

**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, sciences social sciences, reference, travel, 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.

## Literature

### General Anthologies

#### 19-1-0001

Past, Ambar; Guzman, Xalik; and Ernandes, Xpetra, eds. *Incantations: Songs, Spells and Images by Mayan Women*. El Paso, Tex.: Cinco Puntos Press, 2009. 232 pp. ISBN 978-1-933693-09-5, \$26.95 (pb).

This text may be understood as an effort to call attention to the ongoing plight of indigenous peoples, presenting poetic song expressions with political undertones rendered into English and sanctioned by the famed Zapatista Subcommandante Marcos. It is the first publication for U.S. audiences of a work that began as the 1998 Tzotzil-Spanish volume *Conjurios y ebriedades* (Spells and intoxications), later produced in Mexico as a limited edition hand-made version by Past in 2005. This 2007



English language volume contains song texts written by modern indigenous Tzotzil Maya women of Chiapas along with their original silkscreen images, printed here in black and white.

The volume includes a lengthy introductory overview by Past which contextualizes the genre through discussion of its role and its indigenous themes, including excerpts from the texts to illustrate points. The pieces themselves center on Maya women's experiences as the bearers of children and as wives, as suppressed yet spiritual beings possessed of generative powers, often heart wrenching, as in a piece called "For a Dead Child." Overt sexual references may not be appropriate for young readers. While the selections illustrate indigenous spiritual consciousness and pride in pre-Colombian textual practices, the absence here of the original Tzotzil versions of the song texts limits its utility for fuller understanding of modern Maya textual processes, and the book may be viewed by academics as an exercise in auto-exoticism with distinctly political ends. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile for cultivating general humanistic awareness of the marginalization of Maya peoples and the persistence of non-Western practices among them. Such works are important avenues for expanding awareness of native peoples, as well as for their own cultural revitalization and struggle for agency.

Joanna Sanchez  
SUNY-Cobleskill

### Fiction

#### 19-1-0002

Abi-Ezzi, Nathalie. *A Girl Made of Dust*. New York: Grove/Atlantic, 2009. 236 pp. ISBN 978-0-8021-1895-0, \$24.00.

How do children perceive war? This novel tells the story of the Lebanese civil war through the eyes of 8-year-old Ruba who lives in a village in the mountains above Beirut. From down the mountain, the distant sound of shelling creates a backdrop and occasional distraction from the most important thing in Ruba's life: the relationships among the members of her family. Her father has become despondent, refusing to work and always sitting in the same chair; her resentful mother, who has been saddled with keeping the household running, vigorously labors away to keep distracted; and her beloved older brother, who is beginning to run with bullies, collecting bullet casings and getting swept into the war.

The shelling and bombing eventually reach the village, and the family must take refuge in a narrow hallway for hours as the house shudders and its windows are shattered. But this terror is

transformed into a closeness and love that anchors them all. The horrors of war are conveyed to the reader, yet shielded from Ruba by her own innocence. However, her inquisitiveness leads her to many ugly truths, including the mystery of her father's depression. This book is a very touching juxtaposition of death, destruction, innocence, and love.

Dena El-Saffar  
Bloomington, Ind.

#### 19-1-0003

Adnan, Etel. *Master of the Eclipse*. Northampton, Mass.: Interlink, 2009. 168 pp. ISBN 978-1-56656-779-4, \$15.00 (pb).

The subtle, unseen forces that shape our world and connect us to one another are brought to light in this collection of short stories. This book covers a wide geographic territory, from Damascus to San Francisco, as well as a vast emotional territory, acknowledging the complexity of heartbreak, regret, disillusionment, loyalty, and belief.

The opening story, which shares the title of the book, is a kaleidoscopic tribute to Kurdish-Iraqi poet Buland Al-Haidari (1926–1996), considered a master poet of Arabic free verse. Admiration and sadness are invoked as his life is pieced together through a series of recollections and encounters, including a visit by his ghost after his death. A bitter humor is captured in “An American Malady” when Beirut’s warring militias happily put aside real fighting in order to reenact battle scenes for a German film. Other topics include the guilty confessions of a desperate lover, a lonely school girl overly fraught by desire for friendship, a writer’s astute observations of an unknown couple sitting in a café, a prostitute wrongly imprisoned for a murder, and a poet with visions of angels. This collection reveals a wise, sympathetic, and philosophical author bearing witness to the wide range of the human experience.

Dena El-Saffar  
Bloomington, Ind.

#### 19-1-0004

Anton, Maggie. *Rashi's Daughters: Book III: Rachel*. New York: Plume, 2009. 425 pp. ISBN 978-0-452-29568-1, \$15.00 (pb).

This is the third book in a series about the daughters of the great teacher Rashi. Like the others it is set in eleventh-century France. The volume is divided into three parts. The first paints a picture of the married life of Rachel, Rashi's youngest daughter, and depicts the separations and reunions of husband and wife due to their involvement in trade. The second and most interesting section depicts the pogroms that took place in Germany at this time in connection with the Crusades and the general unrest of that period. The pogroms wiped out many of the oldest and most important centers of Jewish learning and destroyed these centers of Jewish life forever. Part 3 depicts the pull on Rachel's life between her duty to her husband and to her father.

The book for the most part plays out like a soft-covered romance interspersed with Talmudic quotes. I can't say which of these makes the more tedious reading. Furthermore, the people are one-dimensional and not terribly interesting. The one thing which held this reader's attention, but might not be to everyone's taste, is the detailed explanation of the wool and weaving trade, which Rachel tries to start and improve in an area of France not noted for this industry at the time.

Ruth G. Becker  
Fresh Meadows, N.Y.

#### 19-1-0005

Bolaño, Roberto. *The Skating Rink*. New York: New Directions, 2009. 182 pp. Trans. from Spanish by Chris Andrews. ISBN 978-0-8112-1713-2, \$21.95.

One of the finest Latin American voices in translation is Roberto Bolaño's. Regrettably, he died in 2003, and at that time only one of his works, *By Night in Chile*, was in translation. Hailed by Susan Sontag as one of “the most influential and admired novelists of his generation in the Spanish-speaking world,” *The Skating Rink* is the latest release in the series of highly masterful and literary translations by Chris Andrews out of New Directions Books. Bolaño's fiction is inventive in form and substance. Told in the voice of three different narrators from three different perspectives, the reader of *The Skating Rink* untangles a wide net of crime involving one beautiful figure skater set in an arena of passion, crime, sex, immigrant frustration, and ultimately political corruption of Costa Brava. Bolaño's prose is tight and spare, and he has been compared to Borges, Pynchon, and Cortázar.

Bolaño received the National Book Critics Circle Fiction prize in 2008 for his epic novel *2666*. This, the next work of fiction to be translated following the release of *2666*, deserves to be read widely as well.

Rosemary Aud Franklin  
Univ. of Cincinnati

#### 19-1-0006

Butcher, Kenneth. *The Middle of the Air*. Winston-Salem, N.C.: John F. Blair, Publisher, 2009. 310 pp. ISBN 978-0-89587-371-2, \$22.95.

Butcher's new novel is all over the place, mainly in the “middle of the air” down South around Oak Ridge, Tennessee, somewhere between Nashville and Knoxville. The book jacket calls it a techno-mystery and that is as good as any description it might call up. With that said, *The Middle of the Air* is a middle of the road novel. Its greatest appeal would be to readers interested in government conspiracy and technology, nuclear waste, and a twisted plot peopled with quirky Southern and Appalachian characters.

The work also has regional appeal, with John F. Blair, Publisher as the publishing house. John F. Blair is a former editor at the Uni-

versity of North Carolina Press. Kenneth Butcher makes his home in Hendersonville, North Carolina, and runs his own engineering and development company, owning 15 U.S. patents, an obviously imaginative mind. This is good public library fiction, representative of a particular place and time.

Rosemary Aud Franklin  
Univ. of Cincinnati

#### 19-1-0007

Capó Crucet, Jennine. *How to Leave Hialeah*. Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 2009. 184 pp. ISBN 978-1-58729-816-5, \$16.00 (pb).

This debut short story collection is an easy read that packs a wallop. I say easy not just because the stories are breezy and humorous and uplifting and seamlessly crafted but because they are a welcome drink to the soul's parched land and go down as easy as fresh, cool, clean water.

The stories start from a standpoint of place: Hialeah and the various Cuban-American neighborhoods of greater Miami. And soon the reader finds herself in the complex geography of the human heart. Capó Crucet leaves no human theme unturned. Family relations, romantic love and woe, disappointment, longing, coming of age, aging, dying, and even resurrection are all turned and turned under the author's whimsical and poetic microscope. In the process, Miami, and specifically Cuban-American Miami, becomes larger than the sum of its parts, a mythical place as rich, intriguing, and fantastical as James Joyce's Dublin, but with a good heaping of *tostones*, *croquetas*, and other delectable culinary and fiesta fare.

In fact, these short stories are not just tales told by the author, but the author's retelling and refashioning of tales told to her by her parents, friends, *abuelos* (grandparents), and a whole community that thrives on the steamy, pounding present-day South Florida metropolis comingled with those faraway voices and rooms of a land left behind by Cuban exiles, where the past is embellished and glorified in retrospect. Each story stands alone in its theme and singularity, and yet the tales are magically and inexorably connected, much as a symphony is bound by its parts and movements.

This collection is made to be read and re-read and shared with cross-generational readers from all cultures and climes. Each one will hear America singing in her or his own way.

Himilce Novas  
<http://supernovas.org>

#### 19-1-0008

Castro Urioste, José. *And What Have You Done?* Pittsburgh, Pa.: Latin American Literary Review Press, 2009. 109 pp. Trans. from Spanish by Enrica J. Ardemagni. ISBN 978-1-89127-025-3, \$13.00 (pb).

*And What Have You Done?* is a novel translated from Spanish. It is a short novel of four interlacing narratives: "First Takes (in

Black and White, of Course)," "As an Accomplice, The Drizzle," "A Story of Moves," and "Indigo Blue Sky." From the beginning of this novel, we learn about a love story that began for a young man as he moves from Peru to Canada and then to the United States.

The narrator Ernesto, who is known to his friends as Tito, provides descriptions after the fact, depicting the romantic and sexual relationships that started early in his life. He relies on his memory and recounts his experiences as he struggles to cope with life's challenges, leaving his hometown on a journey that takes him eventually to Pittsburgh in the United States.

Throughout the stories, historical and cultural references to Peruvian events, food, and landscapes are embedded in the narrative from beginning to end. The dialogue conveys maturity and loss of innocence as Tito passes through the different stages of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Life changes and friendships take different paths along his adventurous journeys. The translation presents the humor, youthful vulgarity, and slang that capture the original style.

*And What Have You Done?* is a short novel for general readers, especially those who enjoy coming-of-age stories. It has a place in all libraries.

Alva V. Cellini  
St. Bonaventure Univ.

#### 19-1-0009

Cotterill, Colin. *The Merry Misogynist*. New York: Soho Press, 2009. 272 pp. ISBN 978-1-56947-556-0, \$24.00.

This is the sixth novel in Cotterill's engaging detective series with its unlikely hero, Dr. Siri, an elderly coroner in 1970s Laos, along with his new wife, Madame Daeng, and his other friends from earlier books in the series, not to mention the occasional supernatural spirit that sometimes provides Dr. Siri with clues for solving a crime. A feature that distinguishes *The Merry Misogynist* from the other novels in the series is that chapters alternate between Dr. Siri's efforts to find a serial killer—the misogynist of the title—and the cautious scheming of the killer himself as he sets a trap for his next victim. Cotterill leaves out just enough detail about the killer's methods and identity to keep Siri's deductions and pursuit suspenseful. What makes the plot and the historical circumstances dovetail brilliantly, in a way that ratchets up the suspense, is that Laos, recovering from wartime devastation and clumsily governed by the new Communist regime, has no national database that would help Siri and others put together an M.O. for a criminal who commits his murders in widely different districts of the nation, and bureaucratic politics provide additional impediments. Furthermore, the wretched condition of roads in rural areas plays particularly well into the killer's hands.

