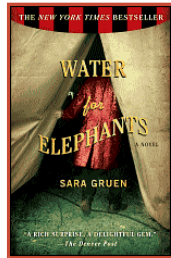
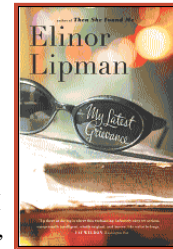
eye to eye (her father had the temerity to marry a Yankee). I laughed throughout and actually did learn where (probably) the Melungeons came from. Arcade, \$25, 9781559708326.

Three of my favorite reads from last year are now out in paperback:

Saving the World by Julia Alvarez is a rich, complex, double story, part of which is narrated by a middle-aged contemporary writer who is experiencing writer's block while her husband is setting up a "free" clinic in the Dominican Republic, where she is from. The writer is also caught up in the second, historical story narrated by a 19th century nun who is in charge of a troop of boy orphans who are sailing to the New World. Their mission, under the leadership of a charismatic doctor, is to carry the live smallpox vaccine to the settlements in America, Mexico, and the Caribbean Islands. Both missions are well-intended, but both men are also egocentric and oblivious to the true cost of their mission. Perfect for book groups, there is much to discuss in this very compelling novel. Algonquin Books, \$13.95, 9781565125582.



My Latest Grievance is another deftly written, wry, and witty novel from Elinor Lipman. Narrated by the most precocious and funny teenager I've encountered in fiction, Lipman's novel takes place in a second-rate women's college in Brookline, Massachusetts, in 1978. Raised by two excruciatingly politically correct teacher parents, Frederica Hatch causes an enormous upheaval for them when she invites the glamorous Laura Lee French, her father's first wife (briefly), to be a part of their lives. I chuckled on nearly every page. Houghton Mifflin/Mariner Books, \$13.95, 9780618872350.

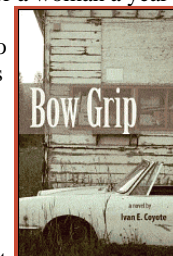


Sara Gruen's ***Water for Elephants*** provided me with the most reading pleasure of any book I read last year. I know I reviewed it then, but in short, it's great historical fiction, a fabulous love story, and very satisfying for those of us who love animals and are fairly certain that they know what's going on. Set on a traveling circus train during the Depression, the main character is an endearing young vet who falls in love with the bareback rider, who is married to the maniacal animal trainer. Algonquin Books, \$13.95, 9781565125605.



Chelsey Clammer suggests...

I'm sad to admit that I've never read any of Ivan E. Coyote's short stories before. I knew of her name from working in a feminist bookstore, and I know that she's also a pretty rad queer lady from her biography and list of topics she's covered in her writing. So when I saw that her first novel was coming out in April, I decided to read it as soon as I could. Coyote's ***Bow Grip*** surprised me in ways I never imagined. The novel is about Joey, a small town man whose wife left him for a woman a year ago. The town mechanic, Joey meets different people who live in the margins of society, as he tries to learn how to play an old cello that an ominous fellow gave him in exchange for an old car. He is also trying to get over the built-up anxiety that he has from his wife leaving him. These two activities - the stress relief and the cello playing - merge together in a wonderful narrative about one man trying to transcend his masculinity. I wouldn't call this book a lesbian novel, but it is definitely queer. Coyote challenges normative notions of masculinity and the social construction of human relations in order to give us a beautifully written novel that grabs your attention on every page. The writing style and plot content swiftly carry the story along until the eye-opening ending. After you read *Bow Grip*, I seriously suggest you pick up some of Coyote's earlier work, because I'm quickly falling in love with her writing. Arsenal Pulp Press, \$16.95, 9781551522135.



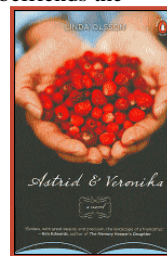
Cristy C. Road is well known for her drawings. Her work has been featured in *Bitch* magazine, on the cover of the current North American Congress on Latin America *Report of the Americas* March/April 2007 edition, on the cover of the new anthology *We Don't Need Another Wave*, and many zines, band posters, shirts, and other magazines. Road's work is truly the face of the younger feminist movement. Now, she has written down her experiences of being a rebellious, gender-queer, Latina

high school student in her illustrated novel **Indestructible**. Road's language and drawings are so honest and raw in emotion that you'll instantly be addicted to her story in the first couple of pages. From being a part of the punk rock scene to deciding whether or not to pluck her eyebrows in a rejection of white femininity, Road's narrative is captivating and inspiring to anyone who ever felt rebellious towards the status quo. Road's novel makes me want to get off my butt and do things in this world! Plus, she's really witty and her drawings are unforgettable. Read it, now. Microcosm Publishing, \$6, 9780977055777.

