

# Reviews

**GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWS:** Reviews are arranged under broad subject categories, with subcategories where appropriate (for example, age-group categories for children's books). The categories are arranged roughly by field in the following order: humanities, biography, history, religion, education, social sciences, reference, juvenile works, and nonprint materials. Within each subject category, reviews are arranged in alphabetical order by author surname. Each review is prefaced by a three-part numbering system: a two digit volume number, with the first year of publication designated as 01; a one-digit issue number; and a four-digit review number that runs consecutively within each individual volume year. For example, 04-1-0024 refers to review number 24 in volume 4, issue 1. Individual review entries begin with a headnote, which indicates the review number and a full bibliographic citation. Audio materials, videocassettes, and computer software are reviewed in separate categories. The review section is followed by author, title, and subject indexes keyed to the review numbers described above. Thesaurus citations in the author index indicate relevant ethnic groups, races, religions, and, where appropriate, geographic regions. The review section concludes with a directory of the publishers cited in a particular issue. The cumulative index for each volume year appears in the December issue of that year.

## Literature

### General Anthologies

#### 16-3-0227

Gilb, Dagoberto, ed. *Hecho en Tejas: An Anthology of Texas Mexican Literature*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2007. 544 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8263-4125-9, \$29.95.

This is an English anthology of Texas Mexican literary selections that contains poetry and narrative written in Texas and includes writings from the time of Spanish expeditions to the present. Authors contributed with literature, art, and music *corridos*, creating an artistic cultural collage of Texas Mexican literature and society with its unique identity. In this collection are literary selections chronologically arranged from a historical perspective, addressing social, political, and cultural issues and the evolution of Texas Mexican literature that is enriching the literary canon and its diversity in all genres.

*Hecho en Tejas* is divided into ten parts. It begins with Cabeza de Vaca in 1537 and ends with the year 2000 with a selection of contemporary Texas Mexican writers and poets. Most of the selections include a brief biography and information about the historical Texas Mexican heritage illustrating the selected story or poem. An introduction voices historical and political issues in relation to the creation of the anthology, the richness of many Texas Mexican writers. Their contributions establish their own

literature, which has been flourishing since the sixteenth century.

Several selections are bilingual, Spanish and English. There are also Spanish and English intertwined with Chicano and Texas Spanish words or Spanglish. Sections with numerous photographs in color and in black-and-white enhance the literary collection, highlighting Texas Mexican life and art. The contents provide an overall cultural and historical background of Texas Mexican life. Prose, poetry, and musical pieces interlace voices expressing art, feelings, issues that tell us about the cultural and literary identity, the creativity and celebration of Texas Mexican writers in their literary journey.

Collectively all these voices offer a valuable harmony for appreciation of Texas Mexican arts and literature in the canon of the literary world as well as establishing their cultural identity. Among those voices include several well known Chicano writers and poets, like Sandra Cisneros and Rolando Hinojosa, and musicians Lydia Mendoza, Freddy Fender, and Selena.

*Hecho en Tejas* is an important and valuable contribution to Texas American scholarship and belongs in public, academic, and special library collections. It may be also valuable as a textbook for literature courses in Texas Mexican, Mexican, Chicano, and cultural and ethnic studies.

Alva V. Cellini  
St. Bonaventure Univ.

### Fiction

#### 16-3-0228

Aira, César. *How I Became a Nun*. New York: New Directions, 2007. 128 pp. Trans. from Spanish by Chris Andrews. ISBN 0-8112-1631-4, \$13.95 (pb).

Set in Rosario, Argentina, in the 1950s, Aira's novel is about a six-year-old child who survives cyanide poisoning after eating strawberry ice cream. At the hospital, the feverish boy (or girl) imagines deliriously a series of fantastic stories about a flood and poisoning his parents. After his illness, he begins his schooling late, learns how to read, and makes friends. While his father is in jail for killing the ice-cream vendor, the boy becomes close to his mother as they endure the economic and personal hardships of life with his father incarcerated. One day he is kidnapped by the ice-cream vendor's widowed wife, who, out of revenge, kills the child by forcing him into the strawberry ice cream drum.

With a circular approach to time, the novel is narrated through the voice of a lonely child, who, without distinctive features, feels invisible, dismembered, and believes he is a girl. Ingeniously, Aira presents a complex narration with philosophical overtones about knowledge. He initiates an intellectual, gamelike reflection on reality. He is skeptical of life, except for music. Moreover, Aira's use of the labyrinth represents a paradox of the symmetry of mind and of history and time. He confronts dogmatic realities that contrast with the idea of freedom. This is a unique and insightful novel that merits careful reading and rereading. Likewise, Andrews's translation into English is excellent.

Rosita Chazarreta-Rourke  
Duchesne Univ.

### 16-3-0229

Andrzejewski, Jerzy. *Holy Week: A Novel of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*. Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 2007. 149 pp. Trans. from Polish by Oscar E. Swan. ISBN-13 978-0-8214-1715-7, \$39.95 (cl); 978-0-8214-1716-4, \$19.95 (pb).

*Holy Week* is a stirring book about Warsaw the week before Easter, from Tuesday through Friday during the year of 1943. We meet one character, a Jewish woman who is hiding out in the open. She runs into a friend who is not Jewish and gets taken to his home. He watches over her and is her protector. We hear about the terrible actions that are taking place in the Warsaw Ghetto: the fighting, the fires, the bombs, and so on.

This book opens readers' eyes to the feelings of many of the Polish citizens during this week. The fear of the citizens is palpable. As a reader of much Holocaust literature, I found this work to be a new way for me to look at the events of this specific time. One character is a member of the underground, and the trepidation he feels, along with that of his family, is gripping. One area the author explores well is the complexity of living as a Polish citizen during this difficult time. The most chilling scene for this reader was during an incident when the Germans set the buildings on fire, and the screams from the Ghetto could be heard throughout the Warsaw community. *Holy Week* is worthwhile reading and explores some topics that are rarely covered in Holocaust literature.

Miriam Guttman  
Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, Wis.

### 16-3-0230

Ballas, Shimon. *Outcast*. San Francisco: City Lights, 2007. 210 pp. Trans. from Hebrew by Ammiel Alcalay and Oz Shelach. ISBN-13 978-0-87286-481-8, \$13.95 (pb).

Ballas writes the fictionalized autobiography of Haroun Soussan, based on the real story of Ahmad Nissim Soussa, interweaving the past and the present. Always intellectualizing, he provides a timeline of historical events from ancient times that moves Iraq through colonization, coups, presidencies, and tyrannies. As the title foreshadows, he is an outcast. With his conversion to Islam, Soussan has distanced himself from his identity as a Jew. He explains that his national fervor for his homeland of Iraq outweighs his allegiance to his former religion. He relates his surprise at the betrayal of former friends who question his conversion, explored in his books, yet Soussan has condemned the Jews who "revel in their isolation," and the Zionists, who are "a dagger in the heart of Arab soil." Ironically, Soussan explains, "I chose Islam out of the will to extract myself from the chains of separatism and couldn't bear to see myself escaping Jewish xenophobia and zealotry only to fall into the hands of Muslim zealots and xenophobes. I was helpless, like one robbed of his own personality."

Disclaiming his political bent, Soussan manages to rise in prestige and power, even meeting Saddam Hussein. But always, he feels himself an outcast, probing his own loneliness through the turmoil of Khomeini and the Iran-Iraq war and the impact of those events on Jews. One situation that affects his friend, Assad, causes Soussan to "fully comprehend the tragic meaning of be-

ing the other." In family matters as well, Soussan is an outcast to Ruben, his brother, and first wife and son.

Patricia F. Goldblatt  
Toronto, Ont.

### 16-3-0231

Bolaño, Roberto. *Amulet*. New York: New Directions, 2007. 184 pp. Trans. from Spanish by Chris Andrews. ISBN-13 978-0-8112-1664-7, \$21.95.

Bolaño, Roberto. *The Savage Detectives*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007. 577 pp. Trans. from Spanish by Natasha Wimmer. ISBN-13 978-0-374-19148-1, \$27.00.

The Chilean-born author, who died in 2003 at the age of 50, published more than a dozen novels and short story collections in his last ten years. *By Night in Chile*, *Distant Star*, and *Last Evenings on Earth* have already appeared in English; some ten fiction titles are in the works, including the epic *2666*. *Amulet*, published by New Directions, and *The Savage Detectives*, published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, contain the same cast of characters, most notably Bolaño's alter ego, Arturo Belano, and his Mexican friend and fellow poet Ulises Lima (based on Bolaño's friend Mario Santiago). The narrator of *Amulet*, the self-described "mother of Mexican poetry" Auxilio Lacouture, has a 10-page account in *The Savage Detectives*.

The middle-aged Uruguyan woman Lacouture is a hanger-on and informal caretaker of the group of young Latin American poets that have Belano and Lima at their center. Marooned in Mexico City without family or any other ties, Lacouture also consorts with older poets and professors. The defining moment of her life is when she locks herself in the women's bathroom during the 1968 military takeover of the campus of the National University, an event that she retells several times in *Amulet*, the account changing as she loses her tenuous grip on reality.

Well-drawn characters distinguish this book, which is in many ways an appetizer for the longer, more complex, fascinating, and ultimately unforgettable *The Savage Detectives*. Winner of the 1998 Rómulo Gallegos Prize for literature published in Spanish, *The Savage Detectives* consists of three parts. The first and third are the first-person narrative of the 17-year-old Juan García Madero, an orphan and reluctant law student who falls under the sway of a "gang" of poets in Mexico City aspiring to create a new literary movement called Visceral Realism. Led by Belano and Lima, the Visceral Realists steal books, sell drugs, have sex (gay and straight), and write poems that the reader never sees. Belano and Lima, in particular, are searching for a female Mexican poet of the 1920s, Cesárea Tinajero, who allegedly founded an earlier Visceral Realist movement, published one poem, and disappeared into the Sonora desert. After helping to rescue a prostitute and punching out her pimp, García Madero and the prostitute end up in a car with Belano and Lima, racing toward the desert with the pimp not far behind.

Sandwiched between these two first-person accounts is a kind of documentary tracing Belano and Lima's divergent paths after they leave Mexico City for the desert in search of the original Visceral Realist. We hear from dozens of characters (including

Auxilio Lacouture), who tell of the poets' journeys in Mexico, France, Spain, Germany, Israel, Nicaragua, Angola, and Sierra Leone, as well as of their own journeys. Many of the poets in Belano and Lima's gang sell out; others end up dead. The shifting perspectives reveal the founding poets in all their complexity; even though they never tell their story in their own voices, they and their journeys are fascinating and ultimately tragic in their unique ways.

Covering a 20-year span from 1976 to 1996, the novel explores a world in which borders have become increasingly porous and identity fluid. Belano, for example, is "the Chilean" who has hardly lived in Chile—like the figure in Manu Chao's song "El desaparecido," a citizen of no country, an eternal wanderer, an eternal "illegal." *The Savage Detectives* is breathtaking in its originality of characterization, storytelling, and language, a groundbreaking work of literature for a global age.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

### 16-3-0232

Boyer, Jeanette. *Junkyard Dreams*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2007. 234 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8263-3949-2, \$18.95 (pb).

Boyer's debut novel is the story of Rita Vargas, a lonely and charmingly opinionated *Hispana* woman driven to distraction over her resolve to safeguard her old family junkyard and keep the enchanted, spirit-filled open New Mexico land of her ancestors free from the encroaching urban sprawl of the Santa Fe suburbs.

Rita is an avid book reader and steel welder, and her son has followed in her footsteps by becoming a junkyard artist—i.e., he constructs original and fanciful shapes from the scraps in his mother's shop and then proceeds to decorate their shop with them. Enter the Anglo builder, Joe Oakes, whose avocation is renovating houses and who, along with his art dealer girlfriend, decides to build his enormous dream house on the scenic hill behind Rita's junkyard. Next, enter a corrupt city official willing to rape the land and collude with Joe the developer, and you have the old recipe for tradition versus progress, unspoiled native landscape against expansion, gentrification, and greed. It is not a new story and there aren't too many cliffhangers, but it's an attention-grabbing, heartfelt tale filled with local color and lore.

In this New Mexican landscape, old settlers have an almost mythical bond to the land, and emotions run high when interlopers threaten their way of life. In a larger sense, *Junkyard Dreams* is more than a local story about the conflict between natives and greedy builders, or between conservationists and developers just in New Mexico. The story is being repeated each day in towns across the West, and Boyer's novel is bound to resonate with readers everywhere. The author seems to have firsthand knowledge of how avarice and politics can conspire to desecrate tradition and place. She pleads her case with fairness and understanding and weaves an interesting yarn in the process.

Himilce Novas  
<http://supernovas.org>

### 16-3-0233

Chen, Willi. *Chutney Power and Other Stories*. Northampton, Mass.: Macmillan Caribbean; dist. by Interlink, 2007. 62 pp. ISBN-13 978-1-4050-2973-5, \$9.95 (pb).

The rhythm, flavors, smells, and sounds of Trinidad's East Indian and Chinese ethnic cultures burst forth from these short stories. Chen's vivid style draws the reader into the lives of the characters, laughing through the comedic portrayal of characters like Prakash, the bottle-washer who spends all his money trying to show off his dancing prowess by taking the sexy Buelah to the dance but ends up being tricked by her. The stories, however, run the gamut, from comedy to tragedy and drama, capturing the contrivances, joys, sadness, and unabashed sensuousness typical of the culture of the Islands in the West Indies. The triumphant joy of Bhim, a mere cane cutter, who realized his dream of becoming King of Carnival; Mano's feeling of doom as he walks to the gallows, having been betrayed by those whom he should not have trusted; and the distress felt by Shanti's mother over her daughter's refusal to dress nicely to meet a future husband, all leave the reader wanting more at the end of each story.

*Chutney Power and Other Stories*, written in typical Trinidadian dialect, weaves the jokes, quarrels, and tricks so typical of West Indian culture into themes of survival among poor women surviving alone, of needy children, and of men deserting their families. This collection of 20 stories is well written, enjoyable, and a welcome addition to the field of West Indian literature. It is well suited for college courses and for libraries and should be on the shelves of all who enjoy good reading.

Diana Budhai  
Excelsior College, Albany, N.Y.

### 16-3-0234

Christiansen, Yvette. *Unconfessed*. New York: Other Press, 2007. 346 pp. ISBN-13 978-1-59051-240-1, \$23.95.

*Unconfessed* is an extraordinary novel, for several reasons. It gives individual recognition and a voice to an enslaved woman from the nineteenth century. It reveals the little-known story of slavery in nineteenth-century South Africa. It tells an unrelenting tale through the unmediated voice of Sila van den Kaap, from the Cape Colony.

Using details from court records, Christiansen, a South African herself, creates an intense and compelling story. The opening chapter uses a third-person narrator to establish Sila's situation, revealing that she is in prison—for the murder of her child. This is the only chapter that represents other characters and outside voices through dialogue. From the second chapter to the end, readers hear only Sila's thoughts and feelings as she relives the events of her life leading to incarceration on Robben Island. Through lyrical passages and horrifying memories, she reflects on her experiences, continually interrogating why things happened as they did. After considerable musing, Sila discovers no answers or consolations for her trials. Near the end, she poses the question: "[I]s this all there is?" Nevertheless, she rallies slightly—as she's done throughout her life—to assert, "[A]ll there is could be less still."

The writing in the novel is consistently beautiful and wise. Sila describes herself as having “a mouth of words that are loose teeth.” The last chapter (comprising one page) returns to an omniscient narrator, who speculates in poignant words what might have happened to Sila after she ceased telling her story.

Anne Serafin  
Newtonville, Mass.

#### 16-3-0235

Condé, Marysé. *The Story of the Cannibal Woman*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Atria Books, 2007. 312 pp. Trans. from French by Richard Philcox. ISBN-13 978-0-7432-7128-8, \$24.00.

Devenne, François. *Three Dreams on Mount Meru*. New Milford, Conn.: The Toby Press, 2007. 212 pp. Trans. from French by Lauren Yoder. ISBN-13 978-1-59264-173-4, \$14.95 (pb).

While both are French citizens, authors Condé and Devenne are in many ways worlds apart. Internationally renowned award-winning novelist, playwright, and essayist Condé, born in Guadeloupe in 1934, has a long list of publications to her credit. On the other hand, Devenne, a native of Nantes, France, is 30 years her junior and has just produced his first novel. Two common threads are, however, apparent in the works in question: Each is set in an African country, and both could be classified as journals of discovery.

Condé's tale focuses on Rosélie Thibaudin, a 50-something artist, whose husband Stephen was recently murdered near their South African home under mysterious circumstances. At the suggestion of Dido, Rosélie's cook, housekeeper, and friend, the middle-aged woman finds necessary employment as a medium. Told through a series of flashbacks, the novel examines Rosélie's present and past—from her upbringing in Guadeloupe through her adult life in countries throughout the world, where she continually experiences the hostility of whites because of the color of her skin. Although she often feels invisible or threatened in the outside world, Rosélie counted on her white husband of 20 years as her savior, “the most perfect of companions.” Upon his death, however, her memories are shaken to the core. Reminiscent of François Ozon's 2001 film *Under the Sand*, this is a psychological mystery where the female protagonist seems for a long while to prefer being “blind” to knowing the truth about her life.

After years of living in and studying the African continent, Devenne has created a truly magical novel. This first-person narrative centers on Bayu, a teenaged member of the El-Mudi family of wood craftsmen. At the urging of his fiancée, the boy decides to undertake his clan's *rite de passage* by traveling from his Kenyan home through dense forests to Mount Meru in Tanzania. Walking toward adulthood, Bayu meets a variety of animals, including a lion that protects and guides him. He encounters solitude, but also genies of the forest and people of different cultures, like scarified people with long earlobes and nearly naked women with shaved heads. Like many modern-day travelers, he must deal with foreign languages, bland food, and the often-curious customs of other cultures. Bayu also develops an open mind as he discovers traditions at odds with those of his native Islam. In the end he finds his “creative breath” as a man who has learned to listen and

who realizes the unity of mankind, animals, and plants.

In creating her complex novel, Condé intersperses first- and third-person narratives, which produce a “stream of memories” that mimic the wandering of one's mind. While the beauty of her imagery shines through, a block of chapters mid-novel seems overly laden with characters and details from the past. Devenne's narrative is as simple as Condé's is complicated, but his writing is truly poetic and enchanting from start to finish. Only on a few occasions does the text seem heavy in local color. These novels would especially appeal to readers interested in Africa.

Jayne R. Boisvert  
Russell Sage College

#### 16-3-0236

Culberson, San. *The Nick of Time*. New York: Dafina Books, 2007. 216 pp. ISBN 0-7582-1520-7, \$14.00 (pb).

Beautiful, smart, and successful attorney Fiona Daniels throws herself a party in celebration of her recently finalized divorce from a no-good, cheating husband. With most of her best friends, her sister, and her mother present, Fiona swears she will remain single for the rest of her life. However, fate steps in and she meets irresistible Nick Nathaniel, chef and owner of the restaurant where the party is held. Having vowed to never love another man, Fiona has become bitter toward all men and plans to use them for her own purposes. So she throws caution to the wind and decides to have at least a one-night stand with the handsome Nick. However, that one night turns into two, then three and so on for the spoiled, selfish, and judgmental Fiona as she finds herself becoming more and more attracted to him. Too headstrong and independent, she sees her world comes crashing down after she suffers the ultimate betrayal.

The one disappointment of an otherwise good book is an abundance of gutter language that does not fit the profile of a heroine who has attained such a position in life.

Hattie H. Vines  
Duke Univ. Medical Center Library

#### 16-3-0237

Griffin, Bettye. *If These Walls Could Talk*. New York: Dafina Books, 2007. 310 pp. ISBN 0-7582-1670-X, \$14.00 (pb).

In her second novel with a real estate theme (following *The People Next Door*, 2005), Griffin weaves an intriguing, entertaining account of three African-American families who leave their cramped New York City apartments for homes in the Poconos, with an 80-mile, two-hour commute each way across two states to their jobs in the city. These three hardworking, decent, struggling families are seeking the American Dream of owning a home in the suburbs, but for all but one of the families, the dream becomes a nightmare.

The novel begins with a vivid picture of inner-city living. Griffin skillfully describes the noise, crime, drugs, degradation, and hopelessness that drive the Youngs, the Currys, and the Lees to their distant paradise. When they get there, the author highlights

the cruel reality of how desperation, inexperience, poor planning, faulty knowledge, false advertising, and fraudulent practices of builders and real estate salespeople have destroyed the hopes and lives of many families.

Also depicted are the survival skills of the African-American families. One family loses their home when the husband loses his job, but their love for one another and fate combine to give them a second chance. The ups and downs of the three very likable families will hold readers' attention from the beginning to the end.

Maxine M. Agazie  
Albany State (Ga.) Univ.

### 16-3-0238

Hopkinson, Nalo. *The New Moon's Arms*. New York: Warner Books, 2007. 323 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-446-57691-8, \$23.99.

If *The New Moon's Arms* is one's first introduction to the storytelling prowess of Nalo Hopkinson, this book will be an inspiration to delve into her other works as well. The enchanting and fascinating West Indian story blends the worlds of reality and fantasy so believably that the reader buys into the world of sea people and enters into the fantasy as easily as into the real-life drama of the main character, a sexy grandmother who would rather be called Calamity.

The novel, written in the distinctive West Indian dialect, depicts the customs and style of living in the Islands of the Caribbean. Themes include the importance of family life and friends and the challenges that such relationships can bring, as well as personal loss and life's transitions. Theresa Lambkins, alias Calamity, is a funny, angry, yet hopeful menopausal grandmother in her fifties with a daughter, Ifeoma, and grandson, Stanley. Hopkinson has created an interesting woman and a cast of characters that vividly surround her. Calamity's gift is that of making things appear from thin air, one of which is the appearance of a sea child, washed up on the beach near her home. In fostering the child, her love and selflessness become more apparent and set her on the path to healing her own family relationships.

Hopkinson, an award-winning writer, has contributed invaluable resources to West Indian literature in the form of literary fiction, Caribbean folktales, science fiction, and fantasy. Impeccably written, *The New Moon's Arms* is also a treasure for all who enjoy a great novel.

Diana Budhai  
Excelsior College, Albany, N.Y.

### 16-3-0239

Hosseini, Khaled. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. New York: Putnam/Riverhead, 2007. 336 pp. ISBN-13 978-1-59448-950-1, \$25.95.

Similar to *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* focuses on marginalized people in Afghanistan, but here Hosseini presents the relationship between unlike characters of the same sex of different generations. He introduces the reader to Miriam and Laila, the former a *harami*, illegitimate daughter of a wealthy man and a household servant, and the latter a well-bred offspring of respected and well-educated parents. Miriam has no special quali-

ties or beauty that will enable her to rise in society, yet when her life is thrown together with Laila's as wives of a disreputable man, Hosseini reveals Miriam's courage and a kind of inner beauty in her ability to offer love and sacrifice. She emerges strong as the heroine of the novel.

Set against the turmoil and tyranny of Afghanistan over a period of 45 years, the novel documents the governmental shifts that destroy the lives of innocent people. In particular, the plight of women in countries that are politically repressive and fundamentalist are addressed. There is much heartbreak and loss in this novel, both personal and public: a scene that involves the Taliban's destruction of the giant Bamiyan Buddhas is only one example. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* extends Christina Lamb's *The Sewing Circles of Herat* and Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, nonfiction works that are the basis for terrifying stories like this one. The title, derived from Saib-e-Tabrizi, a seventeenth-century Persian poet, speaks to both the deep feelings generated by the city of Kabul and the characters of the indomitable women portrayed in the novel:

*One could not count the moons that shimmer on her roofs  
Or the thousand splendid suns that hide behind her walls.*

Patricia F. Goldblatt  
Toronto, Ont.