As in the other Dr. Siri novels, there are side plots that provide amusement—most often at the expense of the Laotian government—and a colorful gallery of minor characters. Dr. Siri himself continues to be one of the most vividly portrayed and delightful detectives in modern fiction.

Joseph Milicia  
Univ. of Wisconsin-Sheboygan

**19-1-0010**

De Winter, Leon. *God's Gym*. New Milford, Conn.: The Toby Press, 2009. 322 pp. ISBN 978-1-59264-265-6, \$14.95 (pb).

De Winter offers a charming stew of a book full of improbable characters, strange twists of fate, and philosophical musings. The principal character is Joop Koopman, a Dutch writer trying to make a living in Los Angeles as a screenwriter. The accidental killing of his daughter Mirjam, a charming and talented teenager, puts Joop in contact with the man who killed her—Erroll Washington, a huge Black man who is the owner of God's Gym and tries to atone for Mirjam's death by devoting himself to Joop. The cast of characters also includes Philip, a childhood friend from Holland who now works for the Israeli ministry of defense and tries to enlist Joop's help to spy on Omar, a Dutch Muslim suspected of being a terrorist; a Jewish cousin from his past; and an uncle who died in the Holocaust but returns as a ghost.

In an additional complication, Joop, instead of spying on Omar, enlists his help in tracking down the recipient of Mirjam's heart. Joop sometimes seems hopelessly naïve, and the double-pronged ending is even more improbable than what has gone before. Tucked within this spoof of a thriller are flashbacks in which Joop eloquently expresses his love for the daughter he has single-handedly raised since infancy. The strange juxtaposition of tones makes this book at once entertaining and often deeply affecting.

Eva Martin Sartori  
Univ. of Nebraska–Lincoln

**19-1-0011**

Durrow, Heidi W. *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2010. 272 pp. ISBN 978-1-56512-680-0, \$22.95.

Rachel, a young girl with a Danish mother and an African-American father, lived through a tragedy that would change her life forever. Rachel's mother Nella thought it would be better to raise her children in the United States rather than Europe after a fire took the life of her first child. But when the marriage failed and Nella could not deal with the nasty treatment of her children, she tried to end their lives. Rachel, however, survived the rooftop fall and ends up being raised by her African-American grandmother. She works to hold onto her parents and who they are, but realizes society isn't so accepting. Rachel's light skin and striking blue eyes cause people to notice and compartmentalize her. Throughout the story, a childhood neighbor named Brick reappears and brings Rachel a gift from her father.

Although each chapter is named for and revolves around a particular character, Durrow is best when she's writing from Rachel's perspective. Rachel is dynamic without being exaggerated, and readers will feel as if they are in her head. Overall, this book shows vividly what a person endures when stigmatized by a diverse racial heritage. It provides insight for young women fighting against others' definitions of race.

Brenda Yates Habich  
Ball State Univ.

**19-1-0012**

Hage, Rawi. *Cockroach*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2009. 306 pp. ISBN 978-0-393-07537-3, \$23.95.

What does it mean to think of oneself as a cockroach? To slip out of your human body and be transformed into a nocturnal pest that exists in the underbelly of humid drains and dark places? With allusions to Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, Camus's *The Stranger* (*L'Étranger*) and Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Hage's novel provides us with access to emigres who have come from dark places of torture, betrayal, war, and torment. Now in Montreal, with their lives chilled by the harshness of a freezing climate and regretting their loss of profession, status, and education, they survive in petty jobs as café troubadours, taxicab drivers, busboys, drug procurers for the frivolously rich, and petty thieves. This is how they squeeze out small change for cigarettes, dope, booze, and cold flat rooms.

Like these immigrants, Hage's unnamed narrator attempts to hide himself in the hard shell and rough behavior of the cockroach, even to his court-appointed therapist, Genevieve. Gradually, his narrative to her explains his cynical, sad, and destructive behavior. However, his poetic language reveals another sensibility as he describes a September moon as "butter yellow" and confides, "There is a sound to the cold, a constant quiet, a subtle permanent buzzing. ... My breath was like a smoking Bollywood train." When he falls in love and into lust with beautiful Shohreh from Iran, his plans to help her avenge her past are romantic, dangerous, but mostly heroic. Continually forced to the edges of society, he does not acknowledge boundaries. He acts with no regrets to avenge society's hypocrisies, for a cockroach is programmed to survive. He states, "I look society in the face and say: I am here, I exist."

Patricia Goldblatt  
Toronto, Ont.

**19-1-0013**

Lisé, Gloria. *Departing at Dawn: A Novel of Argentina's Dirty War*. New York: Feminist Press at the City Univ. of New York, 2009. 184 pp. Trans. from Spanish by Alice Weldon. ISBN 978-1-55861-603-5, \$14.95 (pb).

Set in Argentina in the 1970s, the time of the violent confrontation between the military government and the leftist groups ERP and Montoneros, *Departing at Dawn* narrates the story of Berta Riera, a medical student who escapes from Tucumán after the violent death of Atilio, a union organizer and her lover, for fear of being caught by the government. She travels to La Rioja and lives with her relatives until her final departure to Spain. There she gets to know well and to love her mother's siblings: Aunt Avelina, a widow with a passion for music and romantic novels; Uncle Nepomuceno, who plays guitar to his pets, some snails; and Uncle Javier, who takes care of his store and enjoys the friendship of an Armenian midwife, Lupe. The narrative, filled with sensitive stories, is also imbued with a strong dose of anti-Catholicism and anti-clerical views.

This is a well-crafted story with good descriptions of characters

and landscape. Its weakness lies in its one-sided view of the history. After 30 years, there should be a fresher and more balanced view of this period. The insertion of the “Notes” and of Atahualpa Yupanqui’s lyrics captures a significant dimension of the cultural backdrop and thereby greatly enhances the novel. The translation is good.

Rosita Chazarreta-Rourke  
Duquesne Univ.

#### 19-1-0014

Ma, Kathryn. *All That Work and Still No Boys*. Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 2009. 162 pp. ISBN 978-1-58729-822-6, \$16.00 (pb).

Unlike many recent novels and even picture books intent on portraying other cultures, this one offers characters that feel like real people. There is no talking down. There is no Chinese accent or use of stereotypical words or phrases to make the characters seem really Chinese. Much recent writing exploiting the current interest in valuing differences seems to believe that all one has to do is add a few props, Chinese names and faces, egg rolls and chopsticks, to a family picture in order to write about Chinese or Chinese Americans. However intriguing the plot, these props simply make the whole book seem forced and fake, like a stage set.

This set of stories does not need to make use of those cultural accoutrements. Here we find vignettes of crises in various lives. We are taken immediately into the complicated lives of people who happen to be of Chinese descent, but that is not the main feature of the crisis or of the story. (In a couple of the stories we look in vain for some indication that there might be a multicultural lesson to be obtained.) We become so involved in their lives that we forget that they are Chinese—until some tradition or value creeps in to remind us. And yet there is something in the social workings that is Chinese and not Western.

An elderly woman needs a kidney. Her son is a perfect match but he is her only son. Couldn’t one of the four daughters offer a kidney instead? So many girl babies rejected in China have become adored children of Western parents by adoption. As young teens they are now being taken back to China to see where they came from. Is this a good idea? A family is moving to California and needs to sell the house. The boy admires his schoolteacher who happens to be Black and who needs a house. Will it work if he brings his teacher home? The assistant principal of the school is convinced that the boy who is an A student and from a good family must certainly have been egged on by unsavory friends to take part in a hurtful prank. (Guess again.) What is the protocol for keeping household help? The one who has left and comes back? Or the one who actually does a better job. Don’t talk about fairness. This is a matter of face.

These stories and more offer insight into what it means to think, feel, act, and be Chinese. If you can’t quite put your finger on it, you’re not alone.

Ginny Lee  
Syracuse, N.Y.

#### 19-1-0015

Nunez, Elizabeth. *Anna In-Between*. New York: Akashic Books, 2009. 346 pp. ISBN 978-1-933354-84-2, \$22.95.

Nunez’s colorful and detailed style of writing draws one into the intimate relationship of culture and family life. She provides pivotal lifelong lessons on parental care across age lines. Class and culture also serve as a boundary that brings people together and yet, out of respect, keeps them apart even after many years of marriage. All of this becomes a reality on a backdrop of injustice that links Anna’s two worlds of the Caribbean and America. The paradox of intimacy and privacy in a long-lasting love affair is the spice that Nunez consistently manipulates as she addresses the marital relationship of her main characters, the Sinclairs. Their daughter Anna is the offspring that holds them together. Mrs. Sinclair faces breast cancer and finds it difficult to surrender to the demands that her body dictates in its call for surgery if she plans to live a longer life.

The various emotional peaks and valleys that fear embraces with the dreaded disease of cancer are handled gracefully and eloquently. Readers will want to take their time and linger over the magnificent and realistic descriptions of people, places, and things as Nunez so artfully keeps them engaged.

Johnnie Love  
Univ. of Maryland—College Park

#### 19-1-0016

Perkins, Warren. *Putrefaction Live*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2009. 253 pp. ISBN 978-0-8263-4776-3, \$21.95 (pb).

Perkins’s novel tells the story of James, a half Navajo—half White young man who is struggling to decide what to do with his life. He has moved back to the reservation to do some soul searching after living in the city. While living on the reservation, he forges renewed relationships with friends he had as a child. However, moving back also causes him to face some of the ghosts of his past. James’s great passion is playing death metal on his guitar. He joins Putrefaction, a friend’s band that he wants to see succeed.

James’s family gives him a hard time about his choices. His father wants him to go to school and consequently nags him. He is also overshadowed by his brother, a Stanford law student. He meets a woman who he begins to have feelings for, but she has issues. James also must deal with helping his cousin find out who is stealing his livestock. After James has a run-in with the law, he begins to try to take responsibility for his life and make the right decisions. The difficulties of reservation life are detailed throughout the book. The struggle of growing up in two cultures is voiced in this very engaging story.

Maria Castillo  
Univ. of Arizona

**19-1-0017**

Ratner, Rochelle. *Mother and Child*. Maplewood, N.J.: Hamilton Stone Editions, 2009. 188 pp. ISBN 978-0-9801786-1-6, \$14.95 (pb).

*Mother and Child* begins in refreshing territory: the world of the thirty-something urban professional woman who is not in a desperate search for a husband and child. And yet, that's exactly where Ellyn, the novel's Jewish protagonist, finds herself. Still, the novel offers neither the big white wedding nor the designer-clad infant of the chick-lit-like fiction that provides so many of today's representations of successful, single women. It offers instead an exploration of the surprising and intense connections Ellyn finds with her new, single-parent boyfriend and his preadolescent daughter. This is a story populated by realistically imperfect people in imperfect relationships who both nurture and wound one another, and this is its strength.

Ratner's spare prose and intentionally disconnected narrative style appropriately echo the characters' struggles with their respective pasts and the ways that these pasts shape their present relationships. Despite this stylistic suitability, the constant disjunctions and awkward juxtapositions through which the story is told inhibit rather than enhance the characters' engaging complexity. For example, the abrupt juxtapositions of the present Ellyn and "T.C." (the damaged child-self of her past) are unproductively disruptive, not quite succeeding in the Faulknerian aims of the style. Similarly, the occasional intrusion of dated reflections from various characters detracts from the coherence created by the novel's emphasis on dialogue and relationships.

Shealeen Meaney  
Russell Sage College, Troy, N.Y.

**19-1-0018**

Roesch, Mattox. *Sometimes We're Always Real Same-Same*. Denver, Colo.: Unbridled Books, 2009. 336 pp. ISBN 978-1-932961-87-4, \$15.95 (pb).