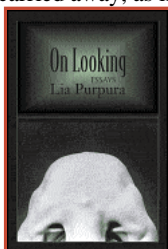


Mary Ellen Kavanaugh is inspired by...

Astrid and Veronika: A Novel by Linda Olson is a lovely, short but deeply satisfying read. Astrid and Veronika are two women of two different generations who come together in a lovely friendship which, like all good relationships, offers them each what they need in the moment in which they need it. Veronika, the younger woman, a writer, has rented a house in a small village in Sweden, where she hopes both to write a novel and to grieve the death of her lover. Astrid, a long-time resident of the village, a solitary woman who is called a witch by those who are frightened of her aloneness, is Veronika's next door neighbor and befriends the sorrowful young woman. As they slowly get to know each other over the course of a harsh winter and into the light of spring, they confide in one another and are witness to the pains and joys of each other's lives. In one very memorable passage, Astrid, who has just confessed to having done a truly horrible thing, tells Veronika, "I have never talked to anyone about that night. Ever... And now when I listen to my own words, I realize that they tell a different story from the one I have carried all these years. ... I think that if we can find the words and if we can find someone to tell them to, then perhaps we can see things differently. But I had no words, and I had nobody." This is a dear piece of writing - a true telling of what we can be to one another. Linda Olson's debut novel is a special book to give to a new friend, a soul friend, and will be a great reading group selection. Penguin, \$14, 9780143038078.

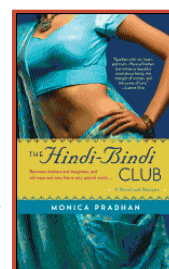


I have been dreamily lost in the reverie that is Lia Purpura's **On Looking**, a collection of lyrical essays. Today, I ate my lunch sitting outside on a busy corner in Minneapolis, slurping down Szechwan noodles, listening to a street saxophonist and carried away, as if in a meditation, by Purpura's descriptions. The focus of these essays is, as the title implies: looking. Seriously looking. The way we look as children but often lose the capacity to look so closely as we age and our vision widens out to "the bigger picture." Anything I can say about her writing feels inconsequential - here is an example of why: "Frost on the bathroom window this morning burgeons and twines in winged fleur-de-lis. Astonishing frost on this, the same morning I discover my mother's old cigarette case: the same, precise blooms but in silver-etched motion. How the mind of frost, the form reaches out, draws its heirs close: from anywhere, cracked riverbeds and leaf veins in sun." Sarabande Books, \$14.95, 9781932511390.



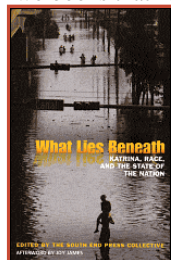
Sara Luce Look is up all night reading...

I was surprised by how much I like **The Hindi-Bindi Club** by Monica Pradhan. It's about a group of women, originally from different regions of India, who now live in the Washington, D.C. area. Their now-adult daughters refer to their mothers as "the Hindi-Bindi club." It's a good read about mothers and daughters, generational and cultural differences, and some history as well, with observations about what happened when Pakistan was separated from India. I loved reading all the recipes - I want to try them all. Random House/Bantam, \$12, 9780553384529.



I too read ***Kinfolks: Falling Off the Family Tree - The Search for My Melungeon Ancestors*** by Lisa Alther this month. It is written in the author's breezy style, very flippant, funny, and entertaining. Melungeon people don't know their history, so Alther does research to find out if she's Melungeon. *Kinfolks* also discusses what it means to be a person of color in the South, the politics of race in the South, what it means to pass, and at what point someone may or may not want to pass. For those who have read her novels, Alther provides information about where some of those characters came from. She also touches on what's taught in U.S. schools and what the truth is, about colonization, etc. I am disappointed that her publisher didn't choose to reprint Alther's classic novel *Kinflicks* and her other backlist titles; it's such a shame that they're all out of print. *Kinfolks*: Arcade, \$25, 9781559708326.