### 16-3-0240

Kyomuhendo, Goretti. *Waiting*. New York: Feminist Press of the City Univ. of New York, 2007. 136 pp. Afterword by M. J. Daymond. ISBN-13 978-1-55851-539-7, \$13.95 (pb).

*Waiting* is an intimate novel about daily life in a Ugandan village during wartime in the late 1970s, told through the eyes and mind of a preadolescent girl. Readers experience the tension of waiting, in this situation, for the soldiers of Idi Amin's retreating army and/or the Liberators (Ugandan and Tanzanian soldiers). The story covers five months of fear during 1979: "No one knew what each group was likely to do to civilians." The enlightening and unsentimentalized account transcends its specific setting to situate readers in the lives of families coping with major losses.

The novel includes lovely passages with smooth narration and dialogue. Alinda, the narrator, must assume increasing burdens after her mother dies in childbirth, and the story focuses on the lives of women in her society. After peace is established, a beautiful scene offers hope as the surviving family members stand at a literal and figurative crossroads, saying good-bye to the father as he returns to work in the city.

An afterword by Daymond, a highly regarded professor from South Africa, sets the novel in its historical and literary context. Daymond also pays well-deserved tribute to Femrite, the Uganda Women Writers' Association, convened by author Kyomuhendo in 1995.

Anne Serafin  
Newtonville, Mass.

### 16-3-0241

Montero, Mayra. *Dancing to "Almendra."* New York: Farrar, Straus

& Giroux, 2007. 284 pp. Trans. from Spanish by Edith Grossman. ISBN-13 978-0-374-10277-7, \$25.00.

Montero's prose is tight and agile and even seductive. She knows how to weave a tale of intrigue and murder with the greatest of literary ease. In this edition, great credit also goes to Edith Grossman, the translator, for doing it so seamlessly that the work comes up firsthand, fresh, never lost in translation.

*Dancing to "Almendra"* is set in the Cuba of the 1950s (where the author was born, before emigrating to Puerto Rico with her parents as a child), just as Fidel Castro's bugle call was beginning to be heard from the famous Sierra Maestra Mountains, in the years before his takeover. The plot follows a young journalist who is investigating the murder of Umberto "Albert" Anastasia, a real-life mob boss who was murdered in 1957. The novel has two voices—that of Joaquin, the journalist and protagonist, and that of Yolanda, his one-armed, biracial (mulatto) lover, who serves to introduce surrealistic elements into the straight film noir narrative. Her take on the farcical comings and goings of the mafia-influenced Fulgencio Batista regime of 1950s Havana delivers both laughter and a great deal of insight into the Cuban culture and psyche of the times.

Real characters, such as famous mafia boss of bosses Meyer Lansky and actor George Raft, are intertwined with purely fictional ones in a fast-moving story where the imagined coexists with the hard facts of an island country mired in corruption, gambling casinos, and idle fiesta and siesta while on the cusp of a puritanical, iron-fisted communist revolution lurking just around the corner.

Montero's story is not without deep philosophical observations and even cautionary elements about the wages of sin, greed, blind ambition, and human disregard. There is redemption and hope in the end and more insight than meets the eye beneath the rubble, rumble, and rumba. Her story is bound to resonate across the board with sympathizers from all political viewpoints.

Himilce Novas  
<http://supernovas.org>

#### 16-3-0242

Muñoz, Braulio. *The Peruvian Notebooks*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2006. 288 pp. ISBN 0-8165-2506-4, \$17.95 (pb).

This novel narrates the tortured life of Antonio Aldoy Gutiérrez, a Peruvian who immigrates to the United States in search of a new life. Rejecting his identity, Antonio attempts to recreate himself, pretending to be an affluent Peruvian, yet rejecting other Latin American émigrés. At the same time, when communicating with friends and family back home, he manufactures an image of himself as a wealthy factory owner. His confrontation with the truth of his actual position as a night watchman and his pattern of deception is set off by the arrival of his cousin Genaro from Peru. Caught in a web of lies, in profound psychological turmoil, he kills his cousin. Afterward he has an epiphany, realizing his wrongdoing.

Written in an epistolary style, the novel employs a series of literary devices—flashbacks, excerpts from the protagonist's di-

ary, and letters. Moreover, the author uses different voices, time frameworks, and settings to underline Antonio's feelings of displacement and exile and his fractured sense of identity. This is a rich psychological narrative, a monologue of a tortured soul. The themes of identity and exile in particular are richly explored.

Rosita Chazarreta-Rourke  
Duquesne Univ.

#### 16-3-0243

Muñoz, Manuel. *The Faith Healer of Olive Avenue*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2007. 256 pp. ISBN-13 978-1-56512-532-2, \$12.95 (pb).

Despite Muñoz's relative youth (he is in his mid-thirties), the ten stories in his second book of fiction display a maturity as well as a depth of empathy for the human condition that one usually sees in the work of writers who have spent much more time in this world.

These interconnected stories are set in the unforgiving heat of the Central Valley in California, where people struggle to find meaning. In the title story, Muñoz introduces us to Emilio, who has been paralyzed by a workplace accident at the local paper delivery warehouse. Emilio's father now cares for him, but it is a great burden: "His father lifted him, both hands reaching upward into Emilio's armpits, and struggled—his father was too old for this." Despite such dependence, the conclusion reveals a strength in both father and son that is, in its own way, remarkable and transcendent.

Other stories—all well-crafted and subtle—open a window to individual struggles and small triumphs, whether Muñoz is writing about a young gay man coming of age or an ex-con attempting to do legitimate work. Muñoz is a powerful chronicler of the ordinary lives of men and women who want nothing more than to find meaning in life.

Daniel A. Olivas  
West Hills, Calif.

#### 16-3-0244

Nonami, Asa. *The Hunter*. New York: Kodansha, 2007. 272 pp. Trans. from Japanese by Juliet Winters Carpenter. ISBN-13 978-4-7700-3025-2, \$24.95.

After a restaurant customer appears to self-combust, setting off a tragic fire, the Tokyo Metropolitan Police initially suspect suicide. However, it turns out to be murder, and the police link this case with the deaths of two people killed by a wild dog or wolf.

The main character is Takako Otomichi, the only female detective assigned to the temporary special unit investigating the case. In her early thirties, she is coping with the first anniversary of her divorce and lives a very isolated lifestyle, trying to ignore the demands of her parents and younger sister. She must also deal with her male colleagues, who at best reluctantly accept a woman in their midst. Even Sergeant Tamotsu Takizawa, Otomichi's temporary partner, believes that this type of police work is best suited to men. A middle-aged veteran detective, Takizawa could easily have been portrayed as a stereotype, but he is a very complex

character, and like Otomichi, the reader initially finds him very difficult to figure out. This is a well-written, suspenseful police procedural, ably portraying aspects of police work within Japanese culture.

First published in Japan in 1996 as *Kogoru Kiba*, this novel won the prestigious Naoki prize for popular literature. It is the author's first novel to be translated into English.

Catherine Crohan  
Siena College Library, Loudonville, N.Y.

#### 16-3-0245

Recacoechea, Juan de. *American Visa*. New York: Akashic Books, 2007. 260 pp. Trans. from Spanish by Adrian Althoff. Afterword by Ilan Stavans. ISBN-13 978-1-933354-20-0, \$14.95 (pb).

Mario Alvarez, a divorced, poorly paid teacher with a drinking problem, has a way out of his dead-end life in the Bolivian provinces through a plane ticket his 20-year-old son has sent him and a job the same son has arranged. Now all Mario needs is a U.S. visa, which he has come to La Paz with his savings, about a thousand dollars' worth of gold nuggets, to obtain. But Mario is an innocent in the big city, and every attempt to get the visa turns out to be yet another misadventure. Living in a cheap hotel, he falls for the schemes of the hustlers who live alongside him and strikes up a friendship with the prostitute Blanca. A chance encounter at a bookstore leads Mario to a high-class party and the idea to rob a wealthy gold dealer, a crazy plan that could cost him everything.

Drawing from the conventions of popular detective fiction from the United States and Latin America, Recacoechea's first novel to be translated into English is filled with exciting events, colorful characters, and slapstick humor. Its fast pace will keep readers turning the pages. The carefully plotted story will help readers excuse the author for the somewhat one-dimensional cast of corrupt government officials, down-and-out hustlers, and a prostitute with a heart of gold. The author portrays the risks people are willing to take for the coveted American visa and why a teacher, an educated person in Bolivia, would give up everything for an unskilled job in an unfamiliar land. Althoff's fluid translation captures the street slang of the Bolivian capital. Recommended for fans of Latin American detective fiction and general readers looking for tales of life's underside.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

#### 16-3-0246

Stuart, David E. *The Ecuador Effect*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New

Mexico Press, 2007. 339 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8263-4099-3, \$24.95.

Anthropologist Stuart, author of *The Guaymas Chronicles*, turns his pen to pure fiction in this story of a junior human rights investigator from New York City who travels to Ecuador to investigate the *señoría*, an anachronistic system in which landlords keep indigenous peasants in a situation of virtual slavery. Set in 1970, the novel begins when the young investigator, John Alexander, flees the country after burning down the hacienda of the corrupt, perverted, and sadistic Veintimita family, the members of which (along with their thuggish managers, or *mayorales*) have raped and brutalized indigenous women and murdered their fathers and husbands. Along with provoking a confrontation with the Veintimitas, John has become romantically involved with a widow from a nearby town from whom he rents a room; he also volunteers as a tutor for the widow's precocious ten-year-old daughter, Anda. Alternating between insightful and annoying, Anda ultimately makes it impossible for John to leave Ecuador in his past.

Strong descriptions of the Ecuadorian highlands and John's first-person narration are among the strengths of the novel. As an anthropologist, Stuart has a keen eye for the practices of the Quechua people of the area and the impact of an outsider's arrival. He raises important questions of whether John's investigations benefit the people he is trying to help. Secondary characters, however, lack similar depth: Anda's actions and dialogue, in particular, do not always ring true. The final four chapters are less well developed than all that comes before. Nonetheless, the novel is recommended for general readers interested in indigenous cultures and human rights as well as students of anthropology, who would be well served to read this work of fiction as well as the usual academic monographs.

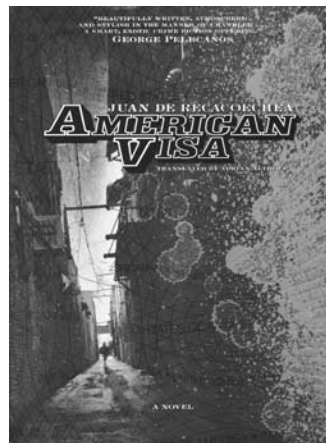
Lyn Miller-Lachmann

#### 16-3-0247

Wadi, Farouq. *Homes of the Heart: A Ramallah Chronicle*. Northampton, Mass.: Interlink, 2007. 116 pp. Trans. from Arabic by Dina Bosio and Christopher Tingley. ISBN-13 978-1-55656-662-9, \$12.95 (pb).

After 25 years of exile, Wadi returns to his homeland and birthplace in Palestine to find that nothing is as he remembers it. As he walks through Ramallah and Al-Bireh, the twin towns where he spent his first 16 years, he seeks out important places from his youth. Because of so much political upheaval, many characteristics of the place have been altered completely, erasing landmarks, roads, schools, and parks that were a part of his childhood memories. Those few things that still remain in their place are sadly neglected and dilapidated. Woven into this bewildering journey conveyed through autobiographical fiction is the history of the place and its people, and personal memories of friends, teachers, adventures, and loves.

In this book, everything is a haunting double take; reality is superimposed onto memory, coexisting like a double-exposed photograph: "As my eyes examined the place, so my memory flashed



back to brighten every corner and every stone; these, in turn, recalled distant events, and people who filled the cracked walls of my vibrant recollection. I'd gaze at a house, and the people who'd lived there would come surging out. I had only to call the place to mind, and back would come all the departed spirits wandering in their exiles, or in heaven."

Dena El Saffar  
Bloomington, Ind.

#### 16-3-0248

Washburn, Elsie. *Elsie's Business*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2006. 216 pp. ISBN 0-8032-9865-X, \$17.95 (pb).

Oscar DuCharme is a storyteller, presumably Lakota, who unravels the present and past events to the book's narrator, intersperses illustrative traditional stories, and pieces together *Elsie's Business*. Oscar is indeed a charming host; his weaving of information about Elsie Roberts, the main character, is cleverly constructed in the narrative. Elsie is a mixed-race American Indian/African American, never specifically identified by tribal nation, but located in Oglala country. Within the first chapters she is horribly raped, beaten, and left for dead. The balance of the book reconstructs her recovery and her mysterious life and death.

Elsie, Oscar, and the other characters are powerfully drawn. The story highlights contemporary challenges and complexities of living in a small town with a mixed Indian and non-Indian population. For example, the stereotypical alcoholic is not an Indian. A sense of Indian community does not emerge until the final pages of the novel, and then the rituals and gestures are redemptive.

The narrator is occasionally slow to piece together the significance of Oscar's stories. Additionally, like life itself, there are loose ends to the main story. Nevertheless, this novel is moving and compelling.

P. Jane Hafen  
Univ. of Nevada, Las Vegas

#### 16-3-0249

Weber, Carl. *The First Lady*. New York: Dafina Books, 2007. 270 pp. ISBN 0-7582-1575-4, \$24.00.

Weber's latest novel is intriguing and keeps readers on edge until the very end. When the story begins, the minister's wife is in the hospital, dying of cancer. She, along with the help of her friend, the church's secretary, writes a series of letters to be delivered after her death. These letters go to various women in the church and address the question of who should marry her husband.

Four women are vying to become the first lady of this African-American megachurch: a crackhead, a plain Jane, a hoochie-mama, and a prima donna. When the minister's wife dies, the drama and trauma begin.

This novel is filled with humor but also depicts with poignancy the pressures a minister and his wife must endure. An excellent subplot focuses on drugs and their impact on this African-American community. Weber captures the craftiness of drugs—how they start out as a friend but end up becoming a slave master. He

exposes the status seekers in the church and to what extent they will go in order to become the "first lady." These "holy sisters" are determined to marry the minister by any means necessary. They fight, use sex, cook pork chops, and conjure up plots that would make the CIA and Scotland Yard envious.

Maxine M. Agazie  
Albany State (Ga.) Univ.

#### 16-3-0250

Yu, Michelle and Kan, Blossom. *China Dolls*. New York: St. Martin's Press/Thomas Dunne, 2007. 278 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-312-36280-5, \$22.95.

"What do you wish, my child," "What will my life bring?" "Will he be handsome?" "Will he be rich?" "Will I get my dream of becoming a sportswriter?" "Will I still want it when I get it?" "Will I find someone who really loves me?"

Three young Chinese women in New York City's Chinatown go to see a fortuneteller who gives them cryptic and somewhat uncomfortable messages for the coming year. Dissimilar in outward form—a lawyer in a trim suit, a sportswriter in T-shirt and cargo pants, and a broker whose mother who wants her to find "a good Asian boy"—all are "China dolls," handsome Asian-American women in their late twenties trying to discover themselves in Western society amid a microcosm of male dates luring them with possible and impossible relationships.

Will M.J. the sportswriter get her dream job and the man of her dreams? Will Alex, the professional lawyer, find a professional man who is not terrified of women who want a relationship but don't "need men" and who have a mind of their own? Will Lin fall for the obnoxious jerk who makes her feel like a beautiful woman, or will she look at Mr. Safe and Sound with new eyes?

No longer teens, but with the teenage interest in boys and themselves, the three women go through the usual motions of looking for a relationship, and they find guys that they "would not have thought of in a million years."

Full of gender and cultural stereotypes, this novel prompts questions between the lines: Is it only Asian men who expect a wife to keep house and produce children? Is it only Asian parents who advise their children to learn from hurt, be patient, and work hard to achieve their dreams? Is it only Western white jocks who are self-important and insensitive to feminine feelings?

The three women wrestle with their own emotions and their relations with their families, who offer wise but unwanted traditional advice. Sometimes it is necessary to make one's own mistakes, recover from them, and find that one is still loved by one's family and friends.

Ginny Lee  
Syracuse, N.Y.

#### Poetry

#### 16-3-0251

Aragón, Francisco, ed. *The Wind Shifts: New Latino Poetry*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2007. 272 pp. Foreword by Juan Felipe Herrera. ISBN 0-8165-2493-9, \$17.95 (pb).

This anthology of verse by Latino poets is one that should be dog-eared after multiple readings. The writers in this collection create a certain intimacy with language that draws the reader in to savor each poem. Clearly a new generation, the voices of these poets reflect life in the late twentieth century—a life in so many respects different than that expressed by earlier writers of Latino and Chicano poetry.

While their Latino identity threads through much of the poetry—Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Nicaraguan, among others—it is really a backdrop for texts that reflect experiences of life. Many of the poems evoke nostalgia for the past and pay homage to family, the language (sometimes lost), and the culture. Places lived are imprinted in memory; and references to cities, towns, and streets create a virtual landscape of images that reflect all the experiences of life and the philosophy of human existence. The wind has shifted, the writers still write of their heritage, but this generation has moved to a new level.

Victoria Martínez  
Union College

### 16-3-0252

Finney, Nikky, ed. *The Ringing Ear: Black Poets Lean South*. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 2007. 405 pp. A Cave Canem Anthology. ISBN-13 978-0-8203-2925-3, \$59.95 (cl); 978-0-8203-2926-0, \$18.95 (pb).

Cave Canem is a nonprofit organization committed to the discovery and cultivation of new voices in African-American poetry. This new anthology under that imprint takes as its theme the American South and what it means to contemporary black poets. Some of the names among the 100 authors here are well known, including Nikki Giovanni and Yusef Komunyakaa, but editor Finney (professor of creative writing at the University of Kentucky) rounds out the collection with such emerging poets as Truth Thomas and Dante Micheaux.

As with any anthology, readers will discover their own favorites, and almost all of the works are accessible in both form and style, which recommends the whole to senior high students and above. Recommended to complement Nielsen and Ramey's (eds.) *Every Goodbye Ain't Gone: An Anthology of Innovative Poetry by African Americans* (Univ. of Alabama Press, 2006).

Anthony J. Adam  
Prairie View A & M Univ.

### 16-3-0253

hooks, bell. *When Angels Speak of Love: Poems*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Atria, 2007. 100 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-7434-5609-2, \$16.95.

The author, best known for her courageous writings on cultural criticism and black feminist theory, takes on the topic of love in her debut collection of poetry. These 50 short poems explore the many faces of love in its pursuit and its promise, its glory and its sorrow, its life and its loss.

The poems are comprised of brief lines and are numbered rath-

er than titled. This, combined with hooks's signature lowercasing of words and abandonment of punctuation, puts the emphasis on the substance of the words themselves, and the essence of each poem rings clear and unfettered.

Many of the poems are written in a Southern Negro Dialect reflective of hooks's upbringing in a segregated Kentucky town: "my daddy/don' love me no mo'/he takes his heavy hand/and hurted me/pain me to my heart/to let me know/I can be his brown sugar girl/no mo'." They are peppered with images from nature, which reinforce hooks's rural Kentucky childhood—images of tobacco leaves, bluegrass, cornfields, honeysuckle, and the meat of "rabbit, possum and coon."

The language is simple, graceful and contemplative, with a great sense of nostalgia and an emphasis on memories, the passage of time, longing and, finally, letting go. There is a sense of the urgency to embrace love, and a reminder of its ephemeral nature. The author's tendency to personify love serves also to remind us of its fickle disposition, and indeed, love sometimes seems to have a mind of its own: "love will not let me speak/will not let me seek words to say/how heavy my heart."

This collection is a gentle reminder of the many facets of one of our most basic human emotions. Yet these poems are not romantic; rather, they reflect simple devotion, and a longing, deep and pure.

Janet Dauphin  
Mansfield Center, Conn.

### 16-3-0254

Smoker, M. L. *Another Attempt at Rescue*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Hanging Loose Press, 2005. 64 pp. ISBN 1-931236-51-8, \$14.00 (pb).

Here are stories that are at the same time songs, prayers "to be let loose with comb and water," from a poet who knows things that only someone who knows the stories told by the land can know: The sound of coyotes singing songs backwards ("everyone knows what that means"). The badland and red rock plateau, etched out by "the shape of our unspoken names." A town remembered for the dead wolves stacked high by the railroad tracks ("you build such strange monuments to yourselves"). A serious wind setting off small tornadoes. A grizzly bear digging into a fallen tree and the gaunt faces of antelope "lingering and unafraid in the red glow of taillights." A place so familiar that people can "drive down to the river/and guess what belongs to who/as the trash floats by."

There is some helplessness here, and sustenance, too. There is a conflict of languages and the casualties of linguistic diversity. There is the not knowing who you are sometimes, and knowing who you are forever. And there are the aunties "preparing the boiled meat and chokecherry soup and laughing about old jokes they still hold onto because these things are a matter of survival" and the recognition of a "need to feel claimed by a place we can only, with a limited tongue, call home."

Mandy Smoker is a consummate storyteller who writes what she knows; her words are sometimes harsh, sometimes achingly beautiful, always truth-telling. *Another Attempt at Rescue* is a gift,

a blessing, an antidote to some of the poison still being force-fed to Indian young people. Thank you, Mandy.

Beverly Slapin  
Oyate, Berkeley, Calif.

### 16-3-0255

Tobin, Daniel, ed. *The Book of Irish American Poetry: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*. Notre Dame, Ind.: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2007. 912 pp. ISBN 0-268-04230-6, \$65.00.

"The Crime is history," Tobin declares in his splendid Irish-American poem, "A Mosque in Brooklyn." Like many of the fine poets in this profound anthology, Tobin is haunted by ancestral ghosts of the famine victims memorialized at Ellis Island and Grosse Isle. Tobin as editor reaches beyond ethnic boundaries to capture a deeper and universal sense of freedom and exile. These poets, not all Irish or Irish-American, feel deeply the trauma of history. Readers will be surprised but in the end delighted to find that this Irish-American anthology includes poems by such great African-American poets as Gwendolyn Brooks and Paul Laurence Dunbar and poems with Irish themes by Louis Simpson, Walt Whitman, and Alan Shapiro.

Shapiro's incredibly powerful elegy about the avoidable Irish famine is a timeless and heartbreaking exposure of Tory racism and Malthusian cruelty. Gwendolyn Brooks's fine poem about an Irish maid and her Black replacement captures their common humanity as they endure the shared indignity of a haughty employer. If poetry cannot abolish history, it makes it bearable. With his diverse group of more than 200 talented poets, Tobin has imagined well "in the bruise colored dusk of the New World" (Eavan Boland) and has proved again that good poetry transcends time, ethnicity, and history.

This volume includes very helpful biographical and historical notes and indices.

Anthony McCann  
Clifton Park, N.Y.

### 16-3-0256

Walcott, Derek. *Selected Poems*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007. 310 pp. Edited by Edward Baugh. ISBN-13 978-0-374-26066-8, \$25.00.

Early in his career, Nobel Prize winner Walcott wrote, "I seek,/ As climate seeks its style, to write/Verse crisp as sand, clear as sunlight,/Cold as the curled wave, ordinary/As a tumbler of island water." He proceeds to do so, admirably, throughout this volume, which spans nearly half a century. It's somewhat daunting but ultimately rewarding to approach such a broad spectrum of work.

Some difficulty is presented by the fact that much of Walcott's oeuvre (particularly his later work) consists of book-length poems; editor Baugh must, therefore, resort to excerpts, which cannot convey the power of the full-length works—or even create the emotional impact of shorter, more intimate pieces such as the loving "Oddjob, a Bull Terrier" or the agonizing "Early Pom-

peian." Walcott is better served by the inclusion of poems such as "The Schooner *Flight*," "Sainte Lucie" and "The Spoiler's Return," which capture the rhythms of West Indian speech and address the issues of colonization and alienation that resonate throughout the longer works. While Walcott's ability to construct an overarching myth and paint a "big picture" is masterful, it can be distancing, and much of the true beauty of his work must be gleaned from smaller brushstrokes: the brilliant color and island light that he observes directly.