Roesch sets his novel in Unalakleet, an Alaskan village. He conveys in vivid detail the people of the village and their feelings of stagnation and hopelessness, which exist alongside their dreams and hopes for better lives in this harsh, isolated land. Roesch's narrator César is a 17-year-old part Mexican-American, part Native American gang-banger from Los Angeles whose mother ships him to the far-north village of 700 people after his older brother is convicted of murder. In Unalakleet, César changes his name to Atausiq and bonds with his Alaskan cousin Go-Boy; through Go-Boy he undergoes a spiritual journey through a recursive "layering" of perspectives on his past becoming his present and future. The narrative spirals back while moving forward, and while the characters ultimately fail to be Jesus—as depicted in Go-Boy's homemade Eskimo Jesus tattoo—César and his new friends ponder His life and values and whether they can ever *become* Him.

Through César/Atausiq we get a living process pagan/Christianity, not in the traditional sense, but where we are moved spiritually and where we discover, in Meister Eckhart's words, "The seed

of God is in us ... Pear seeds grow into pear trees, nut seeds into nut trees, and God-seed into God."

Buy this book! Among the best of literature that is multicultural

James C. Jupp  
Central Arkansas Univ.

**19-1-0019**

Rosero, Evelio. *The Armies*. New York: New Directions, 2009. 224 pp. Trans. from Spanish by Anne McLean. ISBN 978-0-8112-1864-1, \$14.95 (pb).

This book is not what you would expect from a Colombian writer; for decades writers from this country have distinguished themselves in the genre of magical realism, addressing social and political conflicts via the surreal and the absurd. Instead, *The Armies* is a scathing indictment of the current political situation in Colombia where a tiny town and its inhabitants are terrorized by left-wing guerrilla fighters and right-wing paramilitary troops.

Caught in the crossfire, the protagonist, a 70-year-old man, recounts his experiences as he grapples with the mysterious disappearance of his wife and friends, and struggles to stay alive throughout the indiscriminate attacks of terror. Through this work of testimonial literature, Rosero reveals the recent history of his war-torn country.

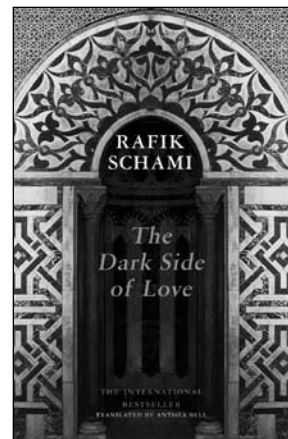
Roberta Gordenstein  
Elms College, Chicopee, Mass.

**19-1-0020**

Schami, Rafik. *The Dark Side of Love*. Northampton, Mass.: Interlink, 2009. 864 pp. Trans. from German by Anthea Bell. ISBN 978-1-56656-780-0, \$24.00 (pb).

The sights, sounds, tastes, and feel of Damascus are imported into English in a new translation coming out of Germany. Schami's long epic romance, translated into English by well-known translator Bell, is a mythical love story with murder at its heart.

Imagine a dead man's body hanging from the portal of St. Paul's Chapel in Damascus. The scene draws in a host of characters, the most enigmatic being Detective Barudi, who implicates the dead man's widow. Taking it up one notch, the Secret Service moves in and takes the case. What follows is a complicated plot involving a blood feud between the Mushtak and Shahin clans. The reader looks back through layers of Middle Eastern history and the complicated culture of clans and tribes and loyalty. Forbidden love is the theme and tension that holds the passion in the work.



The *Dark Side of Love* is a magnum opus at 864 pages, and reading it is a work of love. Schami's works have been translated into 21 languages, which is proof of the enduring quality of this writer's voice in English.

Rosemary Aud Franklin  
Univ. of Cincinnati

#### 19-1-0021

Shrayer, Maxim D. *Yom Kippur in Amsterdam*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse Univ. Press, 2009. 152 pp. ISBN 978-0-8156-0918-6, \$24.95.

Give another cheer for immigration, which has given us the unique voice of Maxim Shrayer, an immigrant from Soviet Russia. Shrayer is a professor of Russian and English literatures and Jewish Studies at Boston College, a translator and a memoirist, as well as the author of several volumes of literary criticism.

In the eight stories in the present collection, his first work of fiction, we make the acquaintance of an astonishingly broad range of characters: young and old academics both in elite American institutions and in Russia, poets and lovers, herdsmen and scientists. Many of these characters struggle with their Jewishness, a Jewishness watered down by several generations who lived under a totalitarian regime or else in a secular state—places that recognized neither religion nor ethnicity. In each case these characters find themselves in an intricate web of relationships that have roots in the past, with connections across the globe and sometimes across centuries. The tone is most often elegiac—a sense of longing suffuses all the stories. The exquisitely precise vocabulary manages to locate the characters in the present even as they attempt to make sense of the situations in which their history, their cultures, and their own aspirations have placed them.

Eva Martin Sartori  
Univ. of Nebraska–Lincoln

#### 19-1-0022

Sze, Elsie. *The Heart of the Buddha*. Austin, Tex.: Emerald Book Company, 2010. 240 pp. ISBN 978-1-934572-30-6, \$14.95 (pb).

Sze's title refers not only to the seed of an Indian bean, but also to the heart of the Buddha as a place of enlightenment, as American librarian Marian Souza learns soon after traveling to Bhutan to work in the public library. She becomes involved with a monk, Lopen Pema, who struggles to work out the tension between his calling and his feelings toward Marian. As one last gesture of responsibility to his vocation, Lopen Pema sets off to retrieve ancient texts and bring them back to his monastery—a dangerous task. Little do Marian and Lopen Pema realize, but they are under suspicion from another monk, which forces Marian to go into hiding.

Ruth, Marian's twin, sets out to find her sister, fearing something terrible has happened. She is finally able to connect with her sister after many twists and turns and soon discovers their lives are

going to be vastly different from each other.

This novel shares information about the spiritual journey of a monk without being prescriptive. Sze allows the reader to experience another culture and lifestyle through Marian's life and expertly captures the humanity of the characters as they struggle with difficult personal and spiritual choices.

Brenda Yates Habich  
Ball State Univ.

#### 19-1-0023

Waberi, Abdourahman A. *In the United States of Africa*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2009. 134 pp. Trans. from French by David and Nicole Ball. Foreword by Percival Everett. Series: French Voices. ISBN 978-0-8032-1391-3, \$45.00 (cl); 978-0-8032-2262-5, \$19.95 (pb).

*In the United States of Africa* is a political and social satire of the twenty-first century. The author, from East Africa, places Africa at the center of world development, embracing immigrants from all other continents. The narrator describes a “thoroughly revised world” (49) with Asmara, Eritrea, as the capital of the continent.

The novel is saturated with irony as it turns familiar places, situations, politicians, academics, and brand names upside down. Allusions abound, and the reversals are often hilarious if one catches them. The topics are quite specialized, though, so the audience for the book is limited.

At the same time, stunning writing frequently urges one to re-read passages and savor the flow of the language. I find this trait typical of French writers, and Waberi does not disappoint; he creates a magical atmosphere and the translators have captured his essence well.

Unfortunately, the cascade of mellifluous phrases, topical allusions, and gems of wisdom are often confusing. Ideas can become lost in piles of clever words and often-fantastical images while a narrative thread is difficult to find amidst innumerable digressions. Even the section and chapter headings are unclear.

Eventually, a character emerges—a woman named Malaika, called Maya—who is an artist, allowing the book to include excellent insights about the artistic process. Then a minor character appears, a photographer named Adama, who is occasionally her boyfriend. A story never really develops, thus leaving the reader frustrated. Despite its exciting premise and its virtues, the novel is difficult and puzzling.

Anne Serafin  
Newtonville, Mass.

#### 19-1-0024

Wicomb, Zoë. *The One That Got Away: Short Stories*. New York: The New Press, 2009. 190 pp. ISBN 978-1-59558-457-1, \$24.95.

Wicomb has done it again. Her first book, *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town* (1987), a collection of linked stories, captured life in a “coloured” township in South Africa. Her first novel, *David's*

*Story* (2001), is dense and difficult, but more recently, *Playing in the Light* (2007) is an excellent and highly readable rendering of the complexities of the post-apartheid world.

Wicomb has returned to the short story genre with *The One That Got Away*, focusing primarily on South Africans of color who have emigrated to Scotland (Wicomb herself lives and teaches in Glasgow). The stories weave together events and reflections from the two countries and alternate between interiors and exteriors—of both people and places. Topics also range widely, but Wicomb's strength is the delicate interactions between humans, whether husbands and wives, madams and maids, mothers and daughters, or even sons. She shows that small details—especially gestures and verbal hints—can be telling, stunning, or even devastating.

The stories are mainly psychological studies and may seem obscure as they unfold. Wicomb has such an eye for telling details that they mount gradually to create a cohesive tale. Many of the stories end powerfully, presenting a sudden revelation. The quiet power of her writing is leavened with playful, humorous, and ironic comments, including reflections on the writing process and an oblique intertextual reference to her first set of stories! Wicomb has limned the trajectory of life for many residents of Cape Town during the past 50 years, and her books are always worth reading.

Anne Serafin  
Newtonville, Mass.

## Poetry

### 19-1-0025

Ali, Kazim. *Bright Felon: Autobiography and Cities*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 2009. 110 pp. ISBN 978-0-8195-6916-5, \$22.95.

Breytenbach, Breyten. *Voice Over: A Nomadic Conversation with Mahmoud Darwish*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Archipelago Books, 2009. 48 pp. ISBN 978-0-9819557-5-9, \$9.00 (pb).

Darwish, Mahmoud. *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*. Northampton, Mass.: Interlink, 2009. 128 pp. Trans. from Arabic by Mohammed Shaheen. ISBN 978-1-56656-755-8, \$25.00.

*Almond Blossoms and Beyond* comprises many of the last poems of the internationally acclaimed Mahmoud Darwish, who died last year, and, as a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization's executive committee, wrote the Palestinian people's declaration of independence. Celebratory contemplations on the passage of time, the changing of seasons, weddings, funerals, and nature in the earlier sections employ a charming, conversational voice that floats on the surface of layered meanings. The meditations on exile in the later sections are philosophical journeys that reflect an even greater sensitivity to the immanence of death and recount conversations either with himself or an imagined other. The book concludes with a reflection on duality and identity—an elegy for Palestinian-American cultural theorist, Edward Said, who died in 2003.

*Voice Over*, subtitled “a nomadic conversation with Mahmoud Darwish,” is an elegy for Darwish by South African writer, visual artist, and human rights activist, Breytenbach, who, having committed the crime of marrying a Vietnamese woman under apartheid, lives in exile as a French citizen. Breytenbach wrote this 12-poem cycle during his travels from Goree Island to Catalonia to Friesland after learning of Darwish's death. Using imagery from his journey through the landscapes of West Africa, northeastern Spain, and Bavaria to evoke an internal language-scape, the work is conceived as a dialogue between two friends, Afrikaaner and Palestinian, who understand well the experience of exile imposed by state sanctions against acknowledging the humanity of certain “othered” humans. Infused with vivid, sensuous imagery and metaphors that elicit an intensely visceral response, these poems are deeply personal, passionate, political, and intimate expressions of grief that capture a sense of the profound and far-reaching impact of Darwish's life and work.

In *Bright Felon*, Asian-American writer Kazim Ali, whose essays on Darwish have been published in literary reviews, reads Darwish's account of the 1982 destruction of Beirut as the United States bombs Baghdad. But this is not an elegy for Darwish; it is an autobiographical meditation on another kind of exile—a state of suspension between love and faith. As in Fae Myenne Ng's novel, *Bone*, revelation moves forward as the narrative moves backward through time. Ali's poems travel back through 14 cities, constructing an identity through events of his life as experienced, contemplated, and articulated. In New York, Ali mourns the destruction of Baghdad and Beirut (again), as well as the World Trade Center in Manhattan. Throughout a journey that takes him to cities in Africa and Europe as well as America, Ali also mourns the end of an early relationship—a love that exiled him from a faith that is an integral part of his identity and suffuses his work with spiritual and religious undercurrent.