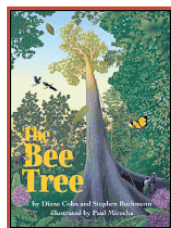
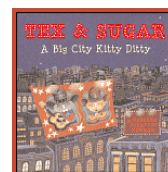
Two books that have sold very well at our store (**Charis Books** in Atlanta) recently:



What Lies Beneath: Katrina, Race, and the State of the Nation edited by South End Press Collective (South End Press, \$15, 9780896087675) and ***The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*** edited by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (South End Press, \$18 paper, 9780896087668). *What Lies Beneath* looks at Katrina in relationship to race, politics, and justice, while *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded* discusses the politics of non-profit organizations and philanthropy - there's quite a buzz in Atlanta about this latest INCITE! book.

And a couple **For the Kids**:

Tex and Sugar: A Big City Kitty Ditty, written and illustrated by Barbara Johansen Newman, features bold and detailed illustrations of cowboy and cowgirl cars trying to make their way in the country music world. With well-done rhymes, it's a great read-aloud book for kids three to seven. Sterling Publishing, \$14.95 hardback, 9781402738876.

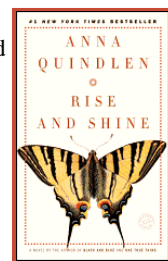


The Bee Tree by Stephen Buchmann and Diana Cohn with beautiful illustrations by Paul Mirocha is based on a true story about a family in Malaysia. They have a tradition where every year someone climbs this tree to collect honey, and this year, it's Nizam's turn, as he's coming of age. The back of the book has the story behind the story - about bees in Malaysia, why they collect the honey - and includes photographs of the people on whom the story is based and the tree itself. We had this book featured on Charis' Earth Day display last month. Cinco Puntos Press, \$17.95 hardback, 9780938317982.



Linda Bryant is moved by...

I was drawn to ***Rise and Shine*** by the beautiful swallowtail butterfly on the cover and because I love Anna Quindlen, but I did not get around to reading it until a 91-year-old woman told her Booklover's Club (where I was speaking about feminist bookstores for women's history month) how much she loved it. She was from New York, and she said it was such a wonderful representation of the glitz and glamour and the soul-wrenching poverty that coexists there that she felt it was very "New York." It's a book to learn from, to cry with, to live in for a while, and taste and see how fragile and resilient people can be. It's not a story that I identify with, a life that I know, but it feels real and alive. Random House, \$14.95, 9780812977813.

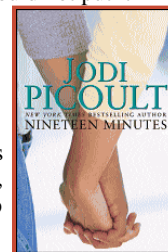


I loved *The Book of Dead Birds* by Gayle Brandeis, so I was eager to read ***Self Storage***, her new novel. Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* infuses this beautiful book, lines of poetry interwoven with the narrator's thoughts, then the ancient copy of the book she owns becomes another kind of salvation for her. Flan deals in storage units, purchasing the contents of units left unpaid for, sight unseen, then selling what she can until one day all that is in the unit is a box with a slip of paper that says, "Yes." When she follows that yes to its source, everything changes. As always, Brandeis brings political realities into her story, much like

Barbara Kingsolver, slips them in and makes you care about them by letting you

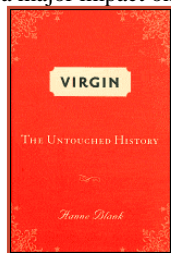
know a person, not an idea. Heartbreaking and yet hopeful, I loved this book. Random House, \$23.95, 9780345492609.

Nineteen Minutes by Jodi Picoult is a tough book - hard, especially, for those whose children are not yet grown. As usual, Picoult draws the reader in emotionally. My co-worker could not finish the book - "too hard," she said. I could not put it down. Taking the reader into the heart of a school shooting, into the mind of the shooter, but, more importantly, into the heart of his parents, it reminded me of all the little decisions that we as parents make daily that affect our children in ways we might not guess. Or if we did, we might not guess right. The other side of the experience - the families of the victims - is also very real, as is the complicated nature of bullying. And then there's the judge, oh, and the cop. She doesn't miss a beat. To me, a novel that opens up the complexity instead of simplifying it is worth the read. Simon & Schuster, \$26.95, 9780743496728.



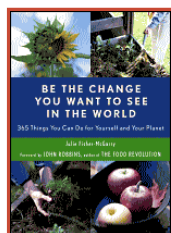
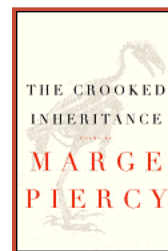
Suzanne Corson enjoys...