Laura Martineau  
Willimantic, Conn.

## Folklore

### 16-3-0257

Jayyusi, Salma Khadra, ed. *Tales of Juha: Classic Arab Folk Humor*. Northampton, Mass.: Interlink, 2007. 152 pp. Trans. from Arabic by Matthew Sorenson, Faisal Khadra, and Christopher Tingley. ISBN-13 978-1-56656-641-4, \$12.95 (pb).

Juha was first presented to me in Arabic class. My normally serious Algerian teacher was all smiles, barely containing her laughter as she told a few witty stories. I too have laughed, reading these English translations of tales collected from all corners of the Arab/Islamic world, where Juha is a beloved character in literary and oral traditions.

The stories are categorized by theme. Most are short; some only five or ten lines. Therefore it is easy to open to any page and read a story or two. However, the analysis at the beginning of the book entitled "The Unforgettable Juha" helped me to appreciate more the ironic humor of these tales. Juha, it is pointed out, embodies opposites. In each tale, a paradox can be found. These paradoxes reflect the contradictory nature of humanity, and this truth is what invokes laughter from deep within. His social status also shifts from story to story; he is alternately a judge, fool, imam, servant, merchant, beggar, thief, and so on.

This collection is useful as an insight for those searching for comedy in the Middle East. Understood in cultural and literary context, the Juha tales become ever more beguiling.

Dena El Saffar  
Bloomington, Ind.

## Criticism

### 16-3-0258

Grobman, Laurie. *Multicultural Hybridity: Transforming American Literary Scholarship and Pedagogy*. Urbana, Ill.: NCTE Press, 2007. 207 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8141-5497-7, \$37.95 (pb).

Grobman provides a way of thinking about multicultural texts that "requires active and student-centered instructional strategies . . . [and] relevant contextual and/or cultural information." She offers readings of several texts, widely recognized as multicultural American texts, *House Made of Dawn* and *The Bluest Eye* among them, that utilize a "hybrid pedagogical practice." This type of practice "does not posit the text as exclusively a result of one cul-

ture's dominance or imposition on another [but rather allows] the multicultural text to [unravel] these constructions."

Grobman's first chapter provides a very useful comparison between liberal and critical multiculturalism, leading her to argue that the idea that multicultural texts must be "read differently" further marginalizes them. Hybridity is, then, a compromise strategy that allows for reading both difference and similarity. This strategy will lead to inclusion and will enable multicultural American texts to continue to invent "anew" American literary tradition with "each new . . . text and each new reading."

Leslie Antonette  
East Stroudsburg Univ. of Pennsylvania

### 16-3-0259

Gutkind, Lee, ed. *Hurricanes and Carnivals: Essays by Chicanos, Pochos, Pachucos, Mexicanos, and Expatriates*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2007. 216 pp. Introduction by Ilan Stavans. ISBN 0-8165-2625-7, \$17.95 (pb).

This book presents a collection of 15 interesting essays of Mexican, Mexican-American, and Latin American writers who cross generic boundaries by writing true stories combined with fiction. The articles focus on topics crossing the boundaries not only of Mexican and American issues but of the global realities of today.

A preface by Gutkind briefly describes the collection. In the introduction, Stavans highlights important events and cultural changes that took place in Mexican society from the last half of the twentieth century to the present. Some of these essays have been translated into English from Spanish. Authors debate issues dealing with immigration, ecology, politics, social, and economic problems with population, natural resources, violence, family, and sexuality among other topics that relate to Mexicans, Mexican descendants across borders, and the hybrid culture of contemporary Mexico.

The back of the book has brief biographical information about the writers. The contributors are prestigious authors like Elena Poniatowska, Ilan Stavans, Sam Quiñones, Richard Rodriguez, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Hugo Hiriart.

*Hurricanes and Carnivals* is a rich source for information in understanding contemporary Mexican culture from various perspectives. This book belongs in all library collections and can also be used as a textbook for Mexican studies and cultural and ethnic studies.

Alva V. Cellini  
St. Bonaventure Univ.

### 16-3-0260

Joseph, Philip. *American Literary Regionalism in a Global Age*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2007. 248 pp. ISBN 0-8071-3188-1, \$45.00 (cl).

At the end of his book, Joseph asserts that Faulkner's treatment of Flem Snopes "resonates with fears that local populations have expressed about increased integration into global networks of communication." Thus he comes full circle from an introduction that cites David Noble's anger about new technologies that deny "connections to the unknown" and "Imagined Communities"

that are indispensable to "nation-building." Showing how local communities in literature are worthy of attention and connect to the broader global world, Joseph examines the place of American literary regionalism and focuses on two specific historic periods, the 1880s to 1890s and the 1920s to 1930s. He argues that in both periods, writers such as Hamlin Garland, Sara Orne Jewett, Abraham Cahan, Willa Cather, Mary Austin, Zora Neale Hurston, and William Faulkner understood their own work as crucial to the national discourse and capable of shaping public thought.

Joseph offers a complex analysis. After explaining scholars' notions about "civil society," he states that regional writers used the idea of community and examines how values including home and neighborhood were reconciled with ideals such as individual and collective empowerment. For example, Hurston's "uneasiness" toward communities that burdened their members with racial and geographical boundaries precedes a discussion about the ethical grounds of her fiction that provide a conception of provisional justice "exemplified by the Eatonville porch talkers." This conception governs the construction of fictive local communities, ensuring that the quest for selfhood remains unfinished and that collective agreements are subject to a continuing dialogue that "recognizes its incompleteness."

Overall, Joseph's argument is rich in detail; however, his rhetorical nuances demand readers with historical insights, literary backgrounds, and an avid interest in extending the possibilities of regionalism.

Elaine R. Ognibene  
Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

### 16-3-0261

Weaver, Jace; Womack, Craig; and Warrior, Robert. *American Indian Literary Nationalism*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2006. 272 pp. Foreword by Simon J. Ortiz. Afterword by Lisa Brooks. ISBN 0-8263-4073-3, \$19.95 (pb).

This collection of three major essays is one of the most important discussions of American Indian literary theory to be recently published. The starting point is a 1981 seminal essay by Simon Ortiz (Acoma Pueblo) that is included in the appendix. Ortiz also introduces the book. Three prominent authors of pivotal works of literary criticism, Weaver (Cherokee), Womack (Muscogee) and Warrior (Osage), engage in academic dialogue and assessment of critical approaches to Native American literature.

Weaver begins the discussion by laying a foundation of the significance of American Indian Nationalism. Although his essay is a bit too self-referential, it establishes key points. Womack's essay begins with a rebuttal to a recent text by a non-Indian author who valorizes theories of hybridity. While his close reading sometimes seems tedious, it is also an important explication of nationalism. He concludes with broader implications for critical work. Warrior frames his essay in tribute to his former teacher, Edward Said, and explains how his theories of tribal sovereignty developed from that association.

Each author refutes charges of essentialism and demonstrates the complexities of theoretical approaches. What they are advocating and what they exemplify are careful readings, contexts, and

precise arguments. This volume is an excellent discourse.

P. Jane Hafen  
Univ. of Nevada, Las Vegas

## Visual & Performing Arts

### 16-3-0262

Amaki, Amalia K. and Barnwell, Andrea D. *Hale Woodruff, Nancy Elizabeth Prophet, and the Academy*. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2007. 144 pp. Illus. ISBN-13 978-0-295-98693-7, \$40.00.

*Hale Woodruff, Nancy Elizabeth Prophet, and the Academy* is a fantastic book that celebrates two extraordinary African-American artists whose work has long been neglected. Created as an exhibition catalogue for an exhibit at the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art on Woodruff and Prophet and their relationship to the Atlanta University Center, this publication examines Hale Woodruff's artistic contributions (in his paintings and murals, teaching and mentoring) and also examines Prophet's existing and known sculptures.

Woodruff and Prophet, both pioneers in their artistic work, spent time in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s and were forced to return to the United States because of economic hardships caused by the Great Depression. Both were recruited to teach at the Atlanta University Center (an organization of schools created to support the arts, which included Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spelman College), and both had to deal with the segregated South, life in Atlanta, and its constraints on their art. The book includes articles written by art historians, former colleagues and students, a chronology of their lives and works, the exhibition catalogue, and an index. A beautiful volume filled with photographs of the art and the artists, it is highly recommended for all public and academic libraries.

Melissa Aho  
Metropolitan State Univ. Library  
St. Paul, Minn.

### 16-3-0263

Rommen, Timothy. *"Mek Some Noise": Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in Trinidad*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2007. 230 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-520-25067-3, \$55.00 (cl); 978-0-520-25068-0, \$21.95 (pb).

"*Mek Some Noise*" is a fitting title for Rommen's book, because in West Indian dialect, "mek some noise" means "let's make some music," usually of the exuberant and joyous kind. Gospel music in Trinidad is indeed such a kind, and Rommen undertakes a study of certain religious faiths whose style of worship is expressed through various types of gospel music. Full Gospel Trinidad is the term he uses to refer to these groups, which are generally of Pentecostal and charismatic denominations. These groupings however, exclude Presbyterians, Anglicans, and Catholics. His analytical

paradigm, called the ethics of style, serves as his theoretical model for examining Full Gospel Trinidad.

Rommen briefly traces the religious history that has shaped Trinidad and identifies the four principal musical styles in the Full Gospel community: namely, gospelypso, North American gospel, dancehall, and hardcore soca and jamoo. The performance and reception of these styles, as well as the artists dedicated to them, are also presented.

While this work is laden with good information on gospel music in Trinidad, reading it was laborious. There needs to be better organization of the materials, with clear transitions from one idea to the other. Subheadings within each chapter would perhaps keep the writer focused and make reading easier and more enjoyable.

Diana Budhai  
Excelsior State College, Albany, N.Y.

### 16-3-0264

Sarig, Roni. *Third Coast: OutKast, Timbaland, and How Hip-Hop Became a Southern Thing*. Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 2007. 384 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-306-81430-3, \$16.95 (pb).

The music genres of a rap and hip-hop are now commemorating, and acknowledging, the 30-year mark in the music and recorded music industries. At this juncture, a number of socio-cultural and critical reviews of this musical phenomenon are warranted. Most writings have focused upon the music and its urban New York-based beginnings, while others have often included the well-chronicled East vs. West conflicts of the 1990s. *Third Coast* is an in-depth review of the paradigm known as Southern Hip-Hop.

Currently a majority of the top hip-hop recordings in the country emanate from Southern artists. The music of the "Dirty South" has dominated the charts in music sales and downloads through the efforts of artists such as Lil John, OutKast, and Timbaland. The city of Houston has been labeled the "Third Coast" in an attempt to garner recognition and respect for the creativity from this area in general, as well as the entire Southern region in particular. Rock 'n' roll, country, and rhythm & blues music can all be traced to this region. The author explains in great detail how the cities of Miami, Houston, Memphis, New Orleans, and Atlanta have also influenced the musical culture. Some of these artists, like Master P and his son Romeo, are nationally known; other lesser known producers, writers, and personalities have also made significant historical contributions to the industry. All of their stories are included here.

Recommended for public libraries, and students of music history and culture.

Anthony Todman  
St. John's Univ. (N.Y.) Library

### 16-3-0265

Tang, Patricia. *Masters of the Sabar: Wolof Griot Percussionists of Senegal*. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 2007. 224 pp. ISBN-13 978-1-59213-420-5, \$27.95 (pb).

This excellent publication is in the series African Soundscapes, edited by Gregory Barz. Tang is a music professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She is a scholar and performer of Senegalese music. The text includes two maps, 22 figures, and 15 black-and-white photos. The accompanying audio recording offers excellent examples of standard sabar repertoire and compositions performed by Lamine Toure with his family drum ensemble.

In a well-written account, the music and culture of Wolof Griot percussionists, masters of the sabar drumming tradition, are examined. Professor Tang has done field research in Senegal in Africa, here relating the history and repertoire of sabar drumming, including dance rhythms and musical phrases derived from spoken words. As in much Western percussion, there has been an increase in virtuosity as well as improved skills of percussionists in recent decades.

The photos, music examples, figures, and text complement each other well, with a writing style that at times is technical, while at other times is more down-to-earth. I strongly recommend this fine volume as an important addition to the literature.

Geary H. Larrick  
Stevens Point, Wis.

## Biography/ Autobiography

16-3-0266

Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem. *On the Shoulders of Giants: My Personal Journey Through the Harlem Renaissance*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007. 270 pp. ISBN 1-4165-3488-1, \$26.00.

Basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar shows in his latest book the same grace with words and ideas that he demonstrated on the court. This time he addresses the Harlem Renaissance in the context of his own life, presenting it as decisive to his development as an African American and as a man. He begins with a history of Harlem's evolution into development as a center of African-American culture in the early twentieth century. Then, borrowing the "call and response" format central to West African culture, he presents three central aspects of Harlem's unique culture and describes how each influenced his life. In the beginning was the Word, spoken by Harlem's writers: Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, and perhaps the greatest of all, W. E. B. Du Bois. Next came basketball—a game, but also Harlem's Great Black Hope of competition with whites on level courts, even when touring teams slept in jails because hotels refused them. Next was jazz. It reinvented the way whites saw black people and the way blacks saw themselves; its notes linger across the spectrum of today's music.

Abdul-Jabbar's presentation, deeply personal, is also arguably the best introduction to the Harlem Renaissance and its legacy currently available. It merits serious consideration for academic adoption as well as general-interest reading.

Dennis E. Showalter  
Colorado College

16-3-0267

Alcalá, Kathleen. *The Desert Remembers My Name: On Family and Writing*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2007. 224 pp. Series: Camino del Sol. ISBN-13 978-0-8165-2626-5, \$32.00 (cl); 978-0-8165-2627-5, \$14.95 (pb).

This collection of essays is divided into six sections. Despite some awkwardness in the writing of the essays, anyone with immigrant roots will appreciate the author's attempts to convey all that goes into a search for those roots. Indeed, she covers a lot of territory in this slim volume.

Engaged in the search to find out more about the people she comes from, Alcalá finds a great deal. The daughter of a Protestant minister in a largely Catholic population, she discovers her father's religious conversion story as well as the family's Jewish roots from Spain during the Inquisition. Also discovered through perseverance and a large family network, in America and Mexico, are strong, proud, devoted Opatá Indian women who are no longer part of the "hidden people of Mexico." In one essay, the author finds the tragedy of Andrea Yates strangely similar to the Mexican myth of La Llorona.

Extensive footnotes will be helpful to scholars seeking further connections to Hispanic history, Hispanic literature (magical realism), and women's history. This collection, which adds to a growing body of Chicano literature, is recommended for academic and large public libraries with a special interest in any of the subject areas mentioned above.

Francine M. Apollo  
SUNY Cobleskill Library

16-3-0268

Begag, Azouz. *Ethnicity and Equality: France in the Balance*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2007. 151 pp. Trans. from French with an introduction by Alec G. Hargreaves. ISBN-13 978-0-8032-6262-1, \$14.95 (pb).

Begag, Azouz. *Shantytown Kid*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2007. 212 pp. Trans. from French by Naima Wolf and Alec G. Hargreaves. ISBN-13 978-0-8032-6258-4, \$15.95 (pb).

The tension between immigrants to France of non-European origin and the majority ethnic population has been at the forefront of French discourse for some years and was a major topic of debate in the recent French presidential election. Born of Algerian parents, Begag is exceptionally well qualified to introduce us to this topic. A prolific novelist, sociologist at the prestigious research center CNRS, screenwriter, and politician, he has made the transition from life in a shantytown to his present status as a major public figure in French life. These two volumes have a wonderfully synergistic quality, the literary text enabling us to identify with the problems faced by immigrants from North Africa, while the analytic work gives us the historical and political root causes of the conditions under which they live. The memoir-novel *Shantytown Kid* (how much is fiction and how much reality we are not told), written in 1986 but set in the Lyon of the 1960s, chronicles, in a series of vignettes, the life of a first-generation son

of Algerian parents in France come to France to better their lives. The narrator shuttles between two worlds: his home in a shantytown hovel where there is no water, electricity, or plumbing, and the world of the school, where French culture in all its aspects, including correct manners, are inculcated. Though his home lacks the amenities that his non-Arab classmates take for granted and though his parents are illiterate, the community is closely knit and supportive. His immediate family is especially affectionate, caring, and protective, although sometimes rough. The portraits of the French teachers are also nuanced: Some teachers are racists and others kindly and encouraging. Thanks to them and to his own desire to escape the shantytown environment, he will be able to transcend both Arab and French racism and forge a successful career.

As a sociologist, Begag has specialized in studying the communities of North African and other non-European immigrants to France. In *Ethnicity and Equality* he describes the economic inequalities and discrimination that prompt disaffected youths to engage in acts of violence, such as the riots of 2005. Begag focuses mainly on those third-generation youths who lack any knowledge of their ancestors' home culture and yet are routinely denied access to the French culture into which they are born. He believes that the majority culture's fear that an alien way of life will replace the homegrown French one is misplaced. He argues that these youths have accepted French values, although that is not always obvious, and are eager to become an accepted part of the culture. Remedial programs such as affirmative action, which he has observed in the United States, though anathema to most French, can bring them into the mainstream.

Hargreaves, a professor at Florida State University, provides excellent introductions to both these works. Equally exemplary are his translations and the appended glossaries (with Naïma Wolf in the case of *Shantytown Kid*), which show enormous dexterity in translating words of French and Arabic slang, as well as Arabic-accented French.

Eva Martin Sartori  
Library, Univ. of Nebraska-Lincoln

#### 16-3-0269

Blumberg, Ilana M. *Houses of Study: A Jewish Woman Among Books*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2007. 177 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8032-1367-8, \$24.95.

Life often involves balancing one's role among different worlds. For Blumberg, the conflict revolves around her traditional Jewish background, her Jewish education, and her life as a professor. As women's roles in society change, the author struggles to find meaningful ways of expression in a religion that encourages modesty, marriage, and motherhood for women.

As Blumberg tells her story, she relates her life experiences at home, in school, and in the synagogue. She is drawn to English literature, especially to female authors such as George Eliot who defy the expected norms of women's roles in the world. The author expresses her frustration in seeking leadership roles in the synagogue. As she organizes an orthodox women's prayer group, she encounters resistance and conflict among people in her community and the university where she teaches. The author also re-

lates her experiences in the dating world, meeting her husband, and the birth of her daughter.

This book is meaningful, insightful, and well written. I would like to have seen better organization of the time periods of Blumberg's life, to make it easier to follow the sequence of events. Through this narrative, she demonstrates that while religious conflicts can be difficult, they can also become growing and enriching experiences.

Hannah M. Heller  
Baltimore, Md.

#### 16-3-0270

Cook, Richard. *It's About That Time: Miles Davis On and Off the Record*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007. 373 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-19-532266-8, \$27.00.

Cook, editor of *Jazz Review* and author of numerous writings on jazz, does great service to one of the most influential musical figures of the twentieth century in his latest work. Intertwining the oft-painful biographical episodes of Davis's life with insightful reviews of his major recordings, Cook has produced an essential and extremely readable guide that will be beneficial to both those relatively unfamiliar with post-World War II jazz and anyone already a fan of the trumpeter's music.

The narrative follows Davis's career, from the seminal recording *Birth of the Cool* through the final Warner Bros. releases, concluding with a discography of the official releases with Davis as front man. Cook offers critiques throughout. Any academic or public library would do well to add Cook to its music book collection, to complement Ian Carr's *Miles Davis: The Definitive Biography* (Thunder Mouth Press, 2006) and Gary Carner's *The Miles Davis Companion: Four Decades of Commentary* (Schirmer Books, 1996).

Anthony J. Adam  
Prairie View A & M Library

#### 16-3-0271

Diehl, Huston. *Dream Not of Other Worlds: Teaching in a Segregated Elementary School, 1970*. Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 2007. 260 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-87745-996-5, \$24.95.

Sometimes running away from history, especially if that history is painfully embarrassing, is rather like not speaking about a family's ugly past in front of others. In this most marvelous and powerfully emotional book, Diehl has opened the door of America's past, in this case 1970, when as a white teacher in rural Virginia she was the teacher in a segregated school for African-American kids. She was the first white teacher that these 38 fourth-grade students had ever had in the year before they were to transition to an integrated elementary school. In short, it was a tumultuous year in which the professor, then a just-out-of-college, 21-year-old, misplaced high school English teacher feels that she failed. Misplaced? Yes. Failed? Failure is in the eyes of the beholder. I think that both she and those children grew in many ways that year. The students came to know that someone outside of their community, different from them, cared about them deeply and wanted to help them to dream of successes beyond where they laid their heads at night. She came to understand with clarity that

racism, poverty, and the legacy of slavery wouldn't allow most of them to ever do that. You read this memoir and know that this woman became a better person from her experience with those children back in 1970. She's still growing from that experience. Is that failure? I think not.

The power and emotion of Diehl's personal story is in the tradition of Jonathan Kozol's *Death at an Early Age*. This is a must read to any and all who are serious about having conversations on American education at any level.

Henry C. Griffith, Sr.  
Dublin (Ohio) City Schools

#### 16-3-0272

Endo, Shoko. *Yakuza Moon: Memoirs of a Gangster's Daughter*. New York: Kodansha, 2007. 188 pp. Trans. from Japanese by Louise Heal. ISBN-13 978-4-7700-3042-9, \$22.95.

The subtitle of this autobiography is an effective summation. Endo grew up in luxury highlighted by a big house and yard—rarities in Japan—because her father was a *yakuza* (gangster) boss. Her life began a downward spiral when she was only six and her father went to prison. Neighbors and classmates who had been afraid of her father's connections began taunting her, which continued until she finally dropped out of school. The spacious garden became her refuge and her pets her only companions.

By 12, she began sneaking out to discos with her older sister and passing for 18. With this group of older delinquents, she finally found acceptance, but she also started smoking and drinking, getting into fights and being expelled from school.

Apparently, gang bosses in Japan have meteoric careers: They have initial success but are compelled to adopt a flashy lifestyle. Living beyond their means leads to a succession of loans at exorbitant rates and an inevitable crash. This happened to Endo's family when she was a teenager. As loan sharks continually barged in demanding payment, she stopped coming home and going to school and turned to a succession of abusive *yakuza* boyfriends, who supplied her with drugs.

It's a gripping story, but it's also frustratingly predictable. Even though she turns her life around in some ways, like getting off drugs and earning big money as a bar hostess to help with her father's debts, she's still mired in bad old patterns of abusive guys or married businessmen. Readers will cheer her on but also expect yet another broken heart or blackened eye. Also frustrating is her lack of analysis of how she fell to such depths, but this might be from our unfamiliarity with the *yakuza* lifestyle.

Al Hikida  
Seattle Central Community College

#### 16-3-0273

Friedman, Abigail. *The Haiku Apprentice: Memoirs of Writing Poetry in Japan*. Berkeley, Calif.: Stone Bridge Press, 2006. 236 pp. Foreword by Michael Dylan Welch. ISBN 1-933330-04-X, \$14.95 (pb).

Haiku is the most widely known poetic form of our century . . . and the most wildly misunderstood. Just because a text is written

in units of 5/7/5 syllables doesn't mean it captures, or is captivated by, haiku spirit (*bai-i*).

Now comes Friedman with a wonderful corrective. Her debut book opens the window on a lived world of haiku in contemporary Japan, for a breath of fresh air.

Friedman is a perfect guide here for two reasons. One is her day job as a diplomat, as well as her excellent training in observation and reportage. Two, she came at this knowing absolutely nothing about haiku.

We learn, for example, how the season word (*kigo*) of traditional haiku is a heritage of cultural memory. If you use a certain image to evoke a season, you might know you're using the same season word some famous haiku poets had used. And beneath its austere, objectivist surface, we learn how haiku can reveal great depths of emotion. Most of all, we remember the faces and stories of the people in her haiku group. It's enough to make you want to go out and start a haiku group of your own.