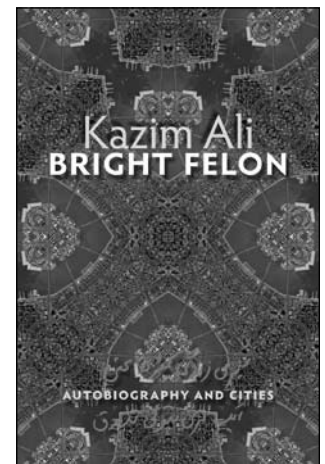
Darwish, writing on exile, writes an elegy for Edward Said. Breytenbach, writing an elegy for Darwish, journeys from Africa into Europe. Ali, journeying backwards through autobiography, writes an elegy for lost love and unrequited faith—another kind of exile. All eloquently claim a common humanity and a notion of language as home.

Lori Tsang  
Washington, D.C.

### 19-1-0026

Ayala, Naomi. *This Side of Early*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press/Curbstone Press, 2009. 68 pp. ISBN 978-1-931896-46-7, \$13.95 (pb).

With her second poetry book Ayala establishes herself as an-



other important voice in the ever-growing community of Latino writers in the United States. Divided in three parts, *This Side of Early* looks at the simplest of things and weaves them into a personal narrative in which we learn about a grandfather who could not write or we stand behind a man buying cupcakes and notice the sweat-drenched bills he pulls out of his pocket.

There is a directness and purity in the way Ayala shapes each of the poems in this collection. In her "Summer Solstice," which starts with the early arrival of autumn, she combines the description of a dying daylight in the mountain with the memory of her mother's kitchen and urban howls—dissimilar ideas which somehow find a balance thanks to Ayala's command of the language and the facility with which she can paint with words.

Bessy Reyna  
Latin Arte News, Hartford, Conn.

#### 19-1-0027

Darwish, Mahmoud. *Mural*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Verso, 2009. 70 pp. Trans. from Arabic by Rema Hammami and John Berger. ISBN 978-1-84467-410-7, \$19.95.

*Mural* is yet another of the English-language translations of works by Darwish, who was considered the national poet of Palestine, that have been emerging since he died on August 9, 2008. The book comprises two poems translated from classical Arabic into English by his friends, English art critic, writer, and artist John Berger and Palestinian-American anthropologist Rema Hammami, who immersed themselves in this project for several months after his death. The first poem, "Mural," is an epic contemplation of the author's life and work, in which he confronts Death shortly after surviving life-threatening surgery in 1998. The other poem, "The Dice Player," is Darwish's last poem, which he read in Ramallah a month before he died.

The volume includes artwork done by Berger during the days following the news of Darwish's death, in which lines of drawings and paintings become intertwined with text from the poems. The poems are prefaced with an essay, also created by Berger, who contemplates the Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip while visiting Darwish's grave at Al Rabweh. This introduction provides an incisively more political contextualization of the poems, which are allegorical, lyrical, and personal reflections on poetry, chance, identity, life, and mortality.

Lori Tsang  
Washington, D.C.

#### 19-1-0028

Gimenez Smith, Carmen. *Odalisque in Pieces*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2009. 80 pp. ISBN 978-0-8165-2788-5, \$15.95 (pb).

Everything we need to know about this small collection of poetry can be deduced from the title: "odalisque" comes from the Turkish word meaning a female slave or concubine in a harem. The words "in pieces" foretell the fragmented, broken quality of

the narrator, an unhappy woman, an object and possession of men, neglected and abandoned or prized only for her beauty and sex.

The titles of several pieces are provocative, but not all the poems deliver on that promise. Successful themes include the longing for a lost love, nostalgia for a childhood home in the wasteland of the Bronx, angry memories of a drunken father, both pride and shame in her Latina heritage as one of "those people," and the meaning of language itself. Feminism constitutes a major part of the work, revealing the poet's anger at male domination and her joy in pregnancy and motherhood, as she delights in her femaleness.

Sadly, several of the poems are original but opaque, emitting more heat than light. Lines like "A moth is a tight swallow" and "screen door, mothball, citronella, poison, acrimony, newspaper" did not really speak to me. The author teaches creative writing, and many of the works sound like exercises submitted in that type of course, where obscure images are prized and rewarded. If, however, you enjoy avant-garde, stream-of-consciousness writing, you will probably find this volume worthwhile reading.

Roberta Gordenstein  
Elms College, Chicopee, Mass.

#### 19-1-0029

Miller, E. Ethelbert. *The 5th Inning*. Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2009. 170 pp. Published in collaboration with Busboys & Poets. ISBN 978-1-60486-062-7, \$18.95.

Miller's poetic memoir traverses so many subjects, emotions, and situations that swallowing it whole is almost the only way to take it. Using the metaphor of the fifth inning—a point in baseball when the game is more than halfway through, but certainly not over yet—Miller, a poet, "literary activist," and the author of a prior substantial memoir titled *Fathering Words*, explores his middle-age years and the accompanying baggage: divorce, grown children, dead family members and friends, former homes, a significant writing career, and of course his love of baseball.

Written at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, *The 5th Inning* employs an ephemeral style that jumps regularly between first-person and second-person storytelling, often using rhetorical questions to lead the reader along. The book, whose narrative is just over 160 pages, is arranged into twenty-four vignette-like chapters, and within each chapter Miller explores numerous topics, darting around in a game of literary connect-the-dots.

*The 5th Inning* is a skillfully written and complex work, but it is not for all readers. Its mature subject matter includes discussions of loss and regret, and Miller often tells the story through allusions to past cultural icons that may not be identifiable for everyone.

Foster Dickson  
Booker T. Washington Magnet H.S., Montgomery, Ala.

## Criticism

**19-1-0030**

Brill de Ramirez, Susan Berry; Lucero, Evelina Zuni; and Simon J. Ortiz, eds. *A Poetic Legacy of Indigenous Continuance*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2009. 440 pp. ISBN 978-0-8263-3988-1, \$27.95 (pb).

Simon Ortiz, Acoma Pueblo poet, is one of the most important living indigenous writers. His splendid writing has set a standard for understanding American Indian issues: land, language, and community. This new collection of critical essays, edited by Brill de Ramirez and Lucero (Isleta/Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo), is an important contribution to critical conversations about Ortiz's significance. The book publication complements an issue of *Studies in American Indian Literatures* (Winter 2004) devoted to Ortiz and repeats some of the articles included there.

The volume is divided into an introduction with three selections by Lucero and Brill de Ramirez, and three separate sections: Essays by and Interviews with Ortiz; Short Creative Nonfiction Essays by Native Women Writers and Scholars; and Critical Essays. The authors of these works include prominent Native voices such as Leslie Marmon Silko, Joy Harjo, Laura Tohe, Kimberley Blaeser, Geary Hobson, and Gwen Westerman, and emerging scholars such as Debbie Reese and Elizabeth Archuleta. The thoughtful epilogue is by Robert Warrior.

The scope of the writings includes Ortiz's language, poetry, essays, and non-fiction—and his humanity. Most important is Ortiz's own voice. This edition is essential for anyone studying the works of Simon Ortiz.

P. Jane Hafen  
Univ. of Nevada—Las Vegas

**19-1-0031**

Harris, Trudier. *The Scary Mason-Dixon Line: African American Writers and the South*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2009. 248 pp. ISBN 978-0-8071-3395-8, \$37.50.

Preeminent scholar of African-American culture and literature, Harris makes the complex argument that while you may take the African-American writer out of the South, you cannot take the South out of the African-American writer. This is not a simplistic maxim but a critical adage. Harris considers an extensive range of twentieth-century African-American writers and demonstrates, with mesmerizing consistency, the presence of not only geographical references but also the imagery of the American South as it might have been experienced by those who actually lived through the days of enslavement and Jim Crow in works written by those who did not.

In response to Langston Hughes's famous words, Harris argues in the introduction that race is not the mountain that African-American writers must climb in order to become "free within themselves" (13). Rather, it is "The South" that is the mountain, and that "[c]omplete identity as an African American Writer seems to come only after a confrontation with black history and American history as represented by and in the South" (16). The chapters that follow are, as one would expect, insightful and rivet-

ing reading. This is a must read for all teachers of multicultural American literatures.

Leslie Antonette  
East Stroudsburg Univ. of Pennsylvania

## Visual and Performing Arts

**19-1-0032**

Chana, Leonard F; Lobo, Susan; and Chana, Barbara. *The Sweet Smell of Home: The Life and Art of Leonard F. Chana*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2009. 176 pp. Illus. by Leonard F. Chana. ISBN 978-0-8165-2818-9, \$40.00 (cl); 978-0-8165-2819-6, \$21.95 (pb).

Thom, Ian M. *Challenging Traditions: Contemporary First Nations Art of the Northwest Coast*. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2009. 176 pp. Illus. ISBN 978-0-295-98919-8, \$65.00.

These two new and delightful books on Native American/First Nations (from the United States and Canada) artists and the art they create are sure to change and challenge your perceptions of what their art is and where it is going.

*Challenging Traditions: Contemporary First Nations Art of the Northwest Coast* is a beautiful collection of essays about 40 of the most accomplished Northwest Coast artists (men and women) working today. Thom, a senior curator at the Vancouver Art Gallery, interviewed all the artists portrayed in the book and discusses their history, artistic background, career, and mentors, who they have worked with, and how they create their art. The book is filled with color images of at least two pieces of art per artist, which range in medium from masks to woven spruce root hats to abstract painting to metal sculpture to drums and bentwood boxes. What is clearly evident in all the portraits is that these artists are melding traditional ideas and images with contemporary materials, ideas, and techniques. They are creating something new, something not seen before, and creating some incredibly beautiful and moving pieces of art in the process.

The second book, *The Sweet Smell of Home: The Life and Art of Leonard F. Chana* is an autobiography about the self-taught Tohono O'odham artist. Told through oral interviews of Chana to anthropologist Susan Lobo before his death, we learn about Chana and his art from his very unique point of view. We read about his life and growing up on the reservation in Arizona, attending the Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school, his personal struggles with alcoholism, his family and friends, his artistic influences, and how he became an artist known for his stippling (pen and ink drawings that use dots instead of lines) drawings and paintings of the O'odham and Sonoran Desert lifestyle. A very modest man, Chana discusses the background of different pieces of art, how he created them, and how they are filled with traditional Tohono

O'odham imagery as well as "messages of healing, recovery, and hope" (xii). While Chana never had a formal show of his art—he was too busy selling it—his art was seen by countless people via the posters he created for many institutions, like the Community Health Department of the Tohono O'odham Nation and The International Indian Treaty Council. The book is filled with black-and-white and color photographs of Chana's remarkable art on posters, canvas, pottery, and even a gourd rattle.

These two excellent books are a welcome addition to any library collection of Native American/First Nations artists and their art and are also a welcome addition to collections that focus on contemporary Canadian and American culture. Highly recommended.

Melissa Aho  
Univ. of Minnesota

### 19-1-0033

Collins, John. *Fela: Kalakuta Notes*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: KIT Publishers, 2009. 160 pp. Illus. with photos by Jak Kilby, Rico D'Rozario, and Thierry Secretan. ISBN 978-906-832748-9, \$29.95 (pb).

*Fela: Kalakuta Notes* contends that Fela Kuti was both the originator of the particularly unique West African music—Afrobeat—and separately, as opposed to other famous protest singers of the twentieth century, was more forward in his attacks, singling out specific government figures and agencies in open confrontation in his music and in his life. The many recollections from friends and fellow musicians within the West African scene, as well as the author's own recollections, support the legend of a rabble-rousing, offensive Fela Kuti.