After fielding numerous questions about what virginity is - and isn't - on teen-sex advice website scarleteen.com, Hanne Blank began doing research in an attempt to get clear answers. Her inability to find either clarity or consensus led her to write **Virgin: The Untouched History**. This is probably a subject that, in and of itself, has a major impact on many women yet is rarely explored in depth. People make



assumptions and spout things about the hymen, history, and religion. Yet even with those things, there isn't agreement. For one thing, though different types of virginity have been written about since before the birth of Christ, discussions of vaginal hymens and their link to virginity weren't noted until the fifteenth century. So clearly the existence - or not - of a hymen wasn't a factor at all in identifying a virgin for, oh, at least the first millennium. Blank's research and scholarship is impressive, and she writes with an entertaining and accessible style. She covers cultural, historical, religious, medical, and scientific thoughts on virginity and tells of the great impact of this subject on women throughout the ages - and today. I was stunned to read that a 12-year-old in Alabama was murdered by her mother in 2004 (only three years ago, folks) because her mother thought the girl was no longer a virgin. Blank also looks at how virginity is addressed in films and on TV, by the government, with things like "abstinence-only sex education," and by some churches today, with "chastity pledges." *Virgin: The Untouched History* is a must-read for anyone interested in women's history and the intersections between history, religion, culture, and sexuality. Bloomsbury USA, \$24.95, 9781596910102.

I finally had a chance to read Marge Piercy's latest collection of poetry, **The Crooked Inheritance**. What a treat. It's a great blend of her trademark political poetry, intimate personal poems, and those about everyday life: gardening, making pesto, baking bread. Of special note is "Choose a Color," which covers everything from the Cold War to global warming. From her childhood neighborhood in Detroit to her home in Cape Cod, from the war in Iraq to the U.S. government's response to Hurricane Katrina, there's plenty to think about, remember, wonder about, and enjoy in this strong collection. Random House/Knopf, \$24, 9780307265074.



Julie Fisher-McGarry has come up with a handy, inspirational, and incredibly useful guide to living green and in better harmony with your mind, body and spirit. **Be the Change You Want to See in the World: 365 Things You Can Do for Yourself and Your Planet** has tips for everyday of the year: recipes, websites to check out, parables, lessons, and motivational gems. There are many books like this, but this one clicked for me in a way that others haven't. These are things I actually can do - and will do. Check it out. Conari Press, \$14.95, 9781573242974.



Science Fiction and Fantasy

By Jill Roberts

Sister Eileen Callaghan is no ordinary nun. For starters, she wears a Colt revolver in a garter holster beneath her habit. And her journey across post-Civil War America is littered with mangled corpses. It turns out that Callaghan has a strange affinity for werewolves, and she becomes locked in a deadly duel with an elusive killer. Will she have to emulate him in order to defeat him? In a Southern gothic with taut suspense and memorable characters, Cherie Priest (*Four and Twenty Blackbirds*) puts her own scary stamp on werewolf stories. With its three linked stories, **Dreadful Skin** is an enjoyable thriller with some very interesting morality thrown in. Subterranean Press, \$25, 9781596060807.

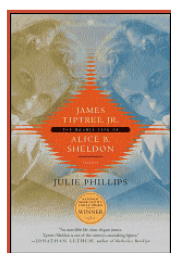


In the Tiptree-verse, the girls are strong and the boys, are - well everyone's pretty much whomever they want to be. The 2006 Tiptree Awards have just been announced, with co-winners Shelley Jackson (**Half Life**) and Catherynne M. Valente (**The Orphan's Tales: In the Night Garden**) sharing the prize (actually, they each get the \$1,000 in prize money, an original Tiptree-related piece of artwork, and most importantly, the signature chocolate created specifically for the award. Yum). In writing superlative fiction that explores and expands gender, these authors move us toward the unconstrained world you'd *really* want to live in. Here are Tiptree juror Joan Gordon's comments on the winners:



"*Half Life* is a spectacular book. Jackson uses the science fictional conceit - conjoined twins born in large numbers after the A-Bomb testing in the 1950s - to explore both sympathetically and satirically all the negotiations in the women's movement, in gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgender movements, in other rights movements - separatist, solidarity, identity, integration, etc." HarperCollins, \$24.95, 9780060882358.