Gary Gach  
Asian Art Museum, Stanford Univ. and  
San Francisco Zen Center

#### 16-3-0274

Link, Aaron Raz and Raz, Hilda. *What Becomes You*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2007. 296 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8032-1081-3, \$24.95.

Aaron Raz Link and Hilda Raz, the authors of *What Becomes You*, are mother and son in search of the integrated self and the deeper truth of who and what *identity* is all about; what, ultimately, defines gender and persona; and even what children and parents owe one another. "Being a man, like being a woman, is something you have to learn," says Aaron, who began life as a girl named Sarah and 22 years later emerged from chrysalis to butterfly into a gay man. Welcome to a brand-new, newly minted world, which, perhaps, at its root, is not so new, after all—for what is new about human longing and the struggle with self and other?

The book is more than a simple biographical account about the journey from girl to gay man. It is a moving, no-holds-barred mother and child story that, on its face, questions all traditional assumptions about social construct; family; sexual orientation; affectional choice or lack thereof; sanity; and, yes, sex and gender. The narrative explodes with a multiplicity of viewpoints that somehow appear brilliantly integrated. As I course through it, I am reminded of Walt Whitman's line: "Do I contradict myself? / Very well then I contradict myself, / (I am large, I contain multitudes) . . ."

And in fact, if the theme and approach are unique, something should be said of the book's literary style as well. For this memoir/documentary/rant has a voice wide and explosive, like a whirlwind, and is propelled by the magical speed of a stream-of-consciousness Joycean tale.

Each author brings fresh, learned and emotional perspective to his/her "side" of the story. Aaron Raz Link is a writer, performing artist, curator, and historian of science. He is the director of the Museum of Nature in Portland, Oregon (how apt is that!). Hilda Raz is a professor of English and women's and gender studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the author of the poetry

collections *Trans* and *Divine Honors*.

Himilce Novas  
<http://supernovas.org>

**16-3-0275**

Matthews, David. *Ace of Spades*. New York: Henry Holt, 2007. 306 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8050-8149-7, \$24.00.

Matthews, a biracial child, grew up in an unusual environment. From his early childhood, David's life was never normal. Raised primarily by a single father who was not very attentive, David's upbringing was pretty much left to his own judgment.

Being biracial had never been of any great interest to David until he went to first grade. At that time he had to make a decision about whether he was going to live a Black or white life. The choice he made influenced the rest of his life. The wrong decision could have caused him his life.

If you are biracial, how do you decide which ethnicity you are going to embrace or not embrace? Why should a child have to make such a hard decision? David did, and he had to live with his decision.

I have read many books on biracial families. This one I found to be the saddest. It should be read, but I am not exactly certain who the audience should be. In order to follow all of Matthews's writing, the teen and average adult reader will need a dictionary nearby. He tends to use big words, even when they are not necessary. Despite this flaw, the book is interesting and sheds light on what it is like to be a biracial person.

Charlie Spencer Lackey  
Duke Univ. Medical Center Library

**16-3-0276**

Quiñones, Sam. *Antonio's Gun and Delfino's Dream: True Tales of Mexican Migration*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2007. 319 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8263-4254-6, \$24.95.

The author does a great job of depicting Mexican immigrants to the United States as heroic people, using their risk-taking skills to try to obtain a better life. He humanizes them, even if they are illegal immigrants. His true stories of various immigrants are excellently told and make for interesting and enjoyable reading.

This volume tells of the poverty and corruption in Mexico, and the difficulty many face in trying to have a decent life there. As a result, some have the courage to try to move to the United States and obtain a better life. Often the circumstances involve illegal immigration to the United States, where many in this book succeed in life and work, overcoming many obstacles. Whether the person becomes a successful farmer or laborer or cook, or whatever, you read of people who improve their lives. Also, you read about how immigrants to the United States typically send money back home to their families. Thus, many dollars come into Mexico, helping the impoverished people there live somewhat better lives.

The book also tells about places such as South Gate, California (near Los Angeles), or Winters, California (near Sacramento), which will be unfamiliar to most, but which include many immigrants from Mexico. With immigration, especially illegal im-

migration, being such a hot political topic in the United States, this book is timely, needed, and fun to read.

Russell Eisenman  
Univ. of Texas–Pan American

**16-3-0277**

Richards, Renée, with John Ames. *No Way Renée: The Second Half of My Notorious Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007. 302 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-7432-9013-5, \$25.00.

Renée Richards (née Richard Raskind in New York, to an affluent Jewish family) is perhaps better known as a “notorious transsexual” than as the champion tennis player and gifted eye surgeon he was; better known as the man who became a woman in 1975 than as someone who helped establish a landmark legal precedent that gave male-to-female transsexuals the right to compete professionally in Forest Hills and beyond. The fact that Richards eventually became an inductee in the Women's Tennis Association Hall of Fame is seldom mentioned. Neither is the fact that she coached Martina Navratilova and helped her become the top tennis player of her time.

This sequel autobiography is compelling and eye-opening for all those reasons—for Richards's remarkable accomplishments as a *person*, before and after her transsexual operation. The book includes her victories as well as her regrets as she ventures bravely into her septuagenarian decade. To be sure, she goes into what becoming and being a woman for her was all about, providing some very clinical descriptions of the operation and hormonal treatments. There is also the heartrending conclusion that in the end, she is not quite a woman, but a “facsimile” of one—a “fax woman”—for all the reasons she explains, with the remarkable freedom of one who has nothing left to lose. But there is also much in the book about Renée's day-to-day life, her relationships with her son and with the woman who for decades has served as her housekeeper, personal assistant, housemate, friend, and champion. We also learn that lasting love with a man has eluded her and that despite all her dashed hopes, her spirit emerged triumphant and unbowed. In fact, it is interesting to me how Richard Raskind seemed to have come into the world with a sense of entitlement—the same entitlement that got him to and through Yale and other hallowed institutions—and how this unflappable sense of entitlement remained intact throughout his metamorphosis into Renée Richards and all the years that followed.

Himilce Novas  
<http://supernovas.org>

**16-3-0278**

Stanton, Mary. *Journey Toward Justice: Juliette Hampton Morgan and the Montgomery Bus Boycott*. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 2006. 262 pp. ISBN 0-8203-2857-X, \$29.95.

Fifty years after Rosa Parks's refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus, the Juliette Hampton Morgan Memorial Library was publicly dedicated. The woman being honored was a staunch advocate of racial equality and social justice as well as a librarian, striving to serve all the citizens of Montgomery in an era when such values were dangerous to espouse no matter what your

color. Numbered among many unsung (until now) heroines of the South's battle to achieve racial equality, Juliette is a testament to the indefatigable efforts of some Southern white women to alter the landscape of prejudice and ignorance. Born into a cultured, well-to-do family, she could easily have lived a life of ease. But her keen intellect and heart of integrity compelled her to speak out, which she did through editorials in the *Montgomery Advertiser* and other publications.

Stanton's buoyant narrative does great justice to exposing the white cultural milieu of Montgomery at that time and how a few courageous spirits put into motion the moving of the mountain of hatred of institutionalized racism. Though Juliette's life ended in tragedy, her courage will inspire generations to come. A must read!

Pamela M. Salela  
Univ. of Illinois at Springfield

## History

16-3-0279

Antler, Joyce. *You Never Call! You Never Write! A History of the Jewish Mother*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007. 304 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-19-514787-2, \$23.00.

This critical, scholarly study of the Jewish-American mother provides a fascinating glimpse into American popular culture through the changing image of the Jewish mother. The time period runs from the early twentieth century immigrant experience until the new millennium. The author, professor of American Jewish history and culture at Brandeis University and author or editor of eight books, aims to meld the social history of American Jewish women with the ideas and myths influencing popular perceptions of them.

The book is heavily documented, with more than 40 pages of footnotes, as well as a list of archival sources used. However, there is no index, which would have been useful. There are interesting black-and-white illustrations sprinkled throughout the book, as well as examples of Jewish mother jokes. The book traces the changes and transformations in the perception of the Jewish mother, as she appears in radio, television, films, novels, and stand-up comedy. It is clearly written and easy to understand. A valuable addition to Jewish studies collections in academic libraries, as well as to nonfiction collections in public libraries and Judaica libraries, including temple, synagogue, and community center libraries.

Susan Freiband  
Univ. of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras

16-3-0280

Baker, H. Robert. *The Rescue of Joshua Glover: A Fugitive Slave, the Constitution, and the Coming of the Civil War*. Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 2007. 272 pp. ISBN 0-8214-1690-1, \$38.95.

Baker offers a model example of a historical case study, using the rescue of the titular character as a springboard to explore much larger issues in antebellum America.

Ostensibly, the book is about the rescue of a fugitive slave in Wisconsin in 1854. Benammi Garland, a southern slaveholder, journeyed north to reclaim Glover, an alleged escapee. With the aid of the proper authorities, Garland subdued Glover but was never able to return to the South. Wisconsinites believed the Fugitive Slave Act, which garbed Garland's actions with an air of legality, was fraudulent and effected a rescue of Glover. The ex-slave was quickly spirited to Canada, but the fallout from the rescue consumed Wisconsin state politics for the rest of the decade.

Baker devotes only one chapter to the actual rescue; a majority of his study examines the aftermath, specifically the efforts of the federal government to prosecute Sherman Booth, a leading Wisconsin abolitionist, with violation of the Fugitive Slave Act. Using a variety of primary sources, Baker sets out to reexamine the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. His conclusions are noteworthy and perhaps even worthy of the vaulted appellation of "paradigm-shifting." The author argues that the Fugitive Slave Act, contrary to several federal court rulings, was unconstitutional, and that it is the public, not the Supreme Court, who is the ultimate arbiter of a law's constitutionality.

While legal commentators may take issue with Baker's main findings, he makes a strong case against the Supreme Court having the final say on a statute's constitutionality. However, not only does he present his novel ideas about constitutionality, he also comments on the Glover rescue's effect on states rights and the nature of citizenship. This is an illuminating new study that should make a noticeable impact on current scholarship within the field.

Ryan Staude  
Windward School, Los Angeles, Calif.

16-3-0281

Capponi, Niccolo. *Victory of the West: The Great Christian-Muslim Clash at the Battle of Lepanto*. Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 2007. 412 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-306-81544-7, \$27.50.

The Battle of Lepanto, fought in 1571, is usually described as at best a tactical victory for the Christian alliance. Despite heavy losses in skilled personnel, within a year a rebuilt Ottoman navy was successfully operating in the Mediterranean.

Capponi, a highly regarded scholar of the Italian Renaissance, returns to the original archival and printed sources to construct a fresh analysis. He describes Lepanto as a victory for Western technology, which would decide so many battles in the next four centuries. The Christian fleet's heavy artillery proved decisive throughout the day, preventing the Ottomans from utilizing their superiority in boarding tactics. Lepanto was also a psychological victory. A ramshackle alliance of Christian states thrashed a Muslim empire at the peak of its power and confidence. The reconstructed Ottoman navy was never again able to dominate the Mediterranean as before. More generally, Lepanto's unexpected outcome sharpened the centuries-long struggle between Christianity and Islam, reinforcing a dichotomy that made it increasingly difficult for the Muslim world to respond to the West's growing lead in military, scientific, and economic matters. What Bernard Lewis calls the "second wave" of Islam's attack on Christendom

arguably reached its high tide at Lepanto.

Dennis E. Showalter  
Colorado College

### 16-3-0282

Engerman, Stanley L. *Slavery, Emancipation & Freedom: Comparative Perspectives*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2007. 128 pp. ISBN 0-8071-3236-5, \$25.00.

Kerr-Ritchie, J. R. *Rites of August First: Emancipation Day in the Black Atlantic World*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2007. 312 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8071-3232-6, \$45.00.

Kerr-Ritchie situates the slavery debate, in terms of the victims, in diasporic dimensions rather than limiting it regionally and/or hemispherically. He uses the Rites of August, the annual West Indian celebration of the 1834 emancipation of slaves throughout the British Empire, a number that totaled over 800,000.

In the annual celebration of August First in the West Indies, North America, Canada West, and England, the author explores the cultural politics of emancipation, which reveals the presence of a Pan-African consciousness steeped in the politics of racial solidarity. This transnational perspective sharpens the focus of the slavery debate to point to an "alliance" of the enslaved within the Atlantic World.

In the United States and western Ontario before and after the Civil War, African descendants used the annual celebration to strengthen their attacks on the peculiar institution. Using conventions, antislavery societies, and the black press as well as the travels of freedom seekers (such as Frederick Douglass) to England, African descendants opened up a very formidable diasporic, transnational front against U.S. slavery. As the author argues so eloquently, August First played a crucial role in politically mobilizing African descendants both in the United States and Canada "for the overthrow of American slavery" (pp. 94, 113, 116–117).

Unlike Kerr-Ritchie's book, *Slavery, Emancipation & Freedom* offers superficial historical background, situating the debate in an unfortunate repetitive mode of comparative, worldwide slavery, stretching back to its ancient origins in Europe, Africa, Asia, and among early Amerindians. The work loses a great opportunity to be more analytic and interpretive, not only of United States slavery, but of the mindset that formulated such a heinous institution and the psychic damage to that mindset and its impact on interpersonal relationships in more contemporary times.

Even though the author raises the issue of race as key to any discussion of slavery "among Europeans and Americans," it is not examined further. Rather than presenting a question on behavior within the American version of the peculiar institution that addresses both black and white, and the extent of the impact of slavery on present-day behavior, Engerman elects to phrase it in terms of black behavior only. It would appear that by placing his discussion of slavery in this worldwide, comparative look, the author wishes to avoid a more empirical, meaningful analysis of United States slavery or slavery under Westerners *per se*. For example, rather than assessing the reasons why Europeans got involved (other than the need for labor) in the trans-Atlantic trade,

Engerman offers apologies. He writes, "Indeed the existence of slavery in Africa and among Native Americans probably permitted the rapid response to emerging European demands, as well as providing a cultural background for living as slave to others" (p. 15, my emphasis).

In spite of the book's somewhat apologetic stance, it has compiled a trove of sources. Yet the reader is left wondering why the seminal works of some authors, such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Eugene D. Genovese, were not cited. This oversight of Du Bois' *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860–1888* (1935), Genovese's *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (1979), and C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1963) is disturbing. Engerman does not do Toussaint and Haiti justice in the book.

Both volumes are suitable for readers at the high school and college levels, and the general reading public, but only the Kerr-Ritchie book receives enthusiastic recommendation.

A. J. Williams-Myers  
SUNY New Paltz

### 16-3-0283

Germany, Kent. *New Orleans After the Promises: Poverty, Citizenship, and the Search for the Great Society*. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 2007. 460 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8203-2543-9, \$59.95 (cl); 978-0-8203-2900-0, \$29.95 (pb).

Germany, an assistant professor of history and African American studies at the University of South Carolina, spent years searching through every document he could find on the anti-poverty programs of the Great Society in New Orleans. What emerged is an intriguing and sophisticated study of race relations, civil rights activism, grass roots community organizations, and the local impact of the Great Society. How did political power and race relations change due to President Lyndon Johnson's policies, and what does it suggest about liberalism's successes and failures? Such questions are addressed in this study. Professor Germany also provides us with a history of politics, racism, and elites in twentieth-century New Orleans.

The Great Society permitted liberalism to challenge racial segregation and the exclusion of African Americans from the political process in the South. In New Orleans, it promoted the inclusion of African Americans in community organizations tied to Great Society programs. Grassroots activism emerged in the African-American neighborhoods, and federal programs contributed to their growth and ability to make change. According to the author, this created a "soft power" of inclusion that remained dependent on federal funding and public/private/nonprofit cooperation for racial progress and the increase in political opportunities for African Americans. Because of the need to extend services to residents neglected by city authorities, Great Society programs created a public/private governing structure, "Soft State." The War on Poverty engaged local citizens, created new African-American leaders, empowered others, and brought African Americans into the civic culture in the 1960s. Germany's research focuses on 1964–74, when federal money came into urban America promoting social change.

This is a must read for anyone interested in urban America, grassroots community action, and the impact of federal programs on local communities.

Harvey J. Strum  
Sage Colleges of Albany

#### 16-3-0284

Hamilton, Ruth Simms, ed. *Routes of Passage: Rethinking the African Diaspora, Volume I, Part I*. East Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Press, 2007. 384 pp. Series: African Diaspora Research Project. ISBN 0-87012-632-1, \$34.95 (pb).

More than 100 years ago Africa was characterized as the “dark continent,” which, according to the German philosopher Georg Hegel at the time, “is no part of the world; it has not movement or development to show.” Now in the twenty-first century appears a publication that is pedagogically innovative in how we view Africa and African descendants, as well as a giant intellectual refutation of Hegel and his school of thought. The book brings together a number of “authors of diverse national origins and who represent a range of disciplinary backgrounds and area studies.” The compilation is a logical outgrowth of the ongoing conceptualization and research of the African Diaspora Research Project (ADRP) at Michigan State University, of which Hamilton was director.

The book contains 21 chapters and an introduction that clearly delineate the routes of passage from Africa to various parts of the world, structuring a global community of descendants inter-related with an African collective consciousness but separated by space and time. This African diaspora, this “Global Africa,” stretches to the far corners of the world: from Africa to Europe, Asia, the Pacific, the Middle East, and the Americas, conveying ideas of language, culture, art, and politics, and endowing the corners with economic windfalls. Its earliest beginnings, its *maafa*, was the “displacement of people against their will and over vast physical spaces, [and it] was one of the largest in the history of the modern world.”

The reader follows the routes of the aggregate to such regions as Brazil and Mexico in the Americas, in the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf, especially in southern Iraq where African descendants called Zanj resisted oppression between 868 and 883. Readers are riveted to the short portrait of Queen Charlotte Sophia, “the German-born consort of England’s King George III (1760–1820), who was identified as ‘Negroid.’” Chapters in the book as well point to historical parallels of violence perpetrated against African descendants by Germans in pre-World War I Namibia in Southern Africa, and by whites in both Great Britain and the United States in 1919.

The book is really a memorial to the late Dr. Hamilton, and seven of the chapters bear her name. It is suitable for students at both the high school and college levels as well as the general reading public.

A. J. Williams-Myers  
SUNY New Paltz

#### 16-3-0285

Jacoway, Elizabeth. *Turn Away Thy Son: Little Rock, the Crisis*

*That Shocked a Nation*. New York: Free Press, 2007. 477 pp. ISBN 0-7432-9719-9, \$30.00.

Viewers of “Eyes on the Prize” have seen iconic images from Little Rock in 1957: National Guardsmen turning black students away from Central High School; the howling mob surrounding Elizabeth Eckford; soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division escorting the students to school. Jacoway’s meticulously researched account of this crisis offers an interpretation that challenges established wisdom.

She contends that white opposition to integration had little to do with educational standards or states’ rights; at its root was an irrational fear of miscegenation. Governor Orval Faubus usually is cast as the villain of this story, but Jacoway finds that others share the blame. Superintendent Virgil Blossom authored the controversial desegregation plan, but then backed away in the face of intense white resistance. School officials expelled Minniejean Brown while failing to discipline the white students who assaulted her. The Justice Department provided little guidance or assistance. White moderates failed to speak in favor of integration, leaving the door open for the Citizens’ Council.

Jacoway highlights many little-known facts: Federal troops were soon withdrawn, leaving the black students unprotected from merciless harassment; most children of affluent whites were not affected by the desegregation plan; Little Rock schools were closed for the 1958–59 school year, and when they reopened only five black students were enrolled.

Jacoway’s access to and understanding of Little Rock’s political and social elite gives her account a depth and complexity lacking in other works. However, with the exception of the nine brave pioneers, their mentor, Daisy Bates, and their lawyer, Wiley Branton, African-American voices are seldom heard. Nevertheless, *Turn Away Thy Son* is likely to stand as the definitive study of the crisis.

Paul T. Murray  
Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

#### 16-3-0286

Lazerow, Jama and Williams, Yohuru, eds. *In Search of the Black Panther Party: New Perspectives on a Revolutionary Movement*. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2006. 408 pp. ISBN 0-8223-3980-4, \$23.95 (pb).

Since its inception, Black Nationalism has addressed issues of social exclusion, class stratification, and political violence. The contributors investigate the complexity of a variation of Black Nationalism, the Black Panther Party, in historical context with little distortion. This collection outlines the evolution of the Panthers and the justifications given for its revolutionary struggle. The articles show how the civil rights historiography underpins mainstream presumptions as to the threat that the Panthers posed to the American socioeconomic order. The Panthers’ dissent to the status quo was widely perceived then and today as a threat to the internal security of the United States.

The Panthers attempted to provide socioeconomic and political arrangements that were thought to be in the best interests of the Black community. Aside from differences, the Panthers and

other progressive organizations united to make sure that the costs of maintaining the status quo were raised in numerous ways and made as unattractive and implausible as possible while struggling for a more just and equitable United States. The contributors, however, fail to correct the misconception of the Panthers being composed of male members and detail their narrow focus on Maoist Communism as the only solution to the economic problems of the Black community.

Aaron P. Ogletree  
Anthropology Review Database

### 16-3-0287

McLaurin, Melton A. *The Marines of Montford Point: America's First Black Marines*. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2007. 216 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8078-3097-0, \$29.95.

The U.S. Marine Corps regards itself as America's elite fighting force. Precisely for that reason it excluded Blacks until World War II and discriminated against them for years afterward. It was, after all, widely believed that Blacks lacked the courage and the intelligence to make real Marines. It took an Executive Order to compel the Corps to enlist its first Blacks in 1941, and then they were assigned to a separate, rigidly segregated training camp: Montford Point, North Carolina. More than 20,000 men trained there during the war. Most were assigned to rear-echelon labor units with high-sounding names like Depot Companies and Ammunition Companies. They performed unexpectedly well under fire, both in their assigned missions and in ad hoc combat role, but little changed. Montford was closed in 1949, in consequence of another Executive Order. De facto segregation and institutionalized discrimination continued until the Korean War's demand for riflemen moved Blacks into the front lines of the Marine Corps for good.

McLaurin, professor emeritus of history at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, bases his work on filmed interviews with 60 Montford graduates. What emerges beyond question is that these veterans felt themselves to be Americans, and knew themselves to be men, long before they were acknowledged as Marines.

Dennis E. Showalter  
Colorado College

### 16-3-0288

Paldiel, Mordecai. *Diplomat Heroes of the Holocaust*. Jersey City: KTAV/Rabbi Arthur Schneier Center for International Affairs of Yeshiva University, 2007. 241 pp. Introduction by Richard Holbrooke. Preface by Arthur Schneier. ISBN 0-88125-909-8, \$29.50.

This fascinating collective biography for researchers studying the topic of Righteous Gentiles presents in short essays and photos the extraordinary deeds of 27 outstanding diplomats from Sweden (6), Switzerland (5), Brazil (2), Romania (2), Spain (2), China (1), Germany (1), Great Britain (1), Holland (1), Italy (1), Japan (1), Portugal (1), Slovenia (1), Turkey (1) and Vatican (1), who were recognized as Righteous among Nations by Yad Vashem for saving the lives of about 200,000 Jews from the Nazi

Holocaust. These diplomats risked their own careers, social status, financial situation, and even lives (such as the legendary Raoul Wallenberg, who saved the lives of about 100,000 Budapest Jews, and died in a Soviet prison) for using ingenious methods—often contrary to the rigid bureaucratic rules of their countries—by dispensing passports and exit visas to needy Jews fleeing the Nazi extermination machine, or by issuing protective papers to shield ghetto Jews from deportation to death camps. The diplomats were guided only by their conscience and deep humanitarian feelings for fellow human beings.