Fela's lyrics, which are included throughout the book, stand for themselves as direct thrashings against the establishment in his own country, Nigeria, as well as elsewhere in Africa. Stories of Fela's promiscuity, the ease with which he and his crowd resorted to blows, and his general disregard for assumed standards of behavior represent to the author a living refusal of colonialism and European social mores.

While Collins's work adds to the legend of Fela, the sheer absence of editing and the author's coarse writing, poorly supported arguments, and seeming self-promotion are hard to overlook. The fantastic stories of Fela's life and the one independent musical analysis of the uniqueness of Fela's music are this work's saving graces.

Daniel Kamienski  
Old Dominion Univ.

### 19-1-0034

Fox, John Hartley. *King of the Queen City: The Story of King Records*. Champaign: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2009. 280 pp. Series: Music in American Life. ISBN 978-0-252-03468-8, \$29.95.

King Records was a small independent record company based in

Cincinnati, Ohio, which housed a mélange of impressive talent from the mid-1940s through the late 1960s, when it was acquired by Starday Records. What makes King a standout operation and well worth its place in popular American music history is its interracial list of artists, ranging from White country/bluegrass performers such as the Stanley Brothers and Grandpa Jones to great Black artists such as James Brown, Redd Foxx, and Johnny "Guitar" Watson.

Fox is the authority on this label, having produced an NPR documentary on it in the 1980s, and he provides just enough detail to keep the reader's interest without bogging him down. Some good black-and-white photos accompany the text, along with a useful secondary bibliography, but a discography of even limited length would have greatly enhanced the overall work. A fine acquisition for any collection interested in a comprehensive history of popular music in the United States.

Anthony J. Adam  
Prairie View A&M Univ.

### 19-1-0035

Ragland, Cathy. *Música Norteña: Mexican Migrants Creating a Nation Between Nations*. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 2009. 256 pp. ISBN 978-1-59213-747-3, \$27.95.

Ragland looks to define Norteña as *the* authentic music of Mexican migrants throughout a Mexican diaspora. To support her thesis, she traces the history of the northern Mexican musical tradition to its present-day inception and establishes the *corrido*, or a sung narrative ballad, as its definitive aspect. Building on others' analysis of the *corrido*, Ragland demonstrates the relationship between the historical and modern incarnations mostly through lyrical form and content focusing on the borderland, migration, and celebrated banditry.

Émigrés' experiences from the nineteenth century through the Bracero program as well as the historically exalted exploits of revolutionaries and border-raiders like Pancho Villa are compared to discussions of modern immigrants and drug-traffickers. Ragland establishes further its relation to migration within a Mexican diaspora by differentiating Norteña from a more Americanized *música tejana*. The music of *Tejanos*, or assimilated Texas Americans of Mexican descent, is to the author less traditional in its arrangement and instrumentation, and lacks a uniquely Mexican political consciousness. While the historical aspects of her work beg for more extensive referencing, her musical analysis and association of the *corrido* with Norteña are clear and concise and represent an informative look at a music underrepresented in the literature.

Daniel Kamienski  
Old Dominion Univ.

*Biography/Autobiography*

**19-1-0036**

Aulino, Charles M. *Lesser-Known Giants of the 20th Century*. n.l.: BookSurge, 2009. 450 pp. ISBN 978-1-4392-2548-6, \$19.99 (pb).

Focusing on America's diversity, this collection of biographical essays encompasses the lives, life lessons, achievements, inspiration, and impacts of 11 prominent Americans. Their backgrounds include two women (Margaret Chase Smith, senator; Katharine Graham, publisher); two African Americans (Joe Louis, boxer; Medgar Evers, civil rights leader); two Jewish Americans (Moe Berg, baseball player and American spy during WWII; Paul Winchell, speech impaired and polio handicapped, ventriloquist and inventor of an artificial heart); one Palestinian Arab (Edward Said, Columbia University professor and author); one Polish American (Ignacius J. Paderewski, composer and politician); one Italian American (Amadeo P. Giannini, banker and founder of Bank of America); one Scottish American (Branch Rickey, baseball manager, civil rights fighter); and one German American (Max Schmeling, boxer).

Balanced and amply footnoted essays, backed up by suitable bibliographies, offer a pleasant reading. Aulino, a successful New Jersey lawyer, sprinkles the essays with interesting and juicy details of the lives of the biographees, reflecting his belief that these are "stories that amaze."

Vladimir F. Wertsman  
New York Public Library

**19-1-0037**

Dickinson, Patti. *Coach Tommy Thompson and the Boys of Sequoyah*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2009. 256 pp. Foreword by Chadwick Smith. ISBN 978-0-8061-4070-4, \$19.95 (pb).

Ziontz, Alvin J. *A Lawyer in Indian Country: A Memoir*. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2009. 328 pp. Foreword by Charles Wilkinson. ISBN 978-0-295-98935-8, \$27.95.

Many people will recognize the names of famous Native Americans such as athletes Jim Thorpe and, more recently, Charlie Bradford, and others active in Native politics and law such as Charles Eastman and Wilma Mankiller. However, there are many other notable figures in Native American affairs who are less well known and whose lives and accomplishments are worthy of note. Two new books explore the lives of two of these lesser-known figures.

The first is *Coach Tommy Thompson and the Boys of Sequoyah*. Thompson was an Oklahoma Cherokee sent by his father to the Cherokee Orphan Training School (later the Sequoyah Indian School), where he excelled at sports, eventually becoming a college football star. Thompson returned to Sequoyah as a coach, where he inspired hundreds of boys to great achievements.

Drawing from personal interviews with Thompson's family and others who knew him plus Thompson's school and employment records, Dickinson creates a portrait of a man with a great talent and a big heart, but also with flaws and failings, including his struggles with alcohol. As would be expected in the biography of an athlete and coach, many of the events highlighted are important games;

Dickinson, however, also takes pains to depict Thompson's family life and his interactions with individual students.

Some may quibble with the inclusion of imagined accounts of certain real-life incidents, but Dickinson integrates these vignettes smoothly into the story as a whole, and they add interest and may appeal to reluctant readers.

The second memoir could hardly be more different from the story of Coach Tommy Thompson. *A Lawyer in Indian Country* is an autobiography of the author, a Jewish lawyer from Chicago. Despite his non-Native roots, Ziontz has had a great impact on Native American law. Ziontz relates that his first encounter with Indian legal matters was almost accidental and did not have a successful outcome. This case did, however, lead him into the confused and difficult field of Native American law. He tells of his cases in Washington, Montana, and Wyoming, in which he fought legal battles over Native land and resource management. He intersperses these accounts of important trials with personal stories of his other interests, including photography and a stint teaching law at the University of Iowa and at Durham College in England.

*A Lawyer in Indian Country* is a lively and interesting memoir which introduces the reader to the complexities of Native American law.

Both of these books are illustrated with black-and-white photographs, and both are recommended: *Coach Tommy Thompson and the Boys of Sequoyah* for general collections, particularly those that serve Native populations, and *A Lawyer in Indian Country* for academic and larger public libraries.

Andy J. Deering  
Central Wyoming College

**19-1-0038**

Finn, Maria. *Hold Me Tight & Tango Me Home: A Cheek-to-Cheek Adventure*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2010. 240 pp. ISBN 978-1-56512-517-9, \$13.95 (pb).

Finn discovers the Argentine tango not long after she discovers the romantic e-mails another woman sent to her husband. Looking out at a group of dancers in Central Park, the newly self-conscious and self-doubting Finn wonders, "How could they do this? In public no less." It isn't long before she finds herself joining them in dance *practicass* and *milongas* (social dances), growing addicted to the bliss of those rare moments when she too can give herself over completely to the dance. The Argentine tango, she finds, "revels in the drama of suffering," and her embrace of the drama carries her from New York City to Buenos Aires and back again. It also carries her from heartbreak back to romance.

Finn's disjointed personal narrative of healing is sprinkled with curious tidbits of information regarding such diverse topics as the history of the tango, the intricacies of dance steps (and missteps), and the science of sexual attraction. The overarching metaphor of tango as an exercise in submission and trust is what holds the memoir together. "Surrender is what a follower learns in Tango," Finn notes, reflecting on the irony of a feminist finding wholeness through learning to follow the lead of a male partner. Dance,

in this memoir, is a form of social connection, but also a form of meditation, of “resigning yourself to what is, accepting the present situation, and then moving on.”

Shealeen Meaney  
Russell Sage College, Troy, N.Y.

#### 19-1-0039

Haywood, Chelsea. *90-Day Geisha: My Time as a Tokyo Hostess*. New York: Pegasus Books, 2009. 320 pp. ISBN 978-1-60598-071-3, \$25.00.

Fashion model Chelsea Haywood brings the reader into the glamour and grit of Tokyo hostess clubs where attractive English-speaking women are paid to be social companions of wealthy Japanese men. We learn that the objective of these high status clubs is not prostitution but conversation, drinking, and karaoke. The clubs provide the illusion of a relationship for overworked businessmen. Success as a hostess is measured in popularity: those receiving the most customer requests and *dohans* (dinner dates) claim the greatest earnings. Additionally, the job has its perks as clients offer their favorite hostesses lavish trips, gifts, and shopping sprees.

Although an interesting personal account from the inside world of the hostess, the book lacks substantive critical and contextual analysis of the troubling issues she encounters. With one client she snorts cocaine, while the unsettling behavior of another has her wondering if he is responsible for the murder of a hostess who came before her. There is a brief critique of child exploitation, but it seems out of place with the rest of the book. The language is also not for the faint of heart where, by capturing the voice of those she meets, sexual undertones and curse words are abundant.

Michelle Napierski-Prancl  
Russell Sage College, Troy, N.Y.

#### 19-1-0040

Husseini, Rana. *Murder in the Name of Honor*. New York: One-world Publications, 2009. 256 pp. ISBN 978-1-85168-597-4, \$24.95.

What Husseini has done and continues to do in order to save the lives of innocent women who may be murdered by their families in so-called honor killings is truly commendable. *Murder in the Name of Honor* brings attention to the disturbing crimes that occur against women and the outrageous laws in some Middle Eastern countries that permit men who kill their female relatives to be dealt with leniently.

The problem is this. Since few books provide opposite realities—of say, strong and positive women role models—the book reinforces the West’s perception that most Arab women are abused and oppressed. Such stereotypes are dangerous. The collective thoughts of the world viewing one population as weak will assist in that population’s regression and sense of victimization.

Husseini’s account serves a strong purpose, but I couldn’t help wonder when stories of women I know will be told. For instance, recently in Iraq, a Muslim woman moved in with her lifelong Christian boyfriend, and they now have a child out of wedlock. She is not hiding from anyone. Actually, she is flaunting her happiness by taking pictures of her new family and submitting them to friends and family.

Weam Namou  
President, Iraqi Artists Association

#### 19-1-0041

Leonin, Mia. *Havana and Other Missing Fathers*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2009. 192 pp. ISBN 978-0-8165-2815-8, \$16.95 (pb).

This book is a poetic journey, a journal account of the life that happened to the author in her quest to find her elusive and almost mythical father. It is touching, inspiring, surprising, and universal in scope. The fact that the father in question is Cuban, and that the author’s quest takes her on a multicultural journey to Miami, Colombia, and Cuba, is not the point of the story, but rather its geographical happenstance. In this sense, this memoir, much to its credit, transcends the local and cultural and, by this very fact, manages to elevate it and to render the borderland culture of “exile” in striking bas-relief.

Leonin lived the first 16 years of her life believing that her father, whom she had never met, was dead. Her mother had woven tales about him—contradictory fairy-tale stories of a man she had recreated in her imagination. Sometimes, this man—this father—was a psychiatrist. Other times, he was a gifted surgeon. But in any case, he was dead and buried and *desaparecido* (disappeared) from this planet. So, when the author discovers that her father is actually very much alive and living in Miami, in that in-between twilight identity known as a “Cuban exile,” she begins her quest to find him and establish a relationship with him. What happens in the process is her own self-discovery through some dark passages that include an interlude in Castro’s Havana, where she comes face-to-face with hunger, humiliation, unbearable sexism, and even persecution.