About *The Orphan's Tales: In the Night Garden*, Gordon continues, "The structure... is brilliant, stories within stories, looping around and following through one another. On the surface it's a girl telling fairy tales a la 1001 nights, but the tales are influenced by worldwide story-telling traditions, and the roles of men, women, heroes, villains, animals, mythic beings, gods, etc., are constantly being subverted, upended, tweaked, so that gender and sexuality are more liquid than solid." Bantam Spectra, \$14, 9780553384031.



I really couldn't have said it any better. I chose **James Tiptree, Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon** as my favorite sf-related nonfiction book of 2006. This dazzling biography of one of my literary heroes subsequently won the National Book Critics Circle Award and has just received a special recognition Tiptree Award. I won't review it again, even though I want to. The trade paperback will be out in June: Picador, \$18, 9780312426941.

Here's the rundown of the 2006 Tiptree Awards, all worth watching out for:

Winners:

Shelley Jackson, *Half Life*

Catherynne M. Valente, *The Orphan's Tales: In the Night Garden*

Special Recognition:

Julie Phillips, *James Tiptree, Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon*

Honor List:

Andrea Hairston, *Mindscape*, Aqueduct Press, \$19.50 paperback, 978933500034

Betsy James, *Listening at the Gate*, Atheneum, \$16.95, 9780689850684

Ellen Kushner, *The Privilege of the Sword*, Spectra, \$6.99, 9780553586961

James Morrow, *The Witchfinder*, Harper Perennial, \$15.95, 9780060821807

Michaela Roessner, "Horse-Year Women," *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, January 2006

Karen Russell, "Ava Wrestles the Alligator" and "St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised

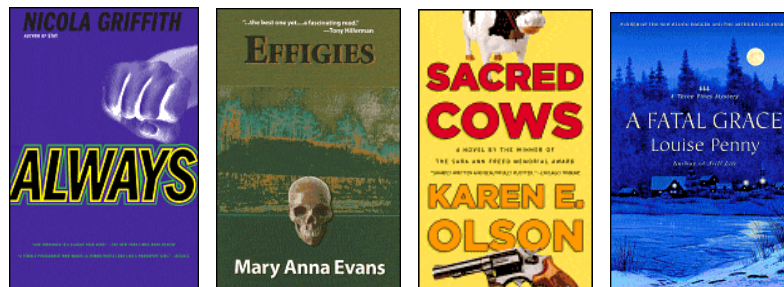
by Wolves," from *St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves*, Knopf, \$22, 9780307263988

Karen Traviss, *Matriarch*, Eos, \$7.99, 9780060882310

Mark von Schlegell, *Venusia*, Semiotext(e), \$14.95, 9781584350262

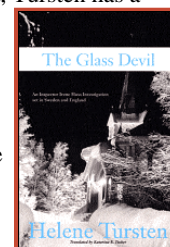


Mysteries By Nan Cinnater

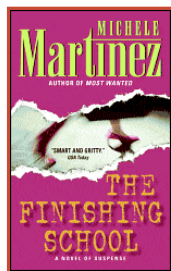


Those of us who are hooked on mystery fiction are to some extent searching for the Grail: that perfect mix of suspense, character, structure, and language that will engage and entertain in equal measure. *Always*, the new entry by Nicola Griffith in her series about Norwegian-born martial artist and former cop Aud Torvingen, comes very close. Aud is the enigmatic lesbian heroine of Nicola Griffith's *noir* classics *Blue Place* (Harper, \$13.95, 9780380790883) and *Stay* (Vintage, \$12.95, 9781400032303). *Always* is the most ambitious and most feminist book in the series so far. In this beautifully structured novel, Griffith alternates between two stories. In one, Aud travels to Seattle to rendezvous with her mother, a Norwegian diplomat, and take care of some business. We quickly realize that something is amiss with Aud's real estate holdings, in particular a warehouse rented to film a trouble-plagued television pilot. The other story follows a women's self-defense course Aud teaches in Atlanta. As often happens in real life, the self-defense classes double as consciousness-raising sessions for the students. In both stories the tension mounts slowly but inexorably, with plot developments firmly rooted in strong, real characters. In addition to all that, we get to meet Aud's mother! Riverhead, \$26.95, 9781594489358.