Chiune-Sempo Sugihara (Japanese Consul-General in Kaunas, Lithuania), for instance, stated: "I could not allow these people to die, people who had come to me for help with death staring in their eyes." And Aristides de Sousa Mendes (Portuguese Consul-General in Bordeaux, France), a father of ten children who lost his job and became a pauper, declared: "If thousands of Jews can suffer because of one Catholic (Hitler), then surely it is permitted for one Catholic to suffer for so many Jews." Carl Lutz (Swiss diplomat in Budapest) confessed: "For me as a Christian, the care for Jews was a moral command, and I thought to assist the thousands who were condemned to death," while Cardinal Angelo Rotti (later Pope John XXIII) voiced his protest to the Hungarian government with the following words: "The simple fact that people are persecuted simply because of their racial origin is a violation of their natural rights. If the good Lord gave them life, no one in the world has the right to remove it from them."

In conclusion, this volume is highly recommended for public, junior/senior high school, special, and academic libraries, and in his introduction Richard Holbrooke rightly hopes that it will be "required reading for all aspiring diplomats."

Vladimir F. Wertsman  
New York Public Library

### 16-3-0289

Thrush, Coll. *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place*. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2007. 376 pp. Foreword by William Cronon. ISBN-13 978-0-285-98700-2, \$28.95.

As Thrush points out, no other American city has embraced its Native American past like Seattle; place names, parks, museums, and public art all pay homage to a rich American Indian heritage. Even the city's name is a more easily pronounced version of Seeathl, the Duwamish Chief whose accommodation with white settlers enabled the (largely) peaceful growth of the city. This relatively peaceful relationship between Native Americans and white settlers stands in stark contrast to many other cities where Native people faced attitudes ranging from indifference to active malevolence (in Denver, for example, *The Rocky Mountain News* rejoiced over every massacre of the Cheyenne or Arapaho).

Thrush looks beyond the superficial veneration of Seattle's Native past and finds a less sanguine reality. Using Seeathl's famous 1850s treaty speech (which may itself be spurious) as a symbolic touchstone, Thrush examines the concept of the "Vanishing American," which was so strong in Victorian America and which appears prominently in Seeathl's speech. Thrush suggests that this was the viewpoint taken by Seattle's white leaders, who saw the region's Native peoples as a lost and nostalgically remembered

part of the city's past. He disputes this judgment, however, and provides evidence, in the form of historical documents and photographs, that Native American residents played an essential role, both culturally and economically, in the growth of the city.

*Native Seattle* is an interesting and lively history of Seattle with an unusual Native American focus, enhanced with many historic photos, copious notes, and a unique atlas of sites historically significant to tribes of the region. Strongly recommended for libraries in the Puget Sound region.

Andy J. Deering  
Central Wyoming College

### 16-3-0290

Walker, Susannah F. *Style & Status: Selling Beauty to African-American Women, 1920-1975*. Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2007. 264 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8131-2433-9, \$40.00.

From beauty schools to lunch counter sit-ins, straightened hair to afros, Susannah Walker situates African-American women's hair and makeup within the context of race politics. With more than 30 illustrations and photos, *Style & Status* unearths the complexities and intersections of beauty standards and sociopolitical events that on the surface seem contradictory. Take, for example, hair straightening and skin lightening products, arguably derived from white beauty ideals, yet embraced by many African-American women for symbolizing success and progress, and for providing a market niche for African-American entrepreneurs and stylists. Walker sheds light on contradictions like these and others, including when the tactic of looking one's best on the frontlines of civil rights protests means straightened hair for African-American women. This seems an inconsistency until Walker tells us that the salons where many women had their hair processed also provided voter registration forms and advocated for civil rights. Years later, the afro presents another challenge: a symbol of Black Power with the potential to put African American-owned salons out of business because of its low-maintenance style.

Walker's social and historical analysis of the selling of beauty to African-American women is excellent.

Michelle Napierski-Prandl  
Russell Sage College

### 16-3-0291

Weiner, Hollace Ava and Roseman, Kenneth D., eds. *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas*. Lebanon, N.H.: Univ. Press of New England, 2007. 328 pp. Foreword by Robert S. Strauss. ISBN 1-58465-622-0, \$34.95.

Jews represent less than one percent of the population of the state of Texas. Yet they have had and continue to have an important influence on the state. This excellent book has 21 chapters, with three overall parts: The Formative Years: Forging a Dual Identity; The Entrepreneurial Era: Leaving Their Mark; and Current Events: Changing the Texas Landscape.

The chapters show that from the fifteenth century to the present, Jews have played an important role in various aspects of Texas life: commerce, education, politics, medicine, law, and more. Jewish leadership in discovering oil in the Permian Basin section of

Texas led to much money for the University of Texas and helped transform it into an elite university (see chapter 8, "West Texas Wildcatters: From Immigrant to Patron Saint Rita" by Barry Schlachter).

Chapter 17, "Minority Report: Dr. Ray K. Daily Battles the Houston School Board" by Lynwood Abram, shows how Daily, a female doctor, helped establish rights for women and aided the development of two universities: Texas Southern University, a historically Black school, and the University of Houston. It was difficult for her to get a medical education and an internship, and no one would give her a residency. Despite this sex discrimination, she was a successful doctor and also had some success in social and political areas. Chapter 18, "Opening Legal Doors for Women: Hermine Tobolowsky" by Gladys R. Leff, shows how men had legal control over women and their property in Texas, but this was resisted and changed by a woman attorney. Other chapters deal with such things as synagogues in Texas, the demographics of the Jewish population, Jewish Confederates in the Civil War, and more.

Many of the chapters tell interesting stories about Jews who come to Texas to make their place in life, often fleeing persecution in Europe. These Jews brought a spirit of independence and yet also usually stayed true to their Jewish religion and culture. At times they had to adapt to being Jews in a very non-Jewish culture, yet they usually managed to work out whatever compromises were necessary to fit in, yet stay loyal to their beliefs. This terrific book, with many photographs (mostly black-and-white, but a few in color) does an excellent job of describing Jews in Texas and showing how people from one culture adapt to another culture.

Russell Eisenman  
Univ. of Texas-Pan American

## Religion

### 16-3-0292

Greenstein, Howard R.; Hotz, Kendra G.; and Kaltner, John. *What Do Our Neighbors Believe? Questions and Answers on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007. 160 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-664-23065-4, \$16.95.

In many urban and suburban neighborhoods throughout America, residents often adhere to different religious traditions. This fact is illustrated by the growing presence of churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques in the same communities. In an effort to create *better* if not *perfect* strangers, Greenstein, Hotz, and Kaltner have devised a splendid book on the beliefs, practices, and traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Each of the book's nine chapters includes three questions, which are answered in turn for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The subjects address origins, significant dates, people, places, sacred texts, leadership, beliefs, practices, relationships, social issues, contemporary concerns, and future prospects. The reader can quickly survey the book to gain information and understanding

about a single unfamiliar tradition or study the questions comparatively for all three faiths. The authors do an excellent job of summarizing the basic beliefs and practices of each tradition and describing their contemporary concerns. The book's only shortcoming is entirely understandable. The incredible diversity and multiplicity within Christianity is nearly impossible to summarize in short chapter form. The book does not mention Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, or other latter-day and millenarian churches. Also, the vexing question of "Who is a Christian?" is never addressed. Perhaps these are matters for another book.

The volume concludes with a helpful section of key dates, a brief glossary, suggested Internet sites, and reading for each religion. Highly recommended for comparative religion study groups and church, synagogue, and Islamic center libraries.

William J. Kanalley  
Siena College Library, Loudonville, N.Y.

### 16-3-0293

Van Til, Kent A. *Less Than Two Dollars a Day: A Christian View of Poverty and the Free Market*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans's, 2007. 192 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8028-1767-9, \$16.00 (pb).

Van Til offers a timely and important work shedding light on the reality of the increasing inequality of income, wealth, access to resources, and opportunities. He not only puts Christian perspectives in the foreground but also takes the power out of the argument that capitalism and free markets will automatically create economic growth that will benefit everyone. His concern is for the third of the world's population living on less than two dollars a day.

He argues convincingly and consistently that Christianity demands that those who call themselves Christian have a moral obligation to provide sustenance and dignity for those who cannot provide for themselves. Van Til challenges the secular cultural belief that the extension of capitalism worldwide will solve the problem of world poverty. He demonstrates that there is no distributive justice built into capitalism or markets. His chapter on the ideas of Adam Smith and mainstream economic thinkers pointedly shows the amoral and coldly calculating nature of economic rationality. He exposes the weakness of the economic argument that the capitalist system provides for the best distribution of products and services by noting that the argument assumes an existing distribution of income and wealth. Consequently, a person with little or nothing cannot benefit from the market.

Van Til discusses both Biblical and contemporary sources of Christian thought, including the U.S. Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter on the economy "Economic Justice for All" and a document from the mainstream Protestant tradition. He anticipates the reader's question of "What can I do?" by introducing important perspectives from Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper and political theorist Michael Walzer. After synthesizing their discussion of the "spheres" (social, political, economic, cultural) that both shape us and are shaped by us, Van Til argues that we can "bloom where we are planted" to act on distributive justice. He discusses Nobel Prize-winning economist Amarta Sen's useful concept by

defining poverty as an inadequate "capacity to function." At all levels and spheres, by fostering changes that increase the "capacity to function, poverty will be eliminated." On a material level, Van Til notes that world material needs for basics would cost just 10 percent of world military spending;

This highly recommended book is well documented both in the text and through an extensive bibliography.

Richard L. Shirey  
Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

## Education

### 16-3-0294

Berry, Theodora Regina and Mizelle, Nathalie D., eds. *From Oppression to Grace: Women of Color and Their Dilemmas within the Academy*. Sterling, Va.: Stylus Publishing, 2006. 264 pp. ISBN 1-57922-110-6, \$65.00 (cl); 1-57922-111-4, \$24.95 (pb).

Through storytelling and the lens of Critical Race Feminism, Berry and Mizelle's edited work offers an uncompromising critique of the institution of higher education. Graduate students and junior and senior faculty recount their struggles and successes, and offer advice to the women of color who will follow. As the subtitle suggests, this book is about dilemmas. Reading about the obstacles these women encounter may stir feelings of frustration in the reader. However, the authors are not complaining but linking their experiences to the works of feminist writers and theorists.

The students' stories repeatedly voice the need for mentors, express feeling "in-between" and on the margin, and underscore the strength they draw from the women in their lives. The narratives from the faculty talk of being role models and address issues of isolation and stratification. They report on institutions overcritical of their scholarship and the expectation that they weigh in on issues of race and gender despite their academic areas of specialty. Although the intended audience may be women of color in the academy, the stories tell us that all persons in institutions of higher education would do well to read excerpts from this book.

Michelle Napierski-Prancl  
Russell Sage College

### 16-3-0295

Tatum, Beverly Daniel. *Can We Talk About Race? And Other Conversations in an Era of School Resegregation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2007. 160 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8070-3284-8, \$22.95.

In her most recent book, Tatum has proven once again, through the clarity of her voice of reason and scholarship, that we still need to overcome the many "isms" that divide and refuse to grant citizenship into the moral community upon which the United States was founded. She argues that though much progress has been made since the *Brown* decisions of 1954-55, society at large has resegregated, and many have abandoned the task won in those

court victories. As such, the soul of our nation has been affected in a negative way. And not only adults but also children, from kindergarten through college, are being affected.

Antiracist dialogues are a must, and to be effective, Professor Tatum asserts that they must be ongoing. Just as a parent would never think of taking a child off a seven-day prescription after only two days, she tells us that in the same way we must have the dogged determination to have the full dose of these much-needed conversations for the healing of this nation now, and for the future of its leaders of tomorrow. *Can We Talk About Race?* is present, vital, relevant, and needed reading for all who are wanting to having meaningful conversations about equity in our country.

Henry C. Griffith, Sr.  
Dublin (Ohio) City Schools

## Social and Political Sciences

16-3-0296

Barrett, Paul M. *American Islam: The Struggle for the Soul of a Religion*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007. 304 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-374-10423-8, \$25.00.

Muslim Americans are currently a community of about three to six million people, congregating in 1,300 mosques, and encompassing a variety of ethnicities: 34 percent are of Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, and Afghani background; 20 percent have Arabic roots; 20 percent are native-born American Black, mostly converts; and 20 percent descend from Turkey, Iran, Africa, and other countries. Eighty-five percent are Sunni, 15 percent are Shi'a, plus there is a small group of Sufis. As a group, Muslim Americans "are more prosperous and better educated than other Americans" (almost 60 percent are college educated, and the family medium annual income is \$60,000). They are overwhelmingly law abiding and politically active; 80 percent are registered voters.

The book is based on the author's more than 400 interviews with people of various ages, social strata, and regions, encountered in Muslim homes, mosques, and private gatherings, with a special focus on seven representative protagonists: a Lebanese Shi'a publisher with a successful immigrant story, an Egyptian scholar and university professor advocating classical Islam and moderate orientation, a charismatic African-American imam who left the militant Nation of Islam to embrace "the real Islam," a Pakistani feminist and journalist who believes that women should not be separated from men during worship in the mosque, a white couple of Sufi converts at Southern Methodist University, a Saudi student (University of Idaho) running an anti-Semitic and anti-American website, and a student (University of Tennessee) who regrets his former association with the militant MoBrotherhood. The book also reveals that in the aftermath of 9/11, thousands of Muslim Americans were investigated and interrogated, many of them feeling unjustly vilified. The reconciliation between Islam and the American culture is a complex problem, interpreted in

various ways by religious leaders, and there is a negative influence of militant Islam sponsored by Saudi Arabia, but opposed by those who emphasize peaceful coexistence with other religions.

Written by an experienced, talented, and objective investigative reporter (formerly editor of *The Wall Street Journal* for 18 years), the book is certainly a good source for a better understanding of Islam in American society. It is recommended for public, high school, and academic libraries, keeping in mind that Muslim Americans represent in essence a success story of integration in mainstream America.

Vladimir F. Wertsman  
New York Public Library

16-3-0297

Bowser, Benjamin P. *The Black Middle Class: Social Mobility—and Vulnerability*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006. 190 pp. ISBN 1-58826-455-6, \$49.95.

Bowser's study reads like a treatise in sociology, with a good deal of neo-Marxist class structure analysis and a summary of theories on class structure. At its best, this work provides a sound and needed summary of the history of the African-American middle class. The author basically divides this history into three periods: Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and Civil Rights/Affirmative Action. He provides an excellent account of the formation of the "middle class" and the impact of government action in the first and third periods in promoting its growth. He also addresses the impact of racism and lack of government protection of basic rights in destroying the "middle class" in the Reconstruction and Jim Crow periods.

Unlike Europe, race and ethnicity played far more of a role in American society in social stratification and in opportunities to achieve middle-class status. According to the author, racism prevented African Americans from acquiring property and handing it down to another generation from the Civil War to 1960; it also limited access to education, another entry path for the middle class. In his analysis, immigrant groups, especially Catholics and Jews, may have had temporary limitations on their opportunities, but eventually they got identified as whites and the doors opened for class mobility. In reality, because of the critical role of race and racism, African-American classes really need to be compared to the next lowest white class. A combination of civil rights legislation, affirmative action, greater opportunities for college education, and unionized jobs has opened up mobility for part of the African-American population since 1960, but the author is less than sanguine that middle-class growth is permanent, due to the attacks on affirmative action by conservatives and dependence on the post-affirmative action diversity policies to continue to promote middle-class formation. Bowser remains concerned about the fragility of working-class African-American class stability due to globalization and cuts in social programs. He suggests that only a fundamental societal and government commitment to jobs for all Americans can protect African Americans. Such a policy would protect middle-class whites and African Americans as well. The odds of a New Deal-level commitment to job creation under either party are slim. Bowser's public policy suggestions run

counter to existing political reality, leaving us in the end with a vulnerable black middle class.

Harvey J. Strum  
Sage Colleges of Albany

**16-3-0298**

Chomsky, Aviva. *They Take Our Jobs! And 20 Other Myths about Immigration*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2007. 264 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8070-4156-7, \$14.00 (pb).

Deaux, Kay. *To Be an Immigrant*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2007. 272 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-87154-086-7, \$35.00.

If you would like to balance out the right-wing diatribes about immigration from Pat Buchanan and Peter Brimelow, buy a copy of Aviva Chomsky's new study, which is a neo-Marxist defense of open borders. Chomsky argues for the United States to stop policing the borders, allow all immigrants into the country, and grant full citizenship rights, including the right to vote, to both legal and illegal immigrants. Since citizenship requirements are artificial discriminatory constructs, the federal government has no moral basis to deny the benefits of citizenship to anyone who gets across the border. Immigration to the United States is a direct result of American hegemonic economic policies and a militarized foreign policy. As a consequence, we can bar no one. Although it is intended as a critique of the myths of American immigration policy, this study provides us with a new set of neo-Marxist assumptions about the undemocratic, racist, and exploitive capitalistic nature of the United States. While the back cover describes the work as "engaging and fresh," excessive and predictable better fit. Any library that owns the works of Buchanan and Brimelow should purchase Chomsky's account as an ideological counterweight.

However, for those interested in a serious study of American immigration policy, also from the left end of the political spectrum, there is hope. Kay Deaux, a social psychologist, writes an account of recent immigration policy from the perspective of another social science discipline. Although some of her conclusions, especially about race and ethnicity, do not differ from those of Chomsky, this study is more sophisticated, better researched, and more nuanced in reaching its conclusions. Deaux concentrates on analyzing recent West Indian immigration and looks into how first- and second-generation immigrants view themselves and are viewed by other Americans. This work is especially concerned with how people define their identity, how it changes, and how racism from the larger society influences choices of identity formation. She uses Oscar Handlin's 1951 *The Uprooted* as a baseline to view different interpretations of the immigrant experience from the perspective of the immigrant; her analysis fits the evolving academic work in identity retention and formation for immigrants and their American-born children. While the author includes information on American immigration policy since 1921, this work's focus is on the immigrants' decisions about their place in American society, and how the larger society views people based on race or ethnic name, rather than as individuals, forcing immigrants to negotiate their definition of identity based on their private and public interactions. This is an illuminating study of

"Who Am I?" and is recommended to anyone with a serious interest in ethnic identity and immigration.

Harvey J. Strum  
Sage Colleges of Albany

**16-3-0299**

Cornelius, Wayne A. and Lewis, Jessa M., eds. *Impacts of Border Enforcement on Mexican Migration: The View from Sending Communities*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007. 180 pp. Published with the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California, San Diego. ISBN-13 978-0-9702838-6-3, \$52.00 (cl); 978-0-9702838-7-0, \$22.00 (pb).

Although unauthorized immigration from Mexico is currently a hot button issue, it is a topic that has been around for decades. In 1993 the U.S. Border Patrol adopted an operational strategy of "concentrated border enforcement," whereby four heavily transited segments of the Mexican-U.S. border were targeted for concentration of enforcement resources. The belief was that sturdy metal fencing and sophisticated surveillance systems would force the migrants to cross at remote, hazardous sites, which would ultimately deter entrance. The policy, however, appears to have failed, sometimes with devastating consequences. With physical barriers erected at urban areas and deployment of more agents, migrants attempt the riskier crossings with increasing fatalities and injuries. Moreover, evidence suggests that tighter border enforcement has increased the length of stay in the United States and raised the probability of remaining permanently. Clearly, the post-1993 policy has failed.

Cornelius and Lewis wanted to know the consequence of that failure. This became the inaugural joint project of the Mexican Migration Field Research and Training Program, the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, and Eleanor Roosevelt College at the University of California, San Diego. Partnered with Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, faculty and students constructed questionnaires and did field interviews in Tlacuitapa in the state of Jalisco and Ánimas in Zacatecas. Both these towns are leading sources for migrants to the United States. The meticulous documentation by the teams, accompanied with tables and graphs, provides valuable insight into reasons for the U.S. policy failure. Admittedly the audience is going to be narrow, but for those with an interest in Mexican immigration, this book is essential and highly recommended.

James C. Harrison  
Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

**16-3-0300**

Davis, Anthony and Jackson, Jeffrey. *"Yo, Little Brother . . ." (Volume II): Basic Rules of Survival for Young African American Males*. Chicago: African American Images, 2006. 128 pp. ISBN 1-034155-01-2, \$14.95 (pb).

Providing a guide for African-American male youths in order to make it easier for them to survive in a United States that is hostile to their existence, Davis and Jackson use psycho-educational methods to help these youths advance themselves by mak-

ing the best possible decisions. The authors detail how to prevent many of the hardships that youths encounter. Davis and Jackson realize some hardships cannot be avoided, but it is still possible for youths to enjoy their lives by minimizing potential risks.

Davis and Jackson challenge youths to take control over their own lives, because if they do not, someone else will. According to the authors, youths engage in self-defeating behavior by not thinking critically about the possible consequences of short-term pleasures, and thereby waste time necessary to advance their lives. The authors urge youths not to reinforce the negative images in the media and within their communities.

Davis and Jackson tend to dramatize potential hardships and provide unsupported claims to strengthen their arguments. Nevertheless, they capture the complexity of the decisions facing African-American youths and provide a valuable point of reference for those without direction.

Aaron P. Ogletree  
Anthropology Review Database

### 16-3-0301

Durand, Frederic. *East Timor: A Country at the Crossroads of Asia and the Pacific*. Seattle: Silkworm Books; dist. by Univ. of Washington Press, 2007. 202 pp. Illus. ISBN-13 978-974-9575-98-7, \$50.00 (pb).

Unlike a dry atlas, Durand captures the trials and triumphs of the East Timorese in a methodical and comprehensive manner. The birth of a nation is a momentous event often marked by excitement and anticipation. When a nation has experienced the tumultuous path of sacrifice and suffering, the way East Timor has, the excitement and anticipation begs for a moment of pause.

This book provides the reader with several occasions to contemplate and reflect on the events and the participants. What starts as a rather clinical documentation of geo-historic facts of East Timor soon turns into a parable of restoration and rebirth. This book will interest the patient and the curious; the future of the East Timorese is yet to be written. Detailed text and colorful illustrations make the book an interesting read. Durand succeeds in reporting with the objective passion of a scientist, yet educating with a spirit of compassion for the human aspect of the subject.

Raj Devasagayam  
Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

### 16-3-0302

Miller, Toby. *Cultural Citizenship: Cosmopolitanism, Consumerism, and Television in a Neoliberal Age*. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 2007. 248 pp. ISBN-13 978-1-59213-561-5, \$23.95 (pb).

Miller's book discusses the ideas of American citizenship and culture through the lens of television. He explores what cultural citizenship is, the war on terrorism on television (aka the American media and how Miller believes they caved in to the Bush administration and their pro-war stance), television food shows, and the role of the weather on television.

The book is relatively short, with only 236 pages of text and

extensive references. Miller packs in as much information as he possible can—perhaps too much information and too many ideas. The book and the reader could have been better served with a longer book or by having each chapter as its own separate entity. Miller, a professor of English, sociology, and women's studies at the University of California–Riverside, has a lot to say, but he loses his audience trying to do too much. While this book is often interesting and thought-provoking, it also falls flat with sections filled with unproductive negative comments and what seem like attacks against people and organizations that Miller does not personally like. While many sections will be controversial, this volume will find readers in the American, culture, and media studies departments.

Melissa Aho  
Metropolitan State Univ. Library  
St. Paul, Minnesota

### 16-3-0303

Montero-Sieburth, Martha and Meléndez, Edwin, eds. *Latinos in a Changing Society*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood/Praeger, 2007. 286 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-275-96233-3, \$39.95.

As the Latino population of the United States grows, more attention has started to be focused on their role in society. Significantly, current explorations do not simply examine how society affects Hispanics/Latinos but also how they affect society. Making an invaluable contribution to this conversation is *Latinos in a Changing Society*, edited by Montero-Sieburth from the University of Massachusetts–Boston and Meléndez of the New School. They have brought together the writings of 15 scholars whose works are broken into two parts: *The Changing Demographics of Latinos*, and *The Changing Social, Educational, and Legal Issues Affecting Latinos*.