This is a book worth finding and a life worth journeying with.

Himilce Novas  
<http://supernovas.org>

#### 19-1-0042

López, Lorraine, ed. *An Angle of Vision: Women Writers on Their Poor and Working-Class Roots*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2009. 198 pp. ISBN 978-0-472-07078-7, \$60.00 (cl); 978-0-472-05078-9, \$22.95 (pb).

Dwonna Goldstone’s father confronts the school principal about her schedule and demands that she be put in college track courses because his daughter will be going to college. An eight-year-old

Angelia Threatt decides there is nothing worth purchasing with the \$8 her family gives her to spend on her birthday and heads home, but then tragically loses the cash somewhere along the way. The life story of Amelia Maria De La Luz Montes's mother is so sad that she once appeared on the television show "Queen for a Day," and Teresa De La Caridad Doval's mother wishes her daughter would write about something other than her poor childhood.

These and other poignant stories of poverty from the lives of a culturally diverse group of women authors are found in Lopez's collection. The most compelling essays are those that describe a writer's journey through childhood and adolescence, while surprisingly, essays that focus on what motivated a specific work do not deliver the same level of inspiration. Individual essays may provide valuable context for those reading an author's poem, novel, or other piece of work. The audience for this book may also include students and struggling writers working to surmount the obstacles of poverty.

Michelle Napierski-Prancl  
Russell Sage College, Troy, N.Y.

#### 19-1-0043

Mokeddem, Malika. *My Men*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2009. 192 pp. Trans. from French by Laura Rice and Karim Hamdy. ISBN 978-0-8032-3262-4, \$50.00 (cl); 978-0-8032-8317-6, \$24.95 (pb).

Mokeddem, an Algerian immigrant who has lived most of her life in France, tells of her loves and hardships with the men who have left their mark on her identity. Mokeddem endured discrimination as a child, where the family, particularly her father, poured all their love, support, and affection onto the boys. Yet she did not submit to the belief that she is less worthy than the opposite sex. She lived a brave and independent life. She excelled in school and became a doctor. She permitted herself the freedom to love and marry whom she wanted, to live where she chose to, and to openly discuss her sexuality in her memoir.

Despite the struggles she faced as a woman, despite the disappointments she experienced with her un-accepting father and some of her failed relationships, the bottom line in *My Men* is that Mokeddem was never a victim—not a common theme in most books about Arab women.

Weam Namou  
President, Iraqi Artists Association

#### 19-1-0044

Trenka, Jane Jeong. *Fugitive Visions: An Adoptee's Return to Korea*. St. Paul, Minn.: Graywolf Press, 2009. 192 pp. ISBN 978-1-55597-529-6, \$16.00 (pb).

Trenka was a Korean child raised by White stepparents in rural Minnesota, married to and divorced from a White adoptee, eventually making extensive contact with her birth family, deal-

ing with an alcoholic boyfriend (also an adoptee), and now living in Korea. Though some writers have celebrated the experience of being bicultural, Trenka's book comes close to being a recital of unending misery. Subject to racism in Minnesota, scorned by Koreans for ignorance of their language and customs, frustrated by a bad marriage, Trenka struggles for acceptance in Korea and finds some joys there ("Korea has taught me how to be quiet and alone....I love Korea even though she didn't love me"), though a scene in a bathhouse in which she envies the all-Korean bonding of mothers and daughters doesn't bode well for a contented future. Her marriage is a vivid portrayal of a failed attempt at combining cultures (and it doesn't help that all her Asian-American acquaintances criticize her for marrying a White man): "I forced my husband to shove his body into the traditional Korean wedding clothes my sister had sent, and like all tourists, he looked misplaced and awkward in them....So that is how we entered into our marriage: in a way that felt slightly fraudulent."

The story is told not in chronological order but rather in fleeting, recurring glimpses structured around the movements of Sergei Prokofiev's piano suite *Visions Fugitives*. (Trenka was trained in classical piano, though another of her frustrations is her inability to play to her satisfaction.) The text is sometimes broken up by lists, such as of Korean word definitions or ironic questionnaires. Trenka's writing is often powerful, though its bitterness can be exhausting to read.

Joseph Milicia  
Univ. of Wisconsin-Sheboygan

#### 19-1-0045

Williams, Serena, with Daniel Paisner. *On the Line*. New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2009. 258 pp. ISBN 978-0-446-55366-7, \$26.99.

Contemporary biographies of sports figures can pose many literary challenges. The subject's body of work is ongoing, and they may still be at the beginning, or in the middle of their athletic career. Additionally, a person who is not yet 30 years of age is still evolving personally and professionally. Serena Williams's effort *On the Line* is not only a biography, but it is a book interspersed with motivational messages, a chronology of events, journal entries, and anecdotal musings.

Many sports and tennis fans are familiar with the story of Serena and Venus Williams as children under the tutelage of their father Richard and their sojourn from the public tennis courts of Compton, California, to international tennis fame and fortune. This book also speaks to the general reader and the casual sport enthusiast. Uniquely, we now have access to Serena's first-person accounts, thoughts, and opinions to supplement the story.

In stark contrast to her on-the-court demeanor, focus, and tenacity, Serena speaks about her childhood, family ties with four other sisters, and her experiences as the youngest sibling. She also offers a brief account of her parents' divorce, her life as a Jehovah's Witness, and an emotional retelling of the homicide of her eldest sister Tunde.

Younger readers will find the story inspirational, while older audiences, general readers, and tennis fans may want more personal,

emotional, or in-depth information. Recommended for school and public libraries.

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

## History

### 19-1-0046

Bean, Jonathan, ed. *Race and Liberty in America: The Essential Reader*. Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2009. 360 pp. Co-published with the Independent Institute. ISBN 978-0-8131-2545-9, \$50.00 (cl); 978-0-8131-9231-4, \$24.95 (pb).

Sitiki; Griffin, Patricia C., ed. *The Odyssey of an African Slave*. Gainesville: Univ. Press of Florida, 2009. 224 pp. ISBN 978-0-8130-3391-4, \$24.95.

What is it that these two diametrically and thematically conflicting literary endeavors have in common? Essentially very little, and that is evident in the false connection one reads into the books' titles—America's perennial struggle with the shadow of slavery, liberty/freedom for all, and the race debate. Fortunately, it is Griffin's book that best epitomizes this ongoing American struggle, while the Bean book parades itself as a must read in deciphering the true Classical Liberal (defender of individual rights), but in actuality is a litany of rhetoric from a far right of center Conservative Republicanism.

*Race and Liberty in America* masks its hardcore conservatism in an array of documents that are articulations of some of America's true freedom fighters for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all Americans. These include Frederick Douglass, David Walker, William Wilberforce, Moorefield Story, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Zora Neale Hurston. But their words are interpreted out of context to give support to what the editor and The Independent Institute (co-publisher) define as the true "classical liberalism [as distinguished] from left-wing liberalism" (p. 2). The book is more subjective than objective in its so-called challenge to left-wing liberals, and comes off more as a statement of a political agenda on which to run future candidates.

In its "Introduction" the book uncloaks itself when the editor wrote: "Students live in a highly charged campus climate that presumes racism is everywhere and must be overcome by 'affirmative discrimination,' diversity studies, multiculturalism, harassment codes, and sensitivity training by 'race experts'" (p. 1). The statement completely detaches itself from the turbulent, genocidal, segregated Jim Crow history of the country's past in its destructive engagement of African Americans.

*The Odyssey of an African Slave*, unlike the Bean book, is a pleasantly engaging read, and as told by the ex-slave, Jack Smith (Sitiki) to his former owner, Buckingham Smith, is in every respect of the same vintage of slave narratives as those of Douglass and Sojourner Truth. Yet unlike some of those earlier narratives, Smith's

covers his enslavement and freedom in Florida under two governments, foreign and domestic—Spain and the United States—as well as recounts "being under four different slavery systems in six to eight locations..." (p. 2).

The core of *The Odyssey of an American Slave* is a story told by Sitiki as seen through his eyes during his adolescent and young adult years. It is a picturesque description of St. Augustine, Florida, as it existed during the Spanish occupation and later under the Americans. That picture of St. Augustine includes its defenses, its architecture, people, customs, and festivals. Jack Smith's life story was told and written down between 1869 and 1871. When he died in 1882, he had not only told the story of his life's journey but had also become an ordained Methodist minister—Father Jack Smith, a true example of the indomitable human spirit in face of that ongoing American struggle. His is the true Essential Reader.

A.J. Williams-Myers  
State Univ. of New York at New Paltz

### 19-1-0047

Bradley, Stefan M. *Harlem vs. Columbia University: Black Student Power in the Late 1960s*. Champaign: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2009. 272 pp. ISBN 978-0-252-03452-7, \$40.00.

The histories of American social movements in this country are broad and diverse in scope. The late 1960's had a number of seminal political events nationwide, in New York City, and in particular at Columbia University. *Harlem vs. Columbia University* seeks to encapsulate a point in time where Black Power, civil rights, local politics, and the tenets of eminent domain intersect.

The 1968–1969 academic years at Columbia are reviewed in detail. Many campuses across the country were embroiled in anti-war protests, civil disobedience, and social change. However at Columbia this incendiary climate also included a property fight between the politically disenfranchised residents of Harlem and the university.

Campus activism was dominated by two disparate groups: Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and Students' Afro-American Society (SAS). The SDS fought to change the attitudes of the student body and challenge the structure of Columbia. Conversely, the SAS made an unusual ally through their support of the local community in their fight to halt a plan to construct a gym in a public park adjacent to the university.

The SAS attributed their struggle to militancy, the burgeoning Black Power conflicts emerging in the country, and Columbia's blatant attempts to marginalize and dominate a voiceless Black community. This is an important story, one well worth a critical review after 40 years. The author gives a fair account of the political and racial climate of the time, not only at Columbia, but also at other Ivy League colleges. Recommended for larger public and academic library collections as well as readers interested in the ideology of Black militancy, college radicalism, and the politics of eminent domain.

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

**19-1-0048**

Cesarani, David. *Major Farran's Hat*. Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 2009. 290 pp. ISBN 978-0-306-81845-5, \$26.00.

O'Donnell, Patrick K. *They Dared Return: The Untold Story of Jewish Spies Behind the Lines in Nazi Germany*. Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 2009. 256 pp. ISBN 978-0-306-81800-4, \$26.00.

In 1947 a 16-year-old Palestinian Jewish boy was kidnapped and murdered by a decorated British officer. Despite an oral and written confession to the crime, the officer was acquitted at trial. How and why this happened, and the implications for the Middle East then and now, are the subject of *Major Farran's Hat*, a highly recommended and fascinating book.

It is said that “one man’s freedom fighter is another’s terrorist,” and the author made me think about that. Cesarani regards the anti-British Irgun and Stern Gang, a few hundred Jews fighting British rule in Palestine between 1945 and 1947, as international terrorists. In a post-9/11 world, I would consider them urban guerrillas who attacked primarily military targets, acted in reprisal, and did not engage in deliberate killing of civilians.

The book also documents the pervasive anti-Semitism in Britain, reflected in government statements and newspaper editorials. Anti-Semitic rioting took place throughout Britain in 1947. People were warned about “foreigners who looked Jewish.” Strict limits and extra security were imposed on “Palestinians” (i.e., Jews) attempting to enter Britain, what we would now term ethnic profiling.

Unintentionally, the author describes a great example of identity theft. Until 1948, both the Jews and the British regarded Jews as Palestinians. The main Jewish newspaper was called the *Palestine Post*. Jewish passports identified them as Palestinians. How Arabs assumed the Palestinian identity is, however, not the subject of this book. This thought-provoking work made me reflect on how the names we call people create bias. Readers interested in British or Jewish history and crime will find this book very intriguing.