In *The Glass Devil* by Helene Tursten, translated by Katarina E. Tucker, Swedish Detective Inspector Irene Huss investigates a triple homicide (Soho Press, \$24, 9781569474525). The victims are a school teacher living in a lakeside cottage and his parents, a minister and his wife, murdered in their beds in a small-town rectory. There are virtually no clues except for the pentagrams drawn in blood on their computer screens, suggesting a Satanic connection. (To her credit, Tursten has a likeable Wiccan character explain the different connotations of the pentagram, as well as the difference between Satanism and more benign occult practices.) Irene learns that there is a fourth member of the family, a daughter who lives in London, and eventually Irene goes to England to investigate. The mystery is compelling and complex, with some masterful misdirection. Irene appears to be a realistic working wife and mother of twin teenage daughters. Occasionally, though, I felt like I was watching a dubbed movie and wondering what was lost in translation. Sometimes social interactions seemed cold or stilted when I suspect they were meant to be casual and even heart-warming. These odd glitches do not detract from a terrific plot, however. This is the third in the Irene Huss series to be published in the U.S. by Soho Press, following *Detective Inspector Huss* (\$14, 9781569473702) and *The Torso* (\$13, 9781569474532).



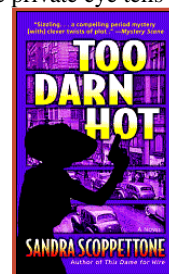
Mary Anna Evans has just published the third in her series about her mixed-race heroine, archaeologist Faye Longchamp, and her Native American colleague Joe Wolf Mantooth. In *Effigies* (Poisoned Pen Press, \$24.95, 9781590583425), Faye and Joe are on a dig in Mississippi when racial tensions boil over, and a local KKK member is found murdered with an Indian blade. Evans does a neat job of incorporating scientific and archaeological data into stories that are equally driven by character and history. The first in the series, *Artifacts*, is currently out of print; the second is *Relics* (Poisoned Pen, \$14.95, 9781590583623).



Michele Martinez, herself a former federal prosecutor, is writing a sharp and suspenseful series about Hispanic federal prosecutor Melanie Vargas. In **The Finishing School** (Harper, \$7.99, 9780060724016), Melanie is investigating the heroin overdoses of two prep school girls, and she begins to suspect that at least one was not an accident. Melanie is a single mom with a family and a life, as well as a crush on an FBI agent she works with, giving this more depth and interest than the run-of-the-mill thriller. Melanie Vargas is back in Martinez's latest novel, **Cover-Up**. Morrow, \$23.95, 9780060899004.

Sacred Cows by Karen E. Olson (Warner, \$6.99, 9780446616850) introduces New Haven reporter Annie Seymour - tough, funny, and cranky bordering on misanthropic. (Annie is the kind of city dweller who is afraid that if she gets to know her neighbors, she'll have to move.) Annie is pulled out of bed in the wee hours to cover the death of a Yale co-ed, who fell or jumped from an apartment balcony. Annie quickly learns that the apartment was rented by a mysterious corporation, and the girl was dead before she fell. Annie's life is almost as complicated as the mystery. Her lover is a cop; her mother is a high-powered lawyer retained by the girl's family; her chief rival is a zealously annoying cub reporter; and she's being followed by a sexy private investigator. As a final straw, Annie is assigned to cover the Cow Parade, an urban art installation of fiberglass cows decorated by local artists. Olson brings Annie back in **Secondhand Smoke** (Mysterious Press, \$22, 9780892960255).

In the film of *The Big Sleep*, Humphrey Bogart runs into a series of wonderfully outspoken working women who epitomize the homefront feminist spirit - most notably a sexy, spunky cab driver who's more than game when the private eye tells her to follow that car. I like to think that one of those women could be Sandra Scoppetone's heroine Faye Quick, a former secretary running a PI agency while her boss is fighting overseas in WWII. Faye debuted in *This Dame for Hire* (Ballantine, \$6.99, 9780345478115) and now the sequel, **Too Darn Hot**, is also available in paperback (Ballantine, \$7.99, 9780345478139). Narrated by Faye, the series at first seemed premise-heavy, written in an extremely slangy dialect and packed with every forties detail that would fit. Something clicked for me with the second book, however, and I gave myself over to the black and white movie that this should be. In *Too Darn Hot*, a good-looking broad walks in to the office and asks Faye to search for her missing boyfriend, a soldier on leave named Charlie. When Faye gets to his hotel room, she finds a corpse - but is it Charlie?