Rather than summarize information about the Latino population of the United States in general, the authors focus specifically on issues that relate to Dominicans, Mexicans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans. Through extensive analytical data often expressed in tables and charts, the authors examine the disparity of poverty, the difficulty of health care and services, labor practices, interaction with communities, and education. Each chapter also contains extensive notation and some include bibliographies. The initial chapter of the book, "The New Nativism and Latinos in a Changing Society" by the authors sets the tone of the book by encapsulating the primary issues and examining specifically the xenophobia found in California and Massachusetts. The successive chapters are profound, and at times complex, but significant in providing insight into what is needed in terms of policy analysis, research, and public awareness to advance Latinos in the future. This is a valuable book and should be part of any collection that deals with modern immigration.

James C. Harrison  
Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

### 16-3-0304

Shandy, Dianna J. *Nuer-American Passages: Globalizing Sudanese Migration*. Gainesville: Univ. Press of Florida, 2007. 224 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8130-3047-0, \$59.95.

## Reference

Exploring new academic territory, Shandy, assistant professor of anthropology at Macalester College, provides data and in-depth analysis regarding the experiences of Nuer in the United States. Due to conflict in the Sudan in the 1990s, the Nuer, traditionally rural cattle herders, first began migrating to the United States. This work examines social networks, technology, and the flow of information used by the Nuer in arranging their migration and after arriving.

Interviews provide specific details demonstrating common trends regarding Nuer people in the United States. Additionally, after describing a concept, Shandy uses interviews to illustrate how abstract concepts are applicable to the experiences of individuals. In addition to interviews, Shandy also provides tables of data that describe trends. She addresses numerous topics such as gender relations, the impact of Nuer in the United States, sending money to relatives in Sudan, movement of Nuer people within the new country, educational challenges, and differences between U.S. legal kinship relationships and cultural kinship relationships.

Overall, this is a thoroughly researched work that offers valuable insight into a highly interesting topic. A bibliography, notes, and an index are included. This work is appropriate for academic libraries.

Kristin J. Whitehair  
Kansas State Univ. Libraries

### 16-3-0305

Volf, Miroslav. *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2007. 244 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8028-2989-4, \$22.00.

George Santayana was only half correct when he said that those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it. Those who remember too much the wrongs they have suffered may also be dooming themselves to repeated cycles of violence. In *The End of Memory*, Volf, a professor of theology at Yale University, advises victims not simply to remember their wounds but to “remember rightly.” Volf claims that the recollection of grievances must seek the truth about the past, foster the healing of old injuries and fractured relationships, and use memory in an “exemplary” and loving way to help others. He takes an unabashedly Christian perspective, which asks victims of atrocities to look to Exodus and the Passion of Christ for models to understand and redeem a damaged history. Indeed, for Volf the ultimate goal or “end” of memory is the “ending” of memory in forgiveness and in what he calls the “non-remembrance of wrongs suffered.”

Many readers will not be happy with the author’s Christian, eschatological, and somewhat unearthly approach to genocide, slavery, rape, apartheid, and torture. They will also find that his recurring paradigm of a wrong suffered, his own confinement and interrogation by a communist official, is too slight an example on which to build a robust theory of restorative justice. Still, despite its inadequacies—which include the lack of a bibliography—this lucidly written book is worth reading because it invites us to attend to memory, love, and hope in order to prove that we humans are not wholly defined by the ancient and recent horrors of our sad earth.

Paul C. Santilli  
Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

### 16-3-0306

Castro, Iván A. *100 Hispanics You Should Know*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood/Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 304 pp. ISBN 1-59158-327-6, \$55.00.

Since there is a great deal of interest in the Latino experience nowadays, I approached this book thinking that it would be another tired biographical rendition of the usual suspects: Fidel Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara, Evita Peron, Roberto Clemente. I was wrong, happily wrong!

*100 Hispanics You Should Know* is an important contribution to Latino studies. It is one of the few volumes available that actually include scientists, lesser known writers, and philosophers. The author, a journalist, made this choice with a clear purpose: to make sure readers knew that the accomplishments of Hispanics or Latinos extend well beyond the spheres of sports and entertainment. To avoid controversy, he also opted to skip contemporary political figures. Again, a wise choice since many Latinos tend to dismiss the value of a book based on the author’s political views.

The emphasis is on figures that are not well known in the United States. The volume includes biographical information on scientists and physicians: Luis Alvarez, who designed detonators for atomic bombs and proposed the popular theory of how a meteor wiped out dinosaurs; Franklin Chang-Diaz, who developed propulsion systems for outer space flights; Carlos J. Finlay, the discoverer of the carrier of yellow fever. There are entries on colorful figures: gunfighters Elfecho Baca and Juan Cortina, who helped to build the American West in the nineteenth century; Confederate spy Jose A. Quintero, who during the Civil War provided information on Union troop movements, and confederate hero Santo Benavides, who with a handful of men defeated 200 Union cavalry men. Then there are the icons of Latino culture: Frida Kahlo, Pablo Neruda, and Cesar Romero, to name a few.

Why some figures are elected and others are not—for example, including Spanish poet Gustavo Adolfo Becquer but excluding Puerto Rican poet Julia de Burgos—could provoke discussion over the choices. But this is not a drawback. The author had only so much space and time and his overarching desire was to celebrate the richness of the Latino experience across all fields from the arts to politics. He was successful. And what is more important, his engaging prose and short but information-packed biographical sketches will appeal to high school students and even undergraduates.

Danilo H. Figueredo  
Bloomfield College (N.J.) Library

### 16-3-0307

Gallagher, Eugene V. and Ashcraft, W. Michael. *Introduction to New and Alternative Religions in America*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2006. 5 vols., 1,504 pp. ISBN 0-275-98712-4, \$399.95.

*Introduction to New and Alternative Religions in America* (Vol. 1.:

History and Controversies, Vol. 2.: Jewish and Christian Traditions, Vol. 3: Metaphysical, New Age and Neopagan Movements, Vol. 4: Asian Traditions, and Vol. 5: African Diaspora Traditions and Other American Innovations) is a study of modern sects that draws a distinct line between a sociohistorical context and the view of “sect as cult” that has colored much of our culture’s response to new religious movements (NRMs). Volume 1 sets out the history and controversies of NRMs, which cover a multitude of movements, including such groups as Shakers, Mormons, the Peoples’ Temple, and Wiccans, among many others. The four subsequent volumes explore individual movements in depth and are grouped according to cultural similarities/genesis and/or philosophical similarities.

This is a fascinating study of societal reactions to NRMs, including the secular anti-cult movement and the religious counter-cult movement. The work also contains essays that explore how issues such as law, gender, and violence relate to NRMs. What is revealed in this collection is that the motives and functions of these NRMs are rarely as they are perceived to be, and that those drawn to them are neither victims nor religiously naive, but genuine seekers, no matter our perceptions of the sects they join. While this course in alternative religions may challenge the lay reader, it is well worth the effort.

Jennifer Corse Simon  
Hudson Valley Pagan Network

#### 16-3-0308

O’Donnell, Kevin. *Inside World Religions: An Illustrated Guide*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007. 192 pp. Illus. with photos. ISBN-13 978-0-8006-3889-4, \$24.00.

Although written by an Anglican priest, this volume offers a fair introduction and balanced information on 12 religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Baha’i, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, and Jainism, the first six covered in longer chapters than the others. All chapters, structured in the same way, focus—for each religion—on first steps, the goal, teachers of the way (main religious sources), treasury of the heart (main tenets), path to peace (prayers, blessings), awe and wonder (places of congregation and prayer), journey to mystery (daily practices, miracles), making merry (holidays, festivals), and today (tradition versus reform).

The text is accompanied by numerous colorful photos and quotations from religious books, but unfortunately, it lacks a bibliography and an index. Nevertheless, as a well-documented book, written in an easily accessible form—useful to junior high and senior high students as well as to the average layman—it is recommended for school and public libraries.

Vladimir F. Wertsman  
New York Public Library

## Travel

#### 16-3-0309

Haile, Rebecca. *Held at a Distance: My Rediscovery of Ethiopia*.

Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 2007. 184 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-89733-566-0, \$17.95 (pb).

*Held at a Distance* is a fascinating memoir by Haile, exiled in childhood from her birth country of Ethiopia. Her family was “stripped of possessions and expectations” and forced to flee in 1976, two years after an army coup deposed Emperor Haile Selassie. Twenty-five years later, she returns to Ethiopia and documents her impressions and experiences.

The book provides excellent background while offering a personal viewpoint that makes history accessible and real. Such an approach is inevitably biased, yet historical data supports Haile’s criticisms of the regimes controlling Ethiopia since 1976. She recounts her early memories and details of her thoroughly American life in central Minnesota, where her father finally gained a university position. From age ten, Haile excelled in her new environment, eventually attending Williams College and Harvard Law School. After her marriage, she was the first member of her family to return to Ethiopia. She visits her childhood home in Addis Ababa, meets family members, including her maternal grandmother, and speculates frequently about what her life would have been like if they could have stayed in their country.

The writing is clear and compelling, and Haile’s images capture her rediscovered land with its blend of ancient sites and modern conveniences. She closes her narrative with a moving summary of her mental and physical journey “that began with the drama and noise of gunfire and revolution” but “ends with the much quieter sound of doors swinging open again.”

Anne Serafin  
Newtonville, Mass.

#### 16-3-0310

Levitov, Betty. *Africa on Six Wheels: A Semester on Safari*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2007. 184 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-8032-8054-0, \$18.00 (pb).

Levitov invites readers to participate in a three-and-a-half month semester with her students from Doane University in Nebraska. While visiting seven countries, we are surrounded by ubiquitous vendors, underpaid safari drivers, the generosity of very poor people, joyous musical Church masses, exotic animals and birds, and the variety of beautiful locales that only Africa can offer. We take risks in zipping over sand dunes in Namibia, white-water rafting in Zambia, and swimming to the edge of Victoria Falls. We are scammed by frightening men in Nairobi and continually interrogated at border crossings. We camp out, experiment with foods like *ugali* or *sadza* in Zimbabwe, we celebrate a wedding and observe the multiple faces of women in an Islamic society, we visit children’s schools and we make friends. Our required individual apprenticeships teach us more than any book can and our hearts break when officials in Botswana demand we remove animal skins from the drums we have crafted to avoid potential spread of hoof-and-mouth disease.

The author reflects on Julius Nyerere’s words, that “an educational system must emphasize co-operative endeavor . . . and stress concepts of equality and responsibility.” At the conclusion of the journey, Levitov, influenced by Paolo Freire and bell hooks’s

concept of “engaged pedagogy,” reminds us that good teachers are role models who “push students over cliffs,” empowering them to take risks in their own learning. In this engaging travel memoir, she concludes that to be fully alive is to imagine possibilities and act on ideas.

Patricia F. Goldblatt  
Toronto, Ont.

## Juvenile

### Primary (P-3)

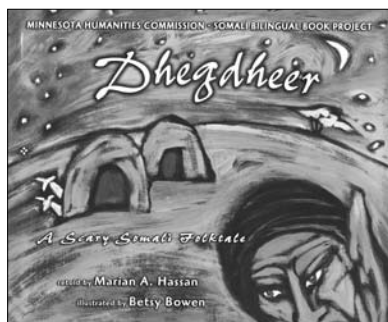
#### 16-3-0311

Ahmed, Said Salah. *The Lion's Share/Qayb Libaax*. St. Paul: Minnesota Humanities Commission, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Kelly Dupre. Bilingual (English-Somali) ed. ISBN-13 978-1-931096-12-4, \$15.95 (cl); 978-1-931016-13-1, \$7.95 (pb).

Hassan, Marian A. *Dhegdheer: A Scary Somali Folktale*. St. Paul: Minnesota Humanities Commission, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Betsy Bowen. Bilingual (English-Somali) ed. ISBN-13 978-1-931096-18-6, \$15.95 (cl); 978-1-931016-19-3, \$7.95 (pb).

These two beautifully illustrated books—Somali folktales retold for children in Somali and English—are a treasure for any child or educator who loves a story that transports one to an imaginary land where scary things happen to good people and animals, but where injustice is either punished or at least understood for what it is.

*The Lion's Share* tells the story of how the lion, the king of the wild, bullies all the other wild animals who had hunted a camel with him, into giving him all the meat. It shows that overwhelming force may be successful but is deeply felt and resented by its victims. *Dhegdheer* tells the story of a people-eating cannibal witch, who can run like the wind and has a long ear (a dheg dheer) with which she can hear over vast distances. When she hungrily pursues a young widow with her baby son, she is blocked by a steep riverbed, which warns her not to venture the crossing unless she is without sin. Impetuously, she tries to cross and is swept away by a flash flood. In both cases, the combination of powerfully direct, evocative, and concise narratives (in Somali and English) with lively, colorful, and creative



illustrations is esthetically and intellectually successful. The stories transport the reader, whether child or adult, into the folktale's special space, imagined here as Somali space: a landscape of acacias, open spaces, hyenas and foxes; women dressed the Somali way; utensils such as water vessels in wicker baskets (haans and saabs), and so forth.

*The Lion's Share* is illustrated by Kelly Dupre, an artist and writer with a special love for nature and the art of native peoples, who earlier wrote and illustrated *The Raven's Gift: A True Story from Greenland*. *Dhegdheer* is illustrated by Betsy Bowen, author of *Antler, Bear, Canoe: A Northwoods Alphabet Year*, and illustrator of, among others, *Shingebiss: an Ojibwe Legend*. Neither authors nor illustrators talk down to children but trust their ability to imagine and understand. We are promised two more books in this Somali Bilingual Book Project, and one would want the series to be expanded further. How about adding a fifth folktale drawing on Somalia's urban history, for example, the medieval cities of Zeila, Mogadisho, or Brava, and a sixth based on the lore of the farming communities of Somalia's riverine areas? Like the two books under review here, these would delight and enlighten us and our children and bring into the lives of refugee children here some of the wisdom of “back home.” Highly recommended for school libraries and families everywhere.

Lidwien Kapteijns  
Wellesley College

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#### 16-3-0312

Amado, Elisa. *Tricycle*. Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Alfonso Ruano. ISBN-13 978-0-88899-614-5, \$17.95.

Margarita lives in a large house in an unnamed Central American country. Her family has servants, and there is plenty to eat. On the other side of the hedge is the cardboard shack of the family from whom Margarita's family buys tortillas. Margarita sometimes plays with Rosario, the girl from the other side of the hedge. One day, though, she leaves her tricycle outside, and Rosario and her brother steal it.

Margarita knows that she has much, and Rosario and her brother have nothing, not even a house strong enough to withstand a volcano. When her mother asks her about the tricycle, and a family friend says the poor are “thieves” and “should be shot,” Margarita lies to protect her less privileged neighbor.

The Guatemalan author offers a gentle, though thought-provoking introduction to issues of social class, poverty, and the responsibilities of those who are born into privilege. Margarita is just old enough not to need a tricycle any more, at an age when children become aware of social differences, injustice, and what it means to do the right thing. Families may have different takes



on how she handles the theft of her tricycle, but the situation is realistic and universal. Ruano's signature style, which served well Antonio Skármeta's award-winning picture book *The Composition*, complements Amado's quieter story as well. The illustrations set the book in Guatemala, with the native trees and the traditional weaving and clothing of the Mayan people.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

### 16-3-0313

Barasch, Lynne. *Hiromi's Hands*. New York: Lee & Low, 2007. 40 pp. Illus. by the author. ISBN-13 978-1-58430-275-9, \$17.95.

This is the story of Hiromi Suzuki. In order for Hiromi to tell her story, she must first tell the story of her parents. Her father grew up in Japan, became an apprentice to a sushi chef, and immigrated to the United States to be a chef in a Japanese restaurant in New York. Eventually he saved enough money to open his own restaurant, and in that restaurant, he met a woman named Kaoru, who became his wife.

That begins Hiromi's story, a girl born to Akira and Kaoru. Hiromi has a typical New York childhood in many ways, but it also includes observing Japanese holidays and attending Japanese school on Saturday. As Hiromi gets older, she becomes interested in her father's work and begs him to take her with him to the fish market. He agrees to that, and then she begs to help him in the restaurant, all the time hoping she can become a sushi chef.

Hiromi's father shows that he is willing to accept the freedom that women have in America. In his words, "You know fish as well as any man. And this is America. Girls can do things here they cannot do in Japan." Thus Hiromi begins her apprenticeship, which is as demanding as the apprenticeship her father experienced in Japan. Her success is evident when he puts her in charge of the restaurant when he travels to Japan.

There are many themes in the book, among them the hard-working and successful immigrants and the woman who takes on a role in a previously all-male occupation. Japanese traditions and words are introduced throughout, and a glossary provides pronunciation and definitions.

The Author's Note shows a picture of present-day Hiromi Suzuki, who works in a restaurant in New York, one of the first female sushi chefs in New York. Barasch's first-person narrative, as if Hiromi were telling her own story, helps the reader identify with Hiromi as she tries each new venture and achieves her goal.

Certainly this is a book to experience Japanese and Japanese-American culture, and an equally important message for career education as well. Here is a powerful story that demonstrates the rewards of hard work and the satisfaction of achieving goals.

Mary J. Lickteig  
Univ. of Nebraska—Omaha

### 16-3-0314

Beake, Lesley. *Home Now*. Cambridge, Mass.: Candlewick Press, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Karin Littlewood. ISBN-13 978-1-58089-163-9, \$6.95 (pb).

For the past several years, authors concerned with HIV/AIDS in southern Africa have written stories to explain the situation.

Because the epidemic is so great, many governments cannot provide the support necessary for all in need.

Beake, a Scottish immigrant to South Africa, describes the phenomenon of being an orphan of AIDS parents. Although she does not mention this disease in the text, the endnotes provide information and contacts about AIDS. She has delicately used another critical issue concerning elephant poaching to explain how human and animal societies take care of orphans. Sieta has lost her parents and must now live with her aunt near a game park. The plight of Sieta is common to nearly 50 percent of the southern African population. By means of a school field trip, Beake also portrays the environmental relationship between humans and, in this case, elephants. By identifying the actual setting for this story in the dedication, Qolweni Township and Knysna Elephant Park, Beake enables students to do further research into the locations and to consider the impact of these two issues on U.S. students.

The illustrations, in watercolor and gouache on textured paper, are poignant in sensitizing readers to the feelings of orphan children. Each picture creates an emotion felt by children during their transitional stage of finding a home. This book provides numerous points of departure for discussion and use for young readers.

Patricia S. Kuntz  
Madison, Wis.

### 16-3-0315

Benchimol, Brigitte. *Jadyn and the Magic Bubble: Discovering India*. Gardena, Calif.: East-West Discovery Press, 2007. 56 pp. Illus. by Siegfried Zima. Includes audio CD. ISBN-13 978-0-9701654-9-7, \$19.95.

Benchimol's first of a series for ages five through twelve invites young children to explore India and understand similarities and differences of experiences in the world. Jadyn is dropped in India by one of his magic bubbles. He meets a new friend, Anil, who shows him around New Delhi, exploring Indian culture. He is taken on a tourist-tour through crowded streets. He visits places such as the Taj Mahal, built by the Indian emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife. Other events include riding a rickshaw in the streets; tasting delicious authentic Indian food such as samosa, aloo gobi, and kheer; and a visit to a school named after Mahatma Gandhi. The 56-page book is unlike typical 32-page picture books. It includes a music CD with Indian songs, narration, and sensory activities.

Benchimol co-illustrated the book with Siegfried Zima. Readers who are familiar with the scenes of India may be surprised to read about Anil and Jadyn meeting Anil's sister Shivani, who climbs into the two-seated rickshaw. Commonly, two-seated rickshaws carry two people. The picture of the two-seated rickshaw does not show her seated. This, however, is a relatively minor flaw. Full of ethnic designs, bright colors, and activities, the book is inviting to young children.

Parsa Choudhury  
Evanston, Ill.

### 16-3-0316

Brooks, Gwendolyn. *Bronzeville Boys and Girls*. New York: HarperCollins, 1956, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Faith Ringgold. ISBN-13

978-0-06-029505-9, \$16.99.

*Bronzeville Boys and Girls* is a stunning collection of more than 30 poems for children by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Brooks. First published in 1956, Brooks's poetry still resonates today. Playing with dolls, skipping, attending church, and using one's imagination are the childhood adventures anyone, young and old, can identify with. The poems are inspired by Brooks's own Chicago South Side neighborhood.

The joys of having company on Sunday are captured in "Timmy and Tawanda," who say, "It is a marvelous thing and all/When aunts and uncles come to call/For when our kin arrive (all dressed, on Sunday, in their Sunday-best)/We two are almost quite forgot! We two are free to plan and plot."

In "Skipper," a young girl laments the loss of her goldfish but finds comfort in the garden tree that "will protect him for me." In other stories, the neighborhood boys and girls are playing in the snow, making new friends, or imagining life in the country—everyday activities that are universal.

Brooks's poetry, in this edition paired with award-winning illustrator Faith Ringgold's work, is a winning combination. Ringgold's striking illustrations bring the Bronzeville neighborhood to life. Children will enjoy this poetry, and no doubt adults may enjoy a childhood trip down memory lane too. Highly recommended.

Valerie A. Canady  
Johnston, R.I.

### 16-3-0317

Buchmann, Stephen and Cohn, Diana. *The Bee Tree*. El Paso, Tex.: Cinco Puntos Press, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Paul Mirocha. ISBN-13 978-0-938317-98-2, \$17.95.

Somewhere in the deep rain forest of Malaysia, a young boy helps his grandfather collect honey from the tall, tall tualang tree, the tree to which the bees return every year just as the rainforest flowers begin to bloom. Grandfather is an ordinary farmer, but it is he who climbs all the way up the tree to gather the honey from his "little friends." Tonight it is 13-year-old Nizam who will climb with Grandfather and startle the bees from their hive with sparks from torches, sparks falling like a shower and luring the bees away, leaving Nizam and Grandfather to collect the golden honey.

An old, old folk tale tells of a prince who was in love with a servant girl, the Sweet, Dark One, but the Sultan, in his anger, banished her. As she ran with her maids, a spear struck her. She and her maids were transformed into a swarm of bees, who now live in the tall trees of the rain forest. Because the spear was of metal, no metal must be used in cutting the combs. And all respect the spirit of the Sweet Dark One.

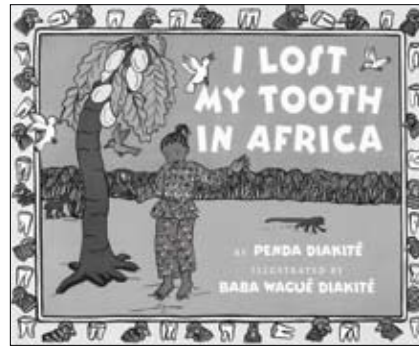
In beautiful and sensitive illustrations, the people and the life in the village are blended with the dream drawings of the spirit tale. We are invited into this Muslim community with words of welcome, "Peace be upon you," and an offering of honey in thanks to the Unseen Protector. Eight pages at the end give us background information about Malaysia, the country and its people, their food and dress and customs, the amazement aroused by details of the

rain forest, its myriad species of trees, plants, birds, insects, and mammals. The giant bees, migrating each year and returning, the brave honey hunters who climb the flimsy ladders 120 feet up the trees, the passing on of the tradition to the young, and the privilege of being invited into the community are all detailed for us in the epilogue. In honor, the authors offer: "You can't really know another culture until someone from that culture invites you in."

Ginny Lee  
Syracuse, N.Y.

### 16-3-0318

Diakit , Penda. *I Lost My Tooth in Africa*. New York: Scholastic, 2006. 32 pp. Illus. by Baba Wagu  Diakit . ISBN 0-439-66226-5, \$16.99.



This is a vibrant, lively story about eight-year-old Amina, who takes a long journey from Portland, Oregon, to West Africa, to visit her father's family in Mali. When Amina loses her tooth in Mali, places it under a gourd, and tangles with the African tooth fairy, she learns that growing up is also about responsibility.