Another book about Jews who fought back is *They Dared Return*, a well-researched account about how the OSS (Office of Strategic Services), forerunner of the CIA, trained and parachuted refugee German Jews back into the Third Reich to gather intelligence. Unlike fantasy movies like *The Dirty Dozen* and *Inglorious Basterds*, *They Dared Return* deals with real secret agents who returned to their homeland.

This book is an eye-opener because it shows that Nazi-occupied Austria contained many anti-Nazis who risked their lives to help Allied agents, that the Americans made use of German defectors, and that German Jews made the most effective agents because of their motivation and mastery of the German language and culture. In fact, despite Nazi propaganda, German Jews were really Germans, and that fact enabled them to achieve incredible feats, including convincing SS, Gestapo, and Nazi party officials to surrender in April and May of 1945.

O'Donnell has written a marvelous story of an unknown chapter of World War Two and Jewish history. It is a wonderful tale of courage against tyranny. The book has extremely interesting primary sources that look at specific missions from both American and German perspectives.

What is particularly significant in comparing the two books is the role of language skills in what is now called asymmetrical warfare and counterinsurgency. British Special Forces in Palestine were unsuccessful because they did not speak Hebrew while American OSS teams were successful in Austria because they spoke German.

Both these books have important lessons for Iraq and Afghanistan.

Richard Sirvint  
West Hartford, Conn.

**19-1-0049**

Coe, Andrew. *Chop Suey: A Cultural History of Chinese Food in the United States*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009. 288 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-533107-3, \$24.95.

Purportedly about food, this book actually has more to do with the Chinese presence in America. It encompasses little-known (in the West) details about Chinese history, customs, beliefs, exploration of the world, and xenophobic feelings mixed with intense curiosity about the world outside China.

Beginning with a jaunty sea story about the first American ship to arrive on Chinese shores—in 1784—the narration proceeds through Chinese history with well-documented original source reports of first impressions of China from the provincial eye of tunnel-visioned Americans, including intimidating descriptions (from a Western point of view) of early (1700s–1800s) Western encounters with Chinese delicacies:

“Curious roots and queer looking vegetables from the land of pigtails” and “Culinary prejudices were so deep that even those few who supported Chinese rights could not stomach their food.”

The first half of the book consists of well-documented descriptions of Chinese terrain and climate and China’s relation to and influence on food throughout its history, detailed dynasty by dynasty, taking care to list the most fantastic foods in the most startlingly unappetizing terms.

To the author’s credit, he does offer the same well-documented writing to describe Chinese history from the classic Shan Hai Jing—fabulous tales of oddities in the far reaches of Chinese mythological past, more than 5,000 years ago. Chapters describe the explorations of Zhang Qian, the Silk Road, and Zheng Ho’s (1405–1433) travels with a fleet of 60 ships, each one larger than the *Queen Mary*. All through Chinese history, China has been the epitome of civilization while all other countries were the savage, barbaric frontier, valuable only to offer tribute to the Emperor in return for protection. A description of the Opium War (1840–1842) gives us some insight into the justification of China for her resentment and hatred of the West, being forced by superior military power into opening her ports and her lands to the invasion of foreign traffic and exploitation, euphemized as “trade.”

Halfway through the book, the Chinese return the favor and come to America, though without being given the civil reception described in the first chapter that the Chinese gave to the first American ship to enter Chinese waters. In fact, the Chinese in this country, from the beginning, along with their food and their culture, were treated with distaste. Then suddenly, with the broad-

er worldview after the Second World War, a few restaurant owners in New York City, Chicago, and San Francisco experimented with a decor and a menu more palatable to American tastes. With the visits of Nixon and Kissinger to China, Chinese food was given another chance to succeed in America.

Nearly 30 pages of notes and an extensive bibliography reveal that the author has indeed done some homework. However, his choice of material to quote and his own commentary reveal a condescending attitude toward Chinese culture and cuisine, perhaps meant to be funny but merely painful. A more condescending and derogatory description of Chinese culture and cuisine in 277 pages would be hard to imagine.

Gastronomic xenophobia is no prettier than any other kind.

Ginny Lee  
Syracuse, N.Y.

### 19-1-0050

Lapierre, Dominique. *A Rainbow in the Night: The Tumultuous Birth of South Africa*. Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 2009. 320 pp. ISBN 978-0-306-81847-9, \$26.00.

Lapierre has written a moving account of the struggle against the racist system of apartheid that existed in South Africa from 1949 to 1994, tracing its origins from seventeenth-century Dutch settlers who developed a vision of their racial superiority during centuries of conflict with British and indigenous Black populations.

The book provides a fine survey of South Africa's history, particularly useful for readers not familiar with the country. A specific strong point is the analysis of "Afrikaner" culture and religious views, and why these Whites repressed the majority non-White populations. Lapierre describes the evils of apartheid in horrible detail: forcible removal of three million non-Whites from their homes, laws against Blacks owning land, separation of men from their families, and prohibitions against Blacks having tea, sex, or social visits with Whites.

The most amazing part of the book is the story of Nelson Mandela, leader of the fight against apartheid, who spent 27 years in prison but never gave up his belief in democracy and equality. Despite what was done to him, he did not hate Whites.

The book's flaws are minor compared to what the reader will learn. It does not have the depth of Lapierre's older books, *Is Paris Burning?* and *O Jerusalem*. In addition, Lapierre admits to an annoying habit of inventing conversations he thinks people had. On the other hand, interesting photographs and very useful appendices add to the overall appeal of the work.

Richard Sirvint  
West Hartford, Conn.

### 19-1-0051

Tammeus, Bill, and Cukierkorn, Rabbi Jacques. *They Were Just People: Stories of Rescue in Poland During the Holocaust*. Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 2009. 236 pp. ISBN 978-0-8262-

1876-6, \$44.95 (cl); 978-0-8262-1860-5, \$24.95 (pb).

This volume, encompassing a collection of over 20 engrossing and moving stories based on ample interviews and thorough factual research, is a welcome addition to the literature on Righteous People and Holocaust survivors in various localities during the World War II Nazi occupation of Poland. The Gentile rescuers were teachers and students, a Catholic priest and nuns, farmers and factory workers, housewives and shopkeepers; their ages ranged from late teens to the eighties. The Jews (in some cases a group of family members, in other cases just one or a few individuals) were hidden in barns and in bunkers under barns, potato cellars, or in the woods. Some children were raised in Catholic convents and reclaimed their Jewishness after the war.

The common denominator among all the rescuers (25 were recognized as Righteous People by the Yad Vashem Authority) was that regardless of their subjective source of motivation (friendship, business, noble purpose, or even romance), all of them risked their lives in the belief that Jews, like Poles, are people "worthy of dignity and respect." As one of the rescuers explained: "There is no difference between people, under the skin we're all the same." The book includes maps, numerous photos, reference notes, a bibliography and general index, a readers' guide for debating how people make decisions under difficult circumstances, and information on The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (New York) and Yad Vashem (Israel). According to the 2008 statistics of Yad Vashem, Poland was recorded with 6,066 Righteous People.

Vladimir F. Wertsman  
New York Public Library

## Religion

### 19-1-0052

Leloup, Jean-Yves. *Compassion and Meditation: The Spiritual Dynamic Between Buddhism and Christianity*. Rochester, Vt.: Inner Traditions, 2009. 176 pp. ISBN 978-1-59477-277-1, \$14.95 (pb).

Leloup, a French Orthodox priest, theologian, and author of more than 15 books on scripture and religion, shows how Buddhist teachings and Christian meditative practices complement each other and together form a dynamic spirituality. Leloup looks at Buddhism from the viewpoint of Eastern Christianity and the Orthodox practice of hesychast meditation. In his introduction the author notes "without compassion meditation tends to become a form of self hypnosis ... And without meditation compassion tends to degenerate into an activism ... lacking in depth and discrimination." Leloup argues that both meditation and compassion are needed to form the truly human person.

The book includes guidance and instruction on positive and negative action and speech. Implied here is the Buddhist principle, "first do no harm." Several chapters end with helpful questions and answers. This is the first American edition of a book first published in French. It includes chapters based on lectures given by Fr. Leloup. The book is not easy to read but is a worthwhile challenge

for anyone wishing to learn more about meditative practices and comparative religion.

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

#### 19-1-0053

Selmanovic, Samir. *It's Really All About God: Reflections of a Muslim Atheist Jewish Christian*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2009. 300 pp. ISBN 978-0-470-43326-3, \$24.95.

Selmanovic covers all bases in this book, or at least endeavors to. His background and experience are unique; he was raised in Communist, atheist, anti-Western-religion Yugoslavia. His father was Muslim and his mother Catholic by background. Selmanovic became a Christian at the age of 18.

Like many liberal Christians, the author attempts to show respect for non-Christians. I sense though, if push came to shove, that he like most pagans/Christians would claim Christianity's superiority, though with far less arrogance and more understanding than some others.

Selmanovic garners respect by virtue of being a Seventh-day Adventist. I assume that his willingness to follow this Sabbath commandment since becoming a "Christian" emanates from his Muslim background. Islam is a faith where certain rules are followed that seem quite limiting to the average Western person. However, a truly God-fearing person will obey such commands, as devout people are mature enough to understand that God may well place healthy limitations on people's freedoms.

Is Selmanovic on a path of serving God above humankind? Since he claims so much, it is difficult to determine who he actually is. He may well agree with this conclusion, in his humble way, or is this an act of humility? Time may yet tell where Selmanovic stands. Will he stay where he presently is, safely under the large but porous umbrella known as Christianity? Or will he follow his own words and create something new? It seems he is willing and able.

Something truly new however would be outside of "safe" religious labels. For me, actions and not words will determine that answer. It would be ideal, however, if the actions and words were congruent.

Richard Levik  
Los Angeles Unified School Dist.  
www.theleviteline.com

#### 19-1-0054

Smith, David I. *Learning from the Stranger: Christian Faith and Cultural Diversity*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2009. 184 pp. ISBN 978-0-8028-2463-9, \$20.00 (pb).

A Calvin College professor of German, Smith argues persuasively about why it is important for Christians to learn how to better recognize and engage with cultural and linguistic diver-

sity. While the book will certainly assist Christian missionaries in preparing for overseas assignments, the intended audience is all Christians who wish to learn from other cultures and languages.

Smith uses Bible passages from Genesis, the Gospel of Luke, and Acts to illustrate his thesis. He also uses quotations from classic Christian texts such as St. Augustine as well as personal and sometimes humorous stories to make his points.

Smith exhorts Christians not only to learn foreign languages as a way of *loving thy neighbor* but to enter fully into cross-cultural engagement as learners, travelers, and good neighbors to immigrant families in the community. One of the book's chapters is an exposition of St. Luke's account of the "good Samaritan." Here Smith examines the parable and the conversation between Jesus and the scribe to illustrate what it means to go beyond the boundaries and prejudices of one's own culture to love the stranger. Smith also encourages his readers to recognize the faults and sins of their own culture as they study the languages and cultures of the other societies and individuals. In his conclusions he expresses the hope that this book will not only be informative but also a call to action for Christians in our increasingly diverse and multicultural society. The book includes extensive notes, a lengthy bibliography, and an index. Highly recommended for seminary, academic, and public libraries.

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

## Education

#### 19-1-0055

Blair, Elizabeth E.; Miller, Rebecca B.; and Tieken, Mara Casey, eds. *Education and War*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Education Review, 2009. 300 pp. ISBN 978-0-916690-49-6, \$29.95 (pb).

This well-timed book of provocative essays examines how education is influenced and in turn influences society during wartime or times of conflict. The essays are taken from the *Harvard Educational Review*, where historians, researchers, and professors, among others, offer wide-ranging detailed observations through interviews, first-person accounts, and historical overviews.

The book is divided into two sections. The first examines how government, students, teachers, and communities work within established education systems to achieve political or social goals with sometimes-unexpected results. The second section examines educational efforts that take place outside of the established system, such as underground and community schools, to explore their impact on intellectual, personal, and societal transformation. Each essay includes detailed notes and reference material. A final section contains brief biographies of the contributors. Overall, the book provides an innovative evaluation of education and its role in society in a unique and challenging context.