Louise Penny writes literate and subtle whodunits in the classic Agatha Christie mode, although her hero, Armand Gamache, Chief Inspector of the Surete de Quebec, is a quietly observant and likeable character who is more Maigret than Poirot. In **Still Life** (Minotaur, \$6.99, 9780312948559) murder disrupts the tiny town of Three Pines, just north of the U.S. border, when a retired schoolteacher and Sunday painter is felled by an arrow in hunting season. In **A Fatal Grace** (Minotaur, \$23.95, 9780312352561) Gamache returns to Three Pines at Christmas when murder occurs during a curling competition.

Maybe I expect less of unpretentious little paperbacks, and therefore I am more satisfied when they turn out to be reasonably well written and entertaining. Or maybe I just like golden retrievers. In any case, I thoroughly enjoyed *Smoky Mountain Tracks* by Donna Ball (Penguin/Signet, \$6.99, 9780451218025), and the sequel, **Rapid Fire**. Raine Stockton is a kennel owner and dog trainer who also works part time for the Forest Service in North Carolina. With the help of her ex-husband the police chief, her business partner Maude, and most of all her golden retriever Cisco, Raine is equal to almost any challenge. But Raine is torn when the FBI contacts her while searching for her old lover, a fugitive eco-terrorist, in *Rapid Fire*. Meanwhile, a bear wreaks havoc at a construction site, and Raine finds a dead body by the side of the road. The threads of this mystery are not as tightly tied as I expected, but that makes it interesting and realistic. And, besides, it's really all about the dog. Penguin/Signet, \$6.99, 9780451219992.



Talk about unpretentious little paperbacks! I had a high fever when I picked up **What's a Ghoul to Do?** by Victoria Laurie, which looks like chick-lit-meets-*Ghostbusters*, and that's pretty much what it is. But Laurie takes her psychic sleuthing seriously, and is therefore convincing in her explication of paranormal

happenings. Meanwhile her heroine's gay male best friend, loud-mouthed parrot, and sexy client/love interest keep the repartee flying and make the reader take everything but the ghosts very lightly. Penguin/Signet, \$6.99, 9780451220905.



New in Paperback

Fiction

Special Topics in Calamity Physics, Marisha Pessl, Penguin, \$15, 9780143112129.
Triangle: A Novel, Katharine Weber, St. Martin's/Picador, \$14, 9780312426149.

Nonfiction

Seducing the Demon: Writing for My Life, Erica Jong, Penguin/Tarcher, \$14.95, 9781585425143.
Strange Piece of Paradise, Terri Jentz, St. Martin's/Picador, \$15, 9780312426699.
The Year of Magical Thinking, Joan Didion, Random House/Vintage, \$13.95, 9781400078431.



Books Into Movies

The movie based on Susan Minot's novel *Evening* opens nationwide on June 29. The cast of this story of mothers and daughters features two real-life mother-daughter acting pairs: Vanessa Redgrave and Natasha Richardson, and Meryl Streep and Mamie Gummer. Others in the cast include Claire Danes, Toni Collette, and Glenn Close.

Alice Sebold's novel *The Lovely Bones* is a few steps closer to a movie theatre near you as well. Director Peter Jackson and writing partners Philippa Boyens and Fran Walsh have finished the script, and Dreamworks won the bidding war for the film, which according to *Variety* is a natural fit, since the studio tried to acquire the script before Jackson successfully did so. Jackson's recent work includes films such as *King Kong* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, but he also directed 1994's *Heavenly Creatures*, which is more similar in tone to Sebold's novel than the blockbusters made of the Tolkien books.



Online with Our Authors

CNN's *Talk Asia* program talks with Kiran Desai:
www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/asiapcf/04/23/talkasia.desai/index.html.

Vermont Woman profiles Grace Paley:
www.vermontwoman.com/articles/0507/GracePaley.shtml.

...and interviews Lisa Alther:
www.vermontwoman.com/articles/0205/lisa-alther.shtml.

Tavis Smiley interviews Anne Lamott for PBS:
www.pbs.org/kcet/tavissmiley/archive/200703/20070328_lamott.html.

Scarleteen.com interviews Hanne Blank about *Virgin: The Untouched History*:
www.scarleteen.com/politics/virgin.html.

T Cooper discusses touring for the paperback release of *Lipshitz 6* with *Publishers Weekly*:
www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6435437.html&.

Bookslut.com interviews Alison Bechdel about *Fun Home*:
www.bookslut.com/features/2007_03_010764.php.