Amina's realistic adventure is reflected in the art as well as the text. The feeling of visual movement envelops the reader and involves him or her in the story. Amina's emotions are clearly visible in the colorful art, the use of Bambara phrases, and in the sounds and words that have been selected to tell her story. These elements enable the reader to form strong impressions about the very different culture and environment that they are being exposed to as they follow Amina's story and symbiotically feel her happiness, disappointment, separation anxiety, and sadness. Amina's adventure, rich and complexly interwoven, introduces young readers to an array of African traditional concepts, such as what it means to be a member of an extended family, what it would be like to live in Africa, how it is different from the United States, and what is expected when one owns domesticated animals (not pets) in Africa and is responsible for their welfare.

Diakit  wrote the book when she was just eight years old. It is based on events that really happened to her little sister, Amina. Her father is the illustrator. His books have earned him a Coretta Scott King Honor Award and a Children's Africana Honor Award. The book's appendix includes a glossary of Bambara words, a good night song in Bambara, and an authentic recipe for African onion sauce from Mali. This heart-warming, fast-moving book is fun to read and highly recommended for primary and upper elementary schoolchildren.

Gloria Creed-Dikeogu  
Ottawa University  
Africa Access Reviews (Copyright   2007  
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**16-3-0319**

Dorros, Alex and Dorros, Arthur. *Numero Uno*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Susan Guevara. ISBN-13 978-0-8109-5764-0, \$16.95.

*Numero Uno* is the tale of Socrates and Hercules, a pair of rival brothers constantly bickering over who is more needed, Socrates for his brains or Hercules for his brawn. The brothers are so obsessed with their feud that they've driven their whole town mad.

Socrates makes plans for a bridge. Hercules wants to be important in building it. Yet all the fighting nearly destroys everyone's dreams. The bridge seems almost metaphoric. The villagers decide to resolve the issue by sending them away to see who will be more sorely missed. Although the villagers all need Socrates' wisdom and Hercules' prowess, they certainly don't need all the fussing.

The Dorros brothers take a simple moral and spin it into a tale that anyone with brothers or sisters, or even a playground nemesis, can take to heart. The Hispanic characters glow in Guevara's illustrations, bringing a familiar feel to the setting and mood.

All in all, this story demonstrates that sometimes life's most basic lessons are some of the hardest learned. And, in the case of Socrates and Hercules, it takes a village to raise a few good men.

Kena Sosa  
Dallas (Tex.) Public Schools

**16-3-0320**

Fagan, Cary. *Ten Old Men and a Mouse*. Toronto: Tundra Books, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Gary Clement. ISBN-13 978-0-88776-716-6, \$21.99.

This delightful and entertaining children's book tells the story of a group of elderly Jewish men who gather together daily to pray in their synagogue. The synagogue, once vibrant, is now nearly empty. These men, with their limited energy, keep things going. When they discover a mouse in their building, they find it difficult to react with anger.

In their loneliness and yearning for excitement, the men realize that the mouse is a live being with needs and desires. When their mousetrap, which they have reluctantly set up, fails, the men decide to welcome the mouse as a member of their house of worship. When the mouse has babies, the men celebrate. However, they realize that several mice in the building can be a serious problem, and they transport these rodents to the country.

After a few months, the men start to miss their adventure with the mouse. When the mouse appears again, they compare it to someone whose children have grown up and moved away and is lonely again. They embrace the mouse in their midst and welcome it all over again.

People of all ages can enjoy this book, and animal lovers will especially like it!

Hannah M. Heller  
Baltimore, Md.

**16-3-0321**

Gershator, Phillis. *Sky Sweeper*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Gi-

roux, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Holly Meade. ISBN-13 978-0-374-37007-7, \$16.00.

"The monks need a temple, the temple needs a garden, and the garden needs a Flower Keeper." This repeated refrain guides the reader through the life story of Takeboki, who begins the job of sweeping up the springtime plum and cherry blossoms as a young boy. Since no one tells him to stop, he continues sweeping in the temple garden throughout the changing seasons, and then, year after year.

As Takeboki ages, others tell him there is no future in being a Flower Keeper, but Takeboki knows better. "I sweep in every season, and every season follows the one before!" Takeboki's world is physically small, limited to the temple garden, but he sees many worlds when he looks at the garden, and he counts his blessings.

Years go by, and Takeboki becomes too old and frail to attend to his work. It is then that the monks realize that Takeboki accomplished more than they thought, and they decide to search out the Flower Keeper. They find his house and the dying Takeboki.

But the story does not end there. As Takeboki leaves the world, he finds a golden rake in one hand and a silver broom in the other, and he becomes the Sky Sweeper. In the temple garden, a new Flower Keeper begins the work as sweeper.

The author explains that the Japanese garden of the Brooklyn Botanical Garden inspired this modern story, told in folktale style. In a beautiful tale with beautiful illustrations, the author captures the rhythm of the changing seasons and explores the themes of dedication to duty and the freedom that a rich imagination allows.

Mary J. Lickteig  
Univ. of Nebraska—Omaha

**16-3-0322**

Harrington, Janice N. *The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Shelley Jackson. ISBN-13 978-0-374-31251-0, \$16.00.

Through paint with fabric and paper overlays complementing lyrical text, this colorful picture book tells of a chicken-chasing female protagonist. Although unstated, the story seems to be of an African-American girl spending the summer in the South on her grandmother's farm.

Harrington, a professional storyteller and librarian, uses oral traditions of the African-American community to make this an engaging story, as when the protagonist describes her favorite chicken, "I call her Miss Hen, and she's plump as a Sunday purse—just waiting for me pick her up." But when she finds Miss Hen sitting on a nest of eggs and chicks, our protagonist shows consideration for the chicken's new status and duties as a mother and helps care for the new family by feeding and protecting them from predators. Most suitable for a K–2 audience, this book would be good for reading aloud to teach about respecting animals.

Laretta Henderson  
Univ. of Wisconsin—Milwaukee

**16-3-0323**

Helling, Kathryn and Hembrook, Deborah. *I Wish I Had Glasses Like Rosa/Quisiera tener lentes como Rosa*. McHenry, Ill.: Raven Tree Press/Delta Systems, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Bonnie Adamson. Bilingual (English-Spanish) ed. Spanish translation by Eida de la Vega. ISBN-13 978-0-9724973-7-4, \$16.95 (cl); 978-0-9770906-5-5, \$7.95 (pb).

*I Wish I Had Glasses Like Rosa* has three main themes: diversity, accepting others for their unique traits, and understanding that everyone's idea of beauty differs. The book is also bilingual for Spanish speakers. However, even with these good qualities, I was not impressed.

The book is very awkward; the vignettes do not flow well from one scene to the next, and three do not fit the book (the beach scene, the second-to-last page, and the last page). I cannot see how page four, when Abby expresses that Rosa looks beautiful with glasses, flows into page seven, where Abby states that they like to build and when they do, they wear safety glasses. The whole book is like that, very disjointed.

All the glasses that Abby tries on in her quest to find the perfect pair do not fit, but instead of explaining why in words, the statement that follows is "I'll never do that again." Small children are impressionable, and if there is not a discussion about why the glasses did not work for Abby, I'm afraid there could be a negative connotation associated with wearing glasses.

Overall, I found this book less than engaging, and I wouldn't recommend it.

Melanie Constable  
Crofton, Md.

**16-3-0324**

Hicks, Kyra E. *Martha Ann's Quilt for Queen Victoria*. Dallas, Tex.: Brown Books Publishing, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Lee Edward Fodi. ISBN-13 978-1-933285-59-7, \$16.95.



Martha Ann is a twelve-year-old enslaved girl living in Tennessee with her family. Upon learning about the American Colonization Society, a group that helps blacks begin a new life in Africa, the family decides to move there in 1830 with \$2,400 her father saves in order to buy his family's freedom. While living in Liberia, Martha begins reading for the first time and her mama teaches her how to sew clothes and stitch quilts.

Martha learns that Queen Victoria of England has helped save people from slavery. Although the Queen lives 3,500 miles away, Martha Ann decides that she will one day thank the queen for her kindness in person and make her parents proud. She also plans to present Queen Victoria with a quilt as a gift. After many years of saving her spare coins to make the trip and despite teasing by the

Liberian townspeople, Martha Ann realizes her dream.

*Martha Ann's Quilt for Queen Victoria* is based on a true story. Hicks, a quilter herself, tells readers that Martha Ann's quilt for Queen Victoria was exhibited at the Worlds' Columbian Exposition in Chicago for viewing by several thousand fair visitors. Young readers will enjoy this historical journey of a little girl's dreams, passion, and determination.

Valerie A. Canady  
Johnston, R.I.

**16-3-0325**

Hopkinson, Deborah. *Sweet Land of Liberty*. Atlanta, Ga.: Peachtree Publishers, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Leonard Jenkins. ISBN-13 978-1-56145-395-5, \$16.95.

Offering a rare glimpse behind the scenes of a pivotal event, Hopkinson looks at the role played by Oscar Chapman in Marian Anderson's Lincoln Memorial recital. Chapman was a white federal bureaucrat who was at the time assistant secretary of the interior. Drawing from oral histories as well as published sources, the author describes two formative incidents in Chapman's Virginia childhood—a temporary expulsion from school for hanging a picture of Abraham Lincoln in his classroom, and his refusal to go along with punishing two African-American friends for a trumped-up theft—that fueled his determination to stir things up when the singer was banned from Constitution Hall. Not only did he secure permission from President Roosevelt to use the Lincoln Memorial, he also put a wide array of political and civic leaders publicly on the spot by sending out return-receipt invitations to the concert.

For illustrations, Jenkins places recognizable historical figures into impressionistically streaked, layered settings, giving the whole episode a sense of breadth and grandeur. Hopkinson closes by noting that the great performer significantly changed a line in her rendition of "America" to "to thee we sing," then suggesting that "things that happen to us as children can change our lives. Sometimes we go on to change other lives. And every once in a while, we might even change the course of history." Thought-provoking reading for middle elementary school.

John Peters  
New York Public Library

**16-3-0326**

Hyde, Heidi Smith. *Mendel's Accordion*. Minneapolis: Lerner/Kar-Ben Books, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Johanna van der Sterre. ISBN 1-58013-212-X, \$16.95.

Throughout the generations, music of many genres inspires and comforts people as they experience life's challenges. This story concerns klezmer music. Klezmer music—the name comes from the Hebrew words *klei zemer* (vessels of song)—originated in Europe in the sixteenth century.

Mendel, a poor Jew from Melnitz, plays his accordion everywhere to his listeners' delight. As he travels through the many villages, Mendel meets people who play fiddle, clarinet, drums,

flute, and cello. Together they form a band, calling themselves *Klezmorim*.

When Mendel immigrates to the United States to escape poverty, he deals with hardships and adjustments to his new life by playing music. He meets new musician friends, and they form a new klezmer band. Eventually Mendel gets married and has children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. The next generations prefer other types of music such as jazz, swing, and rock 'n'roll. It is not until Mendel's great-grandson Samuel finds the accordion in the attic that klezmer music returns. Samuel has the instrument repaired, learns to play it, and joins other musicians to recreate klezmer music.

The author reinforces the beauty of music whose life is everlasting. While Mendel's time is long past, he and his fellow musicians live on in the world today. This book is upbeat and delightful, demonstrating that amidst hardships, music can keep people alive and energetic.

Hannah M. Heller  
Baltimore, Md.

### 16-3-0327

Johnson, Angela. *Wind Flyers*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Loren Long. ISBN-13 978-0-689-84879-7, \$16.99.

Picture books, especially well-done picture books, are true vehicles to imaginary worlds for younger readers. *Wind Flyers* is a visual delight. From the first page to the very last page it opens a wonderful world of history, flight, and memories. Johnson has painted a story with her lyrical narrative, stirring up images of a not-too-distant past, while illustrator Long has rendered his colorful palette creating a place of magical imagery.

Though written for younger readers, this book will appeal to all age groups. It relates the story of a young boy enthralled with flight when an open cockpit allowed the wind to flow around the flyer. World War II offered an opportunity for this young black man to join other African Americans to join a group of flyers known as the Tuskegee Airmen. This book, through a few measured words and wonderful illustrations, creates a highly recommended introduction into an area of history that has been often ignored.

Johnson has received three Coretta Scott King Awards for previous books, while Long has been awarded two gold medals from the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. They previously combined their talents in the award-winning picture book *I Dream of Trains*.

Michael Russert  
New York State Veteran Oral History Program

### 16-3-0328

Manzano, Sonia. *A Box Full of Kittens*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Matt Phelan. ISBN-13 978-0-689-83089-1, \$16.99.

Celebration of the Puerto Rican family and the spirit of community in the barrio are the themes of this engaging picture book

by Manzano, the performer known for playing Maria in *Sesame Street*. The protagonist is Ruthie, a young girl who longs to be a superhero. An opportunity comes when she is asked by her mother to take care of an aunt who is pregnant. But at the crucial moment when the aunt goes into labor and calls for Ruthie's help, Ruthie, who loves kittens, is so distracted by a litter of adorable felines that she does not hear her aunt and does not aid her. How the community comes together to help Ruthie overcome her disappointment with herself for failing to help her aunt, and how her own aunt helps Ruthie regain her self-worth, is the crux of this story. It is a lovely book with realistic dialogue, appropriate use of Spanish phrases to create ambiance, and a realistic and yet sweet resolution. The drawings evoke the hustle and bustle of a vibrant Latino neighborhood, and the renderings of the characters avoid stereotypes. There are scenes with a pleasant Disneyesque quality that will appeal to children while augmenting the story's tribute to childhood, family, and life in the city.

I normally fear children's books written by celebrities: They are often dull and predictable. This is an exception. Manzano is a gifted storyteller who knows her people and loves them and celebrates them.

Danilo H. Figueredo  
Bloomfield College (N.J.) Library

### 16-3-0329

Messinger, Carla, with Susan Katz. *When the Shadbush Blooms*. Berkeley, Calif.: Tricycle Press, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by David Kani-takeron Fadden. ISBN-13 978-1-58246-192-2, \$15.95.

A number of books have come out in recent years depicting the moons and their corresponding seasons in American Indian life. A few, like Joseph Bruchac's *Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back* (1992) are recommended, as they are rooted in specific tribes and traditions. Other books detach the moons from the lives of the people who lived these cycles and thus convey American Indian cultures in their broadest generalities, leading to inaccuracies and the reinforcement of stereotypes.

*When the Shadbush Blooms* is a unique book, rooted in actual lives of the past and present. On facing pages, detailed oil paintings depict a Lenape girl from the seventeenth century and one from the present, in their clothing of the day, with their families, and in activities typical of that time of year. Each double spread is labeled with the name of the moon, on one side in Lenape, on the other in English. The spare, poetic text describes in English what Traditional Sister and Contemporary Sister do at the time of each moon. The text is the same for both, showing how traditions remain a part of the Lenape family's lives despite centuries of change. For instance, at the early summer "Heartberry Moon": "When the berries ripen, dangling like tiny hearts, we go berry



picking. My brother and I race to see who can pick the fastest. The baby tastes her first berries. Her smeared face makes me laugh.”

Of course, the baby will grow up; there is only one first time for berry tasting. This sensitively written, exquisitely illustrated, well-conceived and executed book explores universal themes of continuity and change while depicting the rich and sustaining life of a Lenape family.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

### 16-3-0330

Moss, Peggy and Tardiff, Dee Dee. *Our Friendship Rules*. Gardiner, Me.: Tilbury House, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Alissa Imre Geiss. ISBN-13 978-0-88448-291-8, \$16.95.

Oh, the mysteries and ups and downs of girls' friendships! This is the story of the friendship between the narrator and her best friend, Jenny. They do everything together and tell each other all their most intimate secrets. When there is a misunderstanding, they discuss it, and Jenny writes up "rules of friendship." A new girl comes to the school. She is so "cool," and the narrator wants to be in her clique. She changes her style of dress, hairdo, and manner to imitate the new girl. She gets her wish. As a final gesture, she tells Jenny's most intimate secret to the new crowd.

To her surprise, the narrator feels awful and ashamed. She has hurt and betrayed her real friend. The feeling of loss on both sides is very deep. After a while, with an apology to Jenny, new "rules of friendship" are drawn up. The big surprise is when the "cool" girl wants to share their ways of friendship.

Peopled with a multiethnic cast of vividly illustrated characters, this charming book will appeal to its intended audience of girls in elementary and middle school. Geiss's pictures are beautiful and a perfect complement to the text, which Moss wrote in collaboration with a Toronto teenager.

Ruth Becker  
Forest Hills, N.Y.

### 16-3-0331

Schertle, Alice. *We*. New York: Lee & Low, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Kenneth Addison. ISBN-13 978-1-58430-060-1, \$16.95.

Inspired by discoveries of the oldest fossilized remains of pre-humans and humans in Africa, Schertle traces the development of humankind in moving, poetic text. Beginning with the first humans, who began to walk upright and use their "clever hands," the author describes how humankind migrated to other parts of the world. Along the way, they "stopped to build a house/and plant a seed and make a fish hook and a water jug/and to die . . . and be born." As they faced obstacles, such as the sea or ice, they used their mounting intelligence and resources to make boats, warm jackets, and other items that helped them survive.

Schertle also tells how humankind spread diversity, culture, and technology around the world. While their journey sometimes led to war, it also resulted in holy places, music, art, books, and such useful objects as "donuts and bicycle pumps and umbrellas." And when humankind found the seas, sky, and land to be busy, they

traveled deep below the ocean, inside their own bodies, and out to space. The conclusion comes full circle, as humankind's curiosity leads to the excavation of their ancient ancestors' bones.

This absorbing picture book would appeal not only to elementary school children but middle school and even high school students alike. Its striking, mixed-media collages encourage readers to linger on each page and consider the lyrical text. Despite our differences now, *We* affirms that all of us are united by our history.

Angela Leeper  
Wake Forest, N.C.

### 16-3-0332

Serrano, Francisco. *The Poet King of Tezcoco: A Great Leader of Ancient Mexico*. Toronto: Groundwood, 2007. 36 pp. Illus. by Pablo Serrano. Trans. from Spanish by Judy Balch and Jo Anne Engelbert. ISBN-13 978-0-88899-787-6, \$18.95.

*The Poet King of Tezcoco* chronicles the life of the Aztec king Nezahualcoyotl. He was born into royalty in 1402 and died in 1515. His name meant "lion's strength" and "hungry coyote." He would prove to live up to this legacy.

Unlike many kings of his time, Nezahualcoyotl was not hungry for blood or power. He first showed "lion's strength" after fleeing for his life when his father was killed in battle. He hid for years until he was able to return and take back control of his land. Nezahualcoyotl worked hard to make alliances with other local Aztec kings. He fought against human sacrifice (a common practice at the time), brought irrigation to his community, and had parks and universities built. This leader became legendary not only through his community development but also through his poetry. Some may think that the insecurities expressed in his poems were prophetic, as the reign of the Aztecs came to an end soon after his death with the arrival of the Spaniards. His son, Nezahualpilli, could not stop the inevitable.

Fortunately, Nezahualcoyotl's life story and poetry still exist today for us to learn from and to admire.

Kena Sosa  
Dallas (Tex.) Public Schools

### 16-3-0333

Trotter, Deborah W. *A Summer's Trade*. Flagstaff, Ariz.: Salina Bookshelf, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Irving Toddy. ISBN-13 978-1-893354-71-5, \$17.95.

Tsinajinnie, Veronica. *Jóbonaa'èi Baa Hane: Bringer of Dawn*. Flagstaff, Ariz.: Salina Bookshelf, 2007. 32 pp. Illus. by Ryan Singer. ISBN-13 978-1-893354-53-8, \$17.95.

Navajo culture fascinates many readers, but there is little material available about the Navajo for very young readers, and what there is, is likely to be misleading or condescending. Two new picture books, one for preschoolers and one for younger-grade readers, add to the short list of colorful, interesting, and culturally

sensitive books about the Navajo.

The first of these is *Jóbonaa'ėi Baa Hane: Bringer of Dawn*. This is the simple story of the warmth and beauty the sun brings to the dwellers of Navajo land. As the sun rises, it first brings light to the sage, then wakens the wild creatures—mice, rabbits, and coyote. (Coyote, tired after a night of mischief, rejects the sun's entreaty and retreats to his den.) Then the sheep are awakened and finally the dwellers in the Hogan. The rested Navajo family shows its gratitude to *Jóbonaa'ėi* through an offering of white corn.

*Jóbonaa'ėi Baa Hane* is a plain story, told in a straightforward manner but with important details that add to the story's meaning—for example, the sage brings forth a healing incense in response to the sun's warmth, and the family in the story, true to human nature, is slow to waken. These details, along with Singer's evocative illustrations, create the sense of harmony that is central to the Navajo culture.

*A Summer's Trade* is a more conventional story intended for second- to fourth-grade readers. Tony, a young Navajo boy, spends his summer months working in a Gallup, New Mexico, trading post, hoping to earn enough to buy a saddle. Tony's plans are interrupted when his uncle is injured and cannot work. Tony's grandmother is forced to pawn her treasured silver-and turquoise-bracelet in order to raise money for her daughter and son-in-law. When his grandmother falls ill, Tony redeems the pawn on his grandmother's bracelet and returns it to her, using the money he had saved toward the purchase of the saddle. Tony's grandmother's health improves, and when Tony returns to work, he is dismayed to see that the saddle he so desires is no longer on display. Dejectedly, he finishes the day's work, and then finds that his grandmother has purchased the saddle for him with an advance from the trader toward the next blanket she will weave.

This is a satisfying story that reinforces the idea of strong family relationships, an important part of Navajo culture. Toddy's detailed illustrations and warm colors add to the impact of the story (Toddy is the son of noted Navajo artist Beatien Yazz).

I do, however, have a few quibbles about *A Summer's Trade*. The first is the implication of the almost magical nature of the grandmother's bracelet and its apparent causal relationship to her illness and her cure. The second relates to the setting of the story in (apparently) 1950s Gallup. While there certainly were traders who had close personal relationships with the Navajo people they served, until recently, reservation border towns such as Gallup were most noted for their racism and exploitation of the Navajo people. An on-reservation setting might have been more credible.

Both of these books are presented in a bilingual English/Navajo format, and both would be useful additions to elementary school and public libraries, particularly as a starting point for discussion of Navajo culture.

Andy J. Deering  
Central Wyoming College

## Intermediate (Gr. 4–6)

16-3-0334

Crisler, Curtis L. *Tough Boy Sonatas*. Asheville, N.C.: Front

Street Books, 2007. 88 pp. Illus. by Floyd Cooper. ISBN-13 978-1-932425-77-2, \$19.95.

A simple elegance radiates from this new compilation of poetry. Crisler's masterful poems about childhood in Gary, Indiana, are juxtaposed with Cooper's haunting illustrations. The effect created is evocative and unforgettable. Crisler's poetry is straightforward and at times blunt. He has ingenious insight and, through personal anecdotes, brings to light the plight of young Black men being raised in the inner city.

Much of the book's appeal is due to the narrators' profound naïveté. An especially haunting scene depicts a boy's grandmother playing "the vein game"—getting high by injecting cocaine into her arm. It is obvious that Crisler refused to censor himself in any way; the reader can feel the brutal honesty that pervades his words. However, the graphic nature of the novel may turn off some of its intended middle-grade readers. If possible, the book should be read in a classroom setting or with the help of an adult; because of Crisler's high level of language and analysis, young readers will be easily lost and fail to understand the book's profound message. High school students and adults may make a more suitable audience.

Lily Ann Ringler  
Dartmouth College

16-3-0335

Dahlberg, Maurine F. *The Story of Jonas*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007. 148 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-374-37264-4, \$16.00.

Hart, Alison. *Gabriel's Horses*. Atlanta, Ga.: Peachtree Publishers, 2007. 160 pp. Series: Racing to Freedom Trilogy. ISBN-13 978-1-15645-398-6, \$14.95.