Young Adult Books to Watch Out For

Razorbill, an imprint of Penguin Books, will publish Allegra (*Intuition*) Goodman's first young adult novel, *The Other Side of the Island*, in fall 2008. The book is described as a post-apocalyptic dystopian tale.

Also due in fall 2008: a collection of young adult stories from Kelly Link, author of two story collections for adults, *Magic for Beginners* (2005) and *Stranger Things Happen* (2001). Link says the stories in the forthcoming collection for young adults are a combination of fantasy, ghost stories and "some pretty funny" tales.



Awards

The **Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction** recently announced the shortlist for its 2007 awards, which celebrate "excellence, originality, and accessibility in international women's writing." The shortlist consists of:

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Rachel Cusk, *Arlington Park*

Kiran Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss*

Xiaolu Guo, *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers*

Jane Harris, *The Observations*

Anne Tyler, *Digging to America*

Listen to some of the 2007 Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction-shortlisted authors read from their nominated books:

www.orangeprize.co.uk/opf/audio.php4.

In addition, here is the short list for the **2007 Orange Broadband Award for New Writers**, which honors authors of first works of fiction:

Clare Allan, *Poppy Shakespeare*

Roopa Farooki, *Bitter Sweets*

Karen Connelly, *The Lizard Cage*

Three women are included in the Judges' List of Contenders for the second **Man Booker International Prize**. The 15 authors on the list are: Chinua Achebe, Margaret Atwood, John Banville, Peter Carey, Don DeLillo, Carlos Fuentes, Doris Lessing, Ian McEwan, Harry Mulisch, Alice Munro, Michael Ondaatje, Amos Oz, Philip Roth, Salman Rushdie, and Michel Tournier. The writers come from ten countries, and four are writers in translation.

The Man Booker International Prize can be won by an author of any nationality, providing that his or her work is available in the English language. It is awarded every second year, which allows the judges time to study in depth the work of those authors under consideration. The current judges are Elaine Showalter (chair), Nadine Gordimer, and Colm Tóibín.



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

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.

And of course, a gift subscription to one of the three editions of Books To Watch Out For makes a fine gift for your friends and loved ones who read.

With thanks,

Suzanne Corson
for *Books To Watch Out For*
Editor@BooksToWatchOutFor.com
415.642.9993



Three new magazines
Celebrating the books that speak to us!



Books to Watch Out For!™

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!



Free Trial Subscriptions!

- ★ More Books for Women — just launched!
- ★ The Gay Men's Edition
- ★ The Lesbian Edition

Books to Watch Out For™ magazines help you get a handle on the best new GLBTQ and women's books.

Each edition of **Books to Watch Out For™** features succinct reviews of literary fiction, non-fiction, kids' books, mysteries and more, with the latest news from the book world compiled by Carol Seajay, Women & Children First bookstore, and Richard Labonte. Available monthly via email or post.

**"A wonderful resource,
and so much fun to read."**

— Alison Bechdel



Sign up now for a free three-month trial subscription to Books To Watch Out For at www.BTWOF.com/TRIAL/.

The perfect gift for all your reading friends

www.BooksToWatchOutFor.com

★ The perfect gift for all your reading friends — and yourself! ★

★ Sign up for your free trial subscription!

Go to www.BTWOF.com/TRIAL/ and select the edition(s) you'd like.

★ Subscribe today! Sign up for our limited time offer — 15 months for the price of 12—

Go to www.BTWOF.com or use this form.

- More Books for Women The Lesbian Edition
 The Gay Men's Edition

email print

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Prov _____

Zip/Postal Code _____ Country _____

Phone _____

Email address (required for email delivery) _____

Where did you hear about us? _____



Mail with check or credit card information to:
Books To Watch Out For

PO Box 882554, San Francisco CA 94188 415-642-9993

www.BooksToWatchOutFor.com

Give a friend 15 months for the price of 12.

- More Books for Women The Lesbian Edition
 The Gay Men's Edition

email print

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Prov _____

Zip/Postal Code _____ Country _____

Phone _____

Email address (required for email delivery) _____

(Write additional gift recipients on a separate sheet of paper.)

Payment

___ One edition: email \$30/year print \$42/year

___ Two editions: email \$48/year print \$66/year

___ Three editions: email \$65/year print \$95/year

Check enclosed for \$ _____ Charge my credit card

Credit Card number _____

Exp. month _____ Exp. year _____ CVN _____

(CVN is the 3 digit number on back of some cards)

Name on card if different _____

Signature _____