Set during two historic periods in American history, these unique historical fiction titles examine the perception of freedom, and its reality, through the eyes of some of the youngest of those enslaved. The voices of these two coming-of-age African-American male protagonists are realistic, refreshing, and a welcome contribution to the historical fiction genre, and would enhance any unit of study relating to slavery.

*Gabriel's Horses*, the first in the historical-fiction trilogy *Racing to Freedom*, gives readers a rare glimpse into the life of an African-American family during Civil War times, where its members are both free and enslaved. The story unfolds in the year 1864 at the Woodville Farm in Kentucky. Gabriele Alexander, son of a free black man and a slave mother, which makes him a slave, dreams of becoming a famous jockey like the real-life African-American jockey Abe Hawkins. He works alongside his father, who purchased his own freedom with his winning purses, as one of the best thoroughbred racehorse trainers in Kentucky. Unbeknownst to Gabriele, his father has joined the Union Army, used the additional money to purchase his mother's freedom, and arranged for Gabriele to jockey their best thoroughbred in the upcoming race in Lexington, Kentucky, to position him to become Woodville Farm's next jockey. This engaging story radiates with familial warmth, particularly in its depiction of the father rearing

his son into manhood, and how that son emulates him, daring to dream of a life beyond slavery, while it deftly brings to life the historical hardships faced by African-American Union soldiers and their families during the Civil War. However, it is the thrill of the blow-by-blow description of Gabriele's race and the intermittent horse raids that will have readers holding on tight for the next installment!

Thirteen-year-old Jonas is looking forward to becoming his master's personal manservant, as promised, when he finds out that he must spend a year away from the only home he has known since he was five years old, as a servant to master's "good for nothing son," while the young master mines for gold in the Kansas Territory in 1859. Ignoring the whispers of freedom from his friend Tate, a fellow slave, Jonas hopes only to survive the year under the young master's rule in order to achieve a position of security and respectability. But the experience of being treated as an equal by the white wagon train leader, his success as a cook using his deceased mother's recipes, and hearing that Tate was shot by his master for running away, unexpectedly plant the seed of being free. This discerning narrative rings true to the mind-set of an adolescent who has been shielded from the physical and emotional abuse of slavery, but suddenly comes face-to-face with its harsh realities, as it weaves a tale of cunning adventure, friendship, and betrayal.

Wanda Meyers-Hines  
Meyershines Consulting, Sterling, Va.

#### 16-3-0336

Giovanni, Nikki. *On My Journey Now: Looking at African-American History Through the Spirituals*. Cambridge, Mass.: Candlewick Press, 2007. 116 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-7636-2885-7, \$18.99.

By definition, Negro spirituals are closely linked to African-American history. Giovanni takes this idea to its natural conclusion by writing an African-American historical narrative for children and youth using spirituals. Alternating between a historical narrative and lyrics, the text focuses on the African-American experience from the Middle Passage through approximately Emancipation. Giovanni address the context in which some of the songs were sung and how they functioned as a vehicle for worship, to express emotions—especially related to the oppressive conditions of slavery—and to relay messages for runaway slaves through the double meaning of the lyrics. Included in the book are the complete lyrics of the spirituals referenced in her essays; notes; and suggested recordings of the songs.

Without dates, political analysis, and references to historical or musical sources, among other things, this is not a substitute for nonfiction narratives on African-American history. Instead, it should be used as a supplemental text.

Laretta Henderson  
Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

#### 16-3-0337

Gourse, Leslie. *Sophisticated Ladies: The Great Women of Jazz*. New York: Dutton, 2007. 64 pp. Illus. by Martin French. ISBN-13 978-0-525-47198-1, \$19.99.

This is an easy reading title for middle-grade students about the women who paved the way in jazz and blues. Each of the 14 "sophisticated ladies" is presented in a biographical summary that forms a story arc, starting from their often-poor beginnings to stardom to, in many cases, a tragic end. Some young readers may recognize the higher profile names such as Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald, but the stories of lesser-known giants, such as Mildred Bailey and Mabel Mercer, are equally fascinating.

Gourse is able to capture some obscure facts—Billie Holiday was born Eleanora Fagan; Peggy Lee was originally Norma Deloris Egstrom; and Betty Carter's real name was Lille Mae Jones—while maintaining a writing style that's easy on the ears and brain. What's nice about this book is that while it starts with the earliest of greats, Bessie Smith, it also includes modern-day woman who have broken musical ground like Cassandra Wilson and Diana Krall.

Martin French, who has illustrated six books for young people, offers colorful full-page illustrations of each woman, capturing their souls, fashion style, and historical place in jazz and blues.

What readers will come away with, in addition to a concise biographical portrait, is a recognizable thread in each story. Overcoming poverty, abuse, failed relationships, racial discrimination, and addiction to find their names in a book about the great ladies of jazz is really quite a story in itself.

Linda Fiore  
Temple Univ.

#### 16-3-0338

Guillain, Adam. *Bella Balistica and the African Safari*. London, U.K.: Milet Publishing, 2007. 234 pp. ISBN 1-84059-482-9, \$9.95 (pb).



This novel is the third installment in Guillain's fantasy series (*Bella Balistica and the Temple of Tikal*, *Bella Balistica and the Indian Summer*), which depicts a Guatemalan girl adopted by a single mother in England after her biological mother's tragic death and her father's mysterious disappearance. A quetzal pendant rooted in her Mayan heritage gives Bella supernatural powers, including the ability to communicate with animals and fly like a bird. In this novel, she must ward off an attack by the evil Askar Karpov and his Corporation, which is to take place at a conference in East Africa of humans and animals from around the world.

Along with the fantasy elements, Guillain portrays rural and urban Ethiopian life through a family that houses and helps Bella on her way to the conference. Through the Alemnew family (based on a real family of the same name that the author met while researching the novel), readers learn of the differences between rural and urban life, the practice of different religions in Ethiopia, the Amharic language, and the impact of civil war on

those who fought. Outdated terms like “hut” and “tribe” mar what would otherwise be a useful presentation in a book designed to appeal to readers of fantasy. Neither the story nor the relationships among the characters are compelling enough to make this novel cross over to general readers, but Bella’s spunk, her eccentric adoptive mother, and the author’s sense of pacing will satisfy fans of the series and perhaps find some new readers.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

#### 16-3-0339

Marsden, Carolyn. *When Heaven Fell*. Cambridge, Mass.: Candlewick Press, 2007. 184 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-7636-3175-8, \$15.99.

A worried man looks for his runaway cows. Buddha says, “That man is burdened by his cows.” Anything can be a cow. Your material possessions. Your desire for them. Can you release your cows?

Binh lives in Vietnam and has far-flung ideas about America, the Big Land where everyone is rich. Her grandmother had a daughter by an American G.I. Given away to the United States and now grown, this “auntie” is coming to visit them. What rich things will she bring? Are these desires for rich things like the cows that must be released? What about the stories that Binh wants to hear? What about the desire to go to America?

Far from their image of a glamorous movie star, Grandmother’s long-lost daughter turns out to be an art teacher, wearing plain jeans and a T-shirt and bringing no rich gifts. As the cultural differences and misunderstandings on both sides loom large, Binh struggles to know what it is that she really wants from this visit with her auntie.

Filled with local detail, this story, beautifully written in a simple style, paints a clear picture of life in a remote Vietnamese village.

Ginny Lee  
Syracuse, N.Y.

#### 16-3-0340

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Feathers*. New York: Putnam, 2007. 120 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-399-23989-2, \$15.99.

Woodson has produced another warm and satisfying school and family story. *Feathers* is about an African-American family that can best be described as working poor. There is a father, whose subsistence earnings entitle his children to have free lunch; Mama, whose pregnancy threatens both herself and the child she is carrying; eleven-year-old Frannie; and Sean, her drop-dead-gorgeous older brother, who happens to be deaf. This is also a story about the new boy who appears one day after the term has begun. He looks white with long, dirty-blond hair, piercing eyes, and an unnerving calm aura about him. The kids immediately nickname him “Jesus boy.”

*Feathers* is about being different. It is about mixed-race children in an African-American community. It’s about being deaf in a speaking world. It is a story about tolerance. *Feathers* is about faith, believing, but it is not about religion. It is about death and dying and what happens after you die, but it is not morbid. It is a

story about hope, which Emily Dickinson describes as “the thing with feathers.” It is a story about doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do.

Carole J. McCollough  
Detroit, Mich.

#### Young Adult (Gr. 7 and up)

#### 16-3-0341

Abdel-Fattah, Randa. *Does My Head Look Big in This?* New York: Scholastic/Orchard, 2007. 360 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-439-91947-0, \$16.99.

How can a girl assert her non-mainstream identity and not rub people the wrong way? Amal, born in Australia of Palestinian Muslim immigrants, suddenly decides to start wearing the *hijab*. (Her reasons could have been developed more convincingly.) Although she dithers about how people will react at school, nothing bad happens, nor do her head scarf and modest dress discourage the attentions of hunky, smart Adam. How far she can let this friendship go, however, while trying to stay true to the teachings of Islam, presents a dilemma.

For much of its 360 pages, Amal’s story sounds like a typical girl-boy romance with little real conflict. Readers will be captivated by her lively, Aussie-teen-talk voice, though, and will pick up something about Arab/Muslim culture. They will also gain insight into the adjustments that immigrants must make in their effort to fit in yet not lose their own identity. The scene where Amal finally gets her crotchety old Greek neighbor to open up is a gem of interpersonal, intercultural exchange, poignant and charming.

Although Amal sounds a little too mature at times, she and her family are always likable. This book will be a popular addition to literature about immigrant experience and will resonate with young American teens, even though set down under.

Elsa Marston  
Bloomington, Ind.

#### 16-3-0342

Alegria, Malin. *Sofi Mendoza’s Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007. 290 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-689-87811-4, \$15.99.

In less than a month, Sofi Mendoza, a high school senior in San Inocente, California, goes from being a green-card-carrying legal Mexican immigrant to being an illegal immigrant with a fake green card stranded in Rosarito, Mexico, and, finally, to returning to California with full U.S. citizenship. At the end of a clandestine trip across the border with her high school friends Olivia and Taylor, Sofi is confronted with the terrifying truth that she has been living a lie: She is not a legal immigrant. Sofi is required to remain in Mexico as her friends return to San Inocente for the culminating events of their senior year. During this strangely poignant period in her life, when she believes that none of her dreams will ever come true, Sofi inexorably begins a journey toward acceptance, self-awareness, and compassion for others. Changing from a spoiled, provincial youth to a centered, multi-

cultural woman, Sofi reclaims her Mexican heritage and in the process becomes a compassionate citizen of the world with new empathies and sympathies.

Sofi's friends and relatives in Rosarito gradually become her new family as her parents and friends in California anxiously await her return. Sofi surprises herself by falling in love simultaneously with Mexico, its traditions, culture, and contradictions, and with Andres, whom Sofi discovers is an unexpected soul mate. The title, *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico*, is only half of the story. The subtitle should be *Sofi's Guide to Finding Herself*. This totally absorbing, fun read is a realistic introduction to the U.S. immigration and naturalization system and how citizens of Mexico and the United States can learn from each other. Sofi learns the valuable lesson that the U.S.-Mexican border should never be an obstacle to communication and understanding.

Plummer Alston "Al" Jones, Jr.  
East Carolina Univ.

### 16-3-0343

Alexie, Sherman. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. Boston: Little, Brown, 2007. 240 pp. Illus. by Ellen Forney. ISBN-13 978-0-316-01368-0, \$16.99.

What do you do when, every day, you leave your home reservation—"located approximately one million miles north of Important and two billion miles west of Happy"—to attend a high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot and you have to pretend not to be poor and your best friend becomes your worst enemy because you deserted him and you know your parents are sacrificing for you and doing the best they can but sometimes you have to hitchhike home? And, oh yeah, you have a big head, huge hands and feet, you're nearsighted in one eye and farsighted in the other, and you stutter and lisp. What do you do? You draw cartoons about your life and play basketball, that's what.

Called "Junior" by his friends and relatives on the Spokane reservation and "Arnold" by the white people in the other part of the world he inhabits part-time, he's an Indian boy coming into adulthood, literally weaving and dodging and rolling with the punches. But *Absolutely True Diary* is not just a litany of pain; it's also about strength and resilience and endurance and culture and community. And laughter, lots of it, at the joys, at the sorrows, even at the tragedies. And always and ever, it's about the land. As Junior and Rowdy climb almost to the top of the biggest tree on the reservation, they see "from one end of the reservation to the other. We could see our entire world. And our entire world, at that moment, was green and golden and perfect."

*Absolutely True Diary*, illustrated with Forney's amazing black-and-white cartoons, tells Alexie's truths. This is his life. He really does enjoy reading Emily Dickinson and his sister really did die a tragic death. He can be arrogant as all hell, but this Indian boy can write. He'll have you laughing out loud, and then he'll spin you around and whomp you upside the head. He'll break your heart every time. I mean it.

Beverly Slapin  
Oyate, Berkeley, Calif.

### 16-3-0344

Antieau, Kim. *Broken Moon*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007. 183 pp. ISBN-13 978-1-4169-1767-0, \$15.99.

Set in modern-day Pakistan, this moving novel takes the reader on an adventure into the harsh world of young camel boys in Pakistan. The story of family, loss, and hope is told through 18-year-old Nadira's daily journal entries, which she keeps for her six-year-old brother Umar. In her journal, she is able to let her hair down—figuratively speaking, that is. As a traditional poor Pakistani girl, she covers her head with her *dupatta* and pulls it across her face to hide her moon-shaped scar, the result of beatings she got several years ago for a crime her older brother allegedly committed.

Life takes a dramatic turn for Nadira, who works as a servant in a rich Pakistani household, when she learns that Umar has been abducted to race camels for rich sheiks in the desert. Empowered by the story of Queen Shahrazad, who saves her own life by her bravery and quick thinking, Nadira disguises herself as a boy and endures all the unimaginable hardships of life in the desert. Hope never fades, and Nadira is determined to go to all extremes to find and rescue her little brother.

*Broken Moon* is definitely a book worth reading. Antieau has been able to paint vivid pictures of all the characters, providing the reader with a image of contrasting lives in Pakistan, where people of great poverty live side by side with the affluent and influential.

Renu Ramakrishnan  
Delmar, N.Y.

### 16-3-0345

DeSaix, Deborah and Ruelle, Karen Gray. *Hidden on the Mountain: Stories of Children Sheltered from the Nazis in Le Chambon*. New York: Holiday House, 2007. 280 pp. Illus. with photos. ISBN-13 978-0-8234-1928-9, \$24.95.

As the subtitle states, this book documents the stories of some Jewish children hidden in Le Chambon, France, during World War II. Interspersed among these narratives are chapters that provide social and historical context.

The authors do a vital service in preserving the stories, but they could have reduced the number of contextual chapters, which draw focus away from the narratives. One brief chapter at the very beginning would have set the scene well enough. This suggestion is minor. Perhaps some of the extra material could be used as a teacher's guide or as content for the companion website, [www.hiddenonthemountain.com](http://www.hiddenonthemountain.com). This website links to the Chambon Foundation and to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The time line and the reading list are especially useful. The prologue also helps young readers imagine the dangers faced by the youth in the book. Photos help put faces to the names and narratives. The introduction offers insights into the process of collecting oral histories, although the authors wisely acknowledge that they are not professional historians.

The narratives themselves, however, remain the book's chief strength. Today's youth—and all generations—can learn much

from the courage and witness of these survivors.

Maureen Perry  
Univ. of Southern Maine at Lewiston-Auburn

**16-3-0346**

Engle, Margarita. *The Poet Slave of Cuba: A Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano*. New York: Henry Holt, 2006. 184 pp. Illus. by Sean Qualls. ISBN 0-8050-7706-5, \$16.95.

To write the biography of the gifted Cuban poet Francisco Manzano, Engle made a wise choice: to tell his life story as a series of poems. The strategy works, since much of what is known about Manzano is scanty. He was a slave who wrote poetry and was widely read, despite an abusive master who punished Manzano for the slightest of errors, such as dropping a jar or trying to reach for a book. A wealthy abolitionist named Domingo del Monte became aware of Manzano's poetry and gave the manuscript to British abolitionist R. R. Madden, who published the volume in Great Britain. The abolitionist and his friends saved money, along with Manzano's own funds, to purchase his freedom. Once he was freed, Manzano, who was falsely accused of participating in a conspiracy against Spanish rule but was released from prison, retreated into a quiet life, marrying the woman he loved. From the poetry written by Manzano as a young child and young man, Engle reconstructs his life and, of more importance and beauty, his feelings:

My mind is a brush made of feathers  
painting pictures of words  
I remember . . .  
I love the words  
written with my feathery mind  
in the air . . .

The poetic narrative progresses as different characters offer their views on Manzano: his birth mother, the slave owner, the master's son. There are instances of powerful verses revealing the tragedy of slavery, as when a man ordered to whip Manzano as a punishment wants the young boy to cry out in pain so that he can end the beating. There is the consternation felt by the tyrannical master who cannot stop Manzano from rebelling. There is very little history presented in this book, and again that is a wise choice. For rather than defuse the young poet's dreams of freedom and his cries against the evil of slavery with lengthy description of colonial Cuba and the customs of the times, the author concentrates her talent in celebrating and exposing Manzano's talent.

Engle makes Manzano a living individual in this book. At the climax, when the young man manages to escape and the enslaved persons around shout with joy as he gallops away on a horse, the reader joins in the celebration.

Danilo H. Figueredo  
Bloomfield College (N.J.) Library

**16-3-0347**

Leeds, Constance. *The Silver Cup*. New York: Viking, 2007. 214 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-670-06157-0, \$16.99.

Leeds's historical novel chronicles 15-year-old Anna's struggle with religion and friendship when she befriends an orphaned Jew during the First Crusade. Anna, along with the rest of Leeds's characters, portrays practices and attitudes typical of eleventh-century Europe, yet also exhibits traits recognizable in modern humanity and remains sympathetic to the reader.

When Anna's father brings her along on a journey into Worms to trade with a Jewish merchant, the two discover chaos and violence in the aftermath of an attack by Crusaders. Against the wishes of her father, Anna brings home the merchant's daughter, Leah, who has lost her entire family to the murderous zeal of the Crusaders. Encountering disapproval and alienation from friends and neighbors who characterize Leah as "filth" because of her religion, Anna must endure accusations contending that she has besmirched her family name. After a moving confrontation with Leah in which Anna loses her temper, the two gradually become friends. However, the girls ultimately realize that Leah belongs with other Jews, and they travel to a faraway village to reunite Leah with her extended family.

A heartwarming portrait of kindness and friendship in the face of religious intolerance, *The Silver Cup* deserves to grace the bookshelf of every young girl or boy of any religion.

Gila Heller  
Baltimore, Md.

**16-3-0348**

Lester, Julius. *Cupid*. San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt, 2007. 208 pp. ISBN-13 978-0-15-202056-X, \$17.00.

African-American Jewish author of more than 20 books for young readers, Lester has won both the Newbery Honor Award and the Coretta Scott King Award. His latest is a lighthearted romp through Greek and Roman mythology and a folksy retelling of Lucius Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*, the only novel in Latin to have survived antiquity.

Bringing the storyteller's art and craft to classic mythology, Lester introduces a memorable cast of characters, not the least of which are "Story" and "Storyteller," who have comical dialogues of their own about how the tale should be told. Using the device of the omniscient narrator as Storyteller adds another dimension to the timeless tale; however, it may disturb some readers who are fascinated with Storyteller's provocative jests and sly wisdom to the point of wanting to know more about him (Lester himself) and thus detracting from Story itself.

Cupid, the god of love, son of Venus, is sent by her to destroy her rival in beauty, the lovely Psyche, a mortal. When Cupid glimpses Psyche for the first time, he falls madly in love. Despite all obstacles, Cupid discovers true love with Psyche—what love is, how to appreciate it and be worthy of it, and how to keep it. Despite Venus's original jealousy, she relents and approves of the marriage of her son and Psyche, who, through her marriage to Cupid, becomes immortal. Jupiter and all the gods and goddesses in Olympus rejoice at the wedding of the new couple.

Plummer Alston "Al" Jones, Jr.  
East Carolina Univ.

## Audio

16-3-0349

*The Rough Guide to Latin Music for Children*. London, U.K.: World Music Network, 2006. CD. 53 minutes. \$16.98.

This is a diverse collection of recordings of music hailing from throughout the Spanish-speaking world. The CD features a vast selection of performers presenting songs from the United States, Colombia, Senegal, Argentina, the United Kingdom, Cuba, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, and Bolivia. There is also a song in Portuguese from Brazil. More than a thousand schoolchildren were interviewed and invited to select their favorite songs to include on the CD. *The Rough Guide to Latin Music for Children* incorporates a broad variety of musical styles, including—but not limited to—salsa, tango, merengue and samba-reggae.

The accompanying booklet describes how the songs were selected and provides a brief overview of the performers and the song they perform along with photos of the artists. It also describes the two organizations that helped to bring the CD to fruition: the charity Music for Change and the World Music Network, which produces the Rough Guide music album series.

This is a great collection of songs that can be used as a springboard for discussions regarding the diversity of Spanish-speaking people across Latin America, thanks to the contributions of indigenous cultures, the African diaspora, and the colonial rulers of Latin America.

Melanie Pores  
Albany (N.Y.) City School District

## Video

16-3-0350

*Going to School in India*. Cincinnati: Master Communications, 2006. DVD. 76 minutes. Color. ISBN 978-1-88819-490-6, \$29.95.

This DVD, based on the award-winning book by Lisa Heydlauff, invites children to develop a broader understanding of literacy and education, beyond their countries and cultures. It helps them explore how every day millions of children in India go to school in city classrooms, mountain fields, desert tents, monasteries and other places. The modes of transportation they take include boat, bicycle, wheelchair, and bus. Students learn the lessons at different places—on a lake, in the dark, on a dune, or even in a monastery. The book highlights a common element that children all over the world share—their desire to go to school, where they can learn lessons relevant to their lives. More than fifty million children in India have watched “Going to School in India” over POGO, Cartoon Network, and National Geographic networks.

The purpose of this DVD is to show how important an education is to children and families in India. These nine short films with colorful snapshots have won selected awards. Each episode

has a different story of going to school. For example, nine-year-old Zahida paddles her boat to attend school in Kashmir in the middle of a lake, Ramesh takes us to his desert classroom made of mud, nine-year-old Skarma goes to school on a mountaintop, twelve-year-old Gamlesh works during the day so her family can survive. The DVD has universal appeal because it features subjects important to children’s lives.

Parsa Chaudhury  
Evanston, Ill.

## Software

16-3-0351

*Travels with Music*. Berkeley, Calif.: Listen for Life, 2006. 30 lessons. Available by online subscription or DVD-ROM. \$30.00 (online); \$60.00 (DVD-ROM).

Music classes and aficionados of world music will appreciate this exploration of musical styles and instruments from around the globe. This DVD-ROM program, compatible with Macintosh and Windows operating systems (in separate DVDs or in an online subscription format), contains lesson plans, music samples, interviews with musicians, interactive games, and resource lists to give users background information on music from 12 to 15 countries. The first DVD in the series focuses on the blues of the United States as well as music from China, Indonesia, the Philippines, northern India, West Africa (Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria), Morocco, Israel, Mexico, Brazil, and the Andes (Peru, Chile).

The most interesting part of the program is the interviews with musicians, who describe the history of their musical form, the instruments they use, how their instruments are played, and typical motifs and melodies. The interviewees do not shy away from placing their work in a larger social and historical context, making this a good resource for interdisciplinary classes in social studies. For instance, I was reminded that during the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile (1973–1990), certain traditional musical instruments like the *charango* were banned because they were linked to indigenous and leftist rebellions.

Among the games are ones matching indigenous instruments to their lands of origin and quizzes on music history and trivia. These appeal to a variety of users and build on diverse skills—visual and aural recognition and literacy, among others.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