Margaret Auguste  
Franklin Middle School, Somerset, N.J.

## Health and Medicine

19-1-0056

Metzl, Jonathan. *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2010. 288 pp. ISBN 978-0-8070-8592-9, \$27.95.

This work tells the story of how racism changed the meaning of schizophrenia. It shows how this change came about in Ionia, Michigan, and had an impact throughout the medical and penal systems.

During the 1920's, 30's and 40's the term *schizophrenia* was used to describe White people, especially White women. It was especially used to describe the White women who may have embarrassed their families in public by speaking too loudly or by not taking proper care of their homes and families. These women were often sent away to mental institutions, such as the Ionia State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. They would stay in these facilities for short periods of time and be released to return to their families.

When diagnosing Whites with schizophrenia, terms such as agitated, depressed, suicidal, confused, and restless were used. When the same terms were used to describe Blacks, the definition changed. Psychiatrists described Black schizophrenics as combative, dull and listless, thinking slowly, having a slovenly appearance, and without judgment. In the 1960's what had been short-term stay facilities became long term, and Blacks confined within their walls had little hope of release. Many were deemed criminally insane as well.

This book is not light reading, but it is very interesting. It evokes strong emotions in its dealing with racism in the medical setting. It will cause one to take pause and really think about racism in America. Recommended for academic libraries.

Charlie Spencer Lackey  
Duke Univ. Medical Center Library

## Business and Economics

19-1-0057

Fuller, Ellen V. *Going Global: Culture, Gender, and Authority in the Japanese Subsidiary of an American Corporation*. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 2009. 224 pp. ISBN 978-1-59213-689-6, \$22.95 (pb).

Fuller provides a unique perspective on the impact of gender and culture issues that face American corporations in a Japanese setting. From her vantage point she finds that females in Japan face the same barriers to success that women do in the United States. The book provides insight for individuals with respect to expectations and challenges, insight she gained through her immersion in the system. Fuller's use of rich descriptive writing provides the

reader with an authentic picture of the rigid barriers that organizations face when placing management employees in subsidiaries located in Japan.

For corporate executives considering subsidiaries in Japan, this is a must read. Cultural understanding and modifying existing policy to address the differences are essential for company success overseas. This book provides executives with a pleasant read that gets to the heart of decision making with respect to authority and style. Finally, Fuller has written a book that addresses hidden gender bias in organizations that must be addressed for the organization to succeed. She has accomplished the goal of awareness regarding this issue.

Scott Ballantyne  
Alvernia College, Reading, Pa.

19-1-0058

Mercer. [corporate author]. *The Global Manager's Guide to Living and Working Abroad: Eastern Europe and Asia*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2009. 310 pp. ISBN 978-0-313-37590-3, \$49.95.

*The Global Manager's Guide to Living and Working Abroad* is a handbook for the new manager who finds him or herself moving to Eastern Europe and/or Asia. The book prepares individuals for the initial move as well as the "shock" of being fully immersed in an unfamiliar culture. In addition to providing the framework for working and living overseas, the book provides additional helpful tools for the reader.

A good portion of the book is devoted to a description of the major cities within specific countries of Eastern Europe and China as well as information regarding the basic life needs that must be addressed when moving overseas. Topics include housing, medical care, entertainment, recreation, education, and the environment.

What are most useful in this book are the appendices at the end. These documents include guidelines for sorting out work permits and visas, salary and price differentials, safety abroad and corporate concerns, health care abroad, and finally a Celsius to Fahrenheit conversion chart. The collective authors have crafted a book that will be helpful to first time expatriates who want to get a glimpse of what lies ahead in their move to another country.

Scott Ballantyne  
Alvernia College, Reading, Pa.

## Social and Political Sciences

19-1-0059

Aguilar-San Juan, Karin. *Little Saigons: Staying Vietnamese in America*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2009. 256 pp. ISBN 978-0-8166-5486-4, \$22.50 (pb).

Nguyen, Nathalie Huynk Chau. *Memory Is Another Country: Women of the Vietnamese Diaspora*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2009. 215 pp. ISBN 978-0-313-36027-5, \$39.95.

Aquilar-San Juan's work is an insightful comparative case study of the development of Little Saigon in Orange County, California, and Field's Corner in Boston as important sites for Vietnamese-American community and identity maintenance. Aquilar-San Juan is particularly interested in the significance of place (as experienced in ethnic neighborhoods) in the preservation and re-definition of Vietnamese identity in an American context. This book will be of the greatest interest to undergraduate and graduate students as well as scholars of urban sociology, ethnic studies, and Asian-American studies. The theoretical discussions in the volume (largely derived from sociological theory) are somewhat dense for a lay audience not involved with academia. Overall, Aquilar-San Juan's book is an especially valuable addition to the Vietnamese-American studies literature as it represents one of the few detailed book-length examinations of the growth and transformation of contemporary Vietnamese enclave communities in the United States.

Nguyen's book offers a different sort of contribution. *Memory Is Another Country: Women of the Vietnamese Diaspora* provides oral history narratives of 40 Vietnamese women who escaped from Vietnam following the end of the Vietnam War. The author's goal with the volume was to provide a voice to Vietnamese refugee women, as their perspective has often been lacking in previously published accounts of the Vietnam War and its aftermath. Particularly significant are the narratives provided of the experiences of Vietnamese women in the South Vietnamese army. The author notes that other published works have given little if any attention to the women's auxiliary services of the South Vietnamese forces. Other themes discussed in the women's narratives include divergent memories of events within families, the significance of homeland to the women, feelings about return trips to Vietnam, cross-cultural relationships, intergenerational tensions, and issues of unspoken trauma. Nguyen's very accessible and engaging work will be of interest to both an academic audience of students and scholars and the broader audience with an interest in women's studies, ethnic studies, refugee studies, and Asian-American studies.

Mark Edward Pfeifer  
Texas A&M Univ.—Corpus Christi

#### 19-1-0060

Beauboeuf-Lafontant, Tamara. *Behind the Mask of the Strong Black Woman: Voice and the Embodiment of a Costly Performance*. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 2009. 200 pp. ISBN 978-1-59213-668-1, \$23.95 (pb).

Beauboeuf-Lafontant examines the stereotype of the strong Black woman (SBW) as a mechanism for "bolster[ing] ... entrenched inequitable social relations" (18). She does this in order to call to attention to how the stereotype, culturally understood to be a "positive" stereotype, functions to maintain the cultural status quo.

Beauboeuf-Lafontant does not stop at a consideration of the stereotype and its socio-cultural uses. She argues that not only have Black women in America internalized the SBW stereotype but that their internalization of the stereotype leads to and is fed by "overeating and depressive symptoms [that] are manifestations that derive from the proscriptions against ... revealing their complexity as human beings"(20). In this way, the author provides insight into the function of the stereotype, sociologically, and then allows us a view of what that costs in terms of human suffering.

Leslie Antonette  
East Stroudsburg Univ. of Pennsylvania

#### 19-1-0061

Buchenau, Jurgen, and Johnson, Lyman L., eds. *Aftershocks: Earthquakes and Popular Politics in Latin America*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2009. 242 pp. ISBN 978-0-8263-4623-0, \$29.95.

Brittle are the towering Andes. They rise along the edge of a continental tectonic plate constantly under assault from a Pacific plate thrusting beneath it. Where earth succumbs, quakes occur, able to undo not only the lay but the law of a land. Physical collapse and panic produce disorder yet also open opportunities to challenge or re-affirm established order.

In this book, nine scholars of Latin American history describe varying socio-political aftershocks from devastating earthquakes in Peru, Venezuela, Chile, Argentina, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Mexico from the mid-eighteenth century to the late twentieth. A widespread tremor in Lima, Peru, in 1746 wrought mass spiritual re-examination, pitting hierarchy, clergy, and laity in diatribes over moral decay provoking God's wrath. An earthquake in San Juan, Argentina, in 1944 prompted debate on urban renewal and structural engineering. A newly installed national military junta entered the exchange, its successes in post-earthquake recovery strengthening its legitimacy. Spearheading the successes was the junta's minister of labor, Col. Juan Perón. This volume includes numerous black-and-white photos of earthquake aftereffects, showing the relative resistance of adobe wattle, mud brick, and reinforced concrete buildings. The instant of image, however, cannot echo the surrounding and subsequent woe, or spy the tentative hopes for restoration.

Edward A. Riedinger  
Ohio State Univ. Libraries

#### 19-1-0062

Cainkar, Louise A. *Homeland Insecurity: The Arab American and Muslim American Experience After 9/11*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2009. 312 pp. ISBN 978-0-87154-048-5, \$35.00.

This is a scholarly, well-documented study based on more than 100 research interviews and five in-depth oral histories focusing on Arab and Muslim populations (Egyptians, Iraqis, Jordani-

ans, Lebanese, Palestinians, Sudanese, Yemenis) from the Chicago area. Sharply criticizing the Bush Administration's post 9/11 homeland security policy of treating Arab and Muslim Americans as potential threats to the security of America, the author demonstrates that in fact public mistrust, discrimination, interrogations, and harassment became a threat to these minority populations who felt unsafe and insecure in the United States. However, immigrant organizations, religious leaders, civic rights advocates, and community organizers built defensive networks. Round tables were organized between Arab and Muslim leaders, law enforcement, and homeland security agencies for a better understanding of Arab and Muslim communities, and space for their more active inclusion, and involvement in American social and political life.

Interestingly, the vast majority of those interviewed by the author displayed optimistic feelings about the future of Arab and Muslim life in the United States. With a timely subject and multifaceted study—accompanied by numerous statistical tables, useful bibliography, footnotes, and general index—this book is recommended as a welcome addition to ethnic and social science collections.

Vladimir F. Wertsman  
New York Public Library

#### 19-1-0063

Curry, Dawne Y.; Duke, Eric D.; and Smith, Marshanda A., eds. *Extending the Diaspora: New Histories of Black People*. Champaign: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2009. 328 pp. Foreword by Darlene Clark Hine. ISBN 978-0-252-03459-6, \$75.00 (cl); 978-1-252-07652-7, \$30.00 (pb).

Curry, Duke, and Smith have collected and edited pieces that originated as presentations at the "2001 Comparative Black History (CBH)—sponsored 'Diaspora Paradigms: New Scholarship in Comparative Black History' conference held at Michigan State University" (xiii). Curry and Duke were also part of the organizing team for the conference, which the foreword assures the reader was a phenomenal success.

One would have to accept the truth of that statement after reading the essays included in the collection, which expand upon the traditionally accepted understanding of African Diaspora to include geographic locations such as Germany, Jamaica, and Okinawa. The essays consider the ways in which Diasporic presence in those locations, as in more traditionally recognized locations like the United States, are either forcible or voluntary, in order to trace "the social, intellectual, political, and spatial domain of areas inhabited by Black Peoples" (xx). This is a fascinating collection and a must read for teachers of African American Diaspora, literature, culture, and/or history.

Leslie Antonette  
East Stroudsburg Univ. of Pennsylvania

#### 19-1-0064

Fleming, Cynthia Griggs. *Yes We Did? From King's Dream to*

*Obama's Promise*. Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2009. 336 pp. ISBN 978-0-8131-2560-2, \$29.95.

In the election of President Barack H. Obama, many Americans both Black and White see the fulfilling of Dr. Martin Luther King's dream. Obama believes in that promise of a better America that King dreamed of. This book explores through the eyes of civil rights veterans who marched with King and today's Black leaders the challenges of the past, and those facing African Americans today.

There is an unmistakable bridge that links President Obama and Dr. King. Some of those interviewed in this book who worked closely with King or worked in the civil rights movement in the 1960s point this out. For example, Obama's ability to empower citizens and make them believe that the movement they were involved in was bigger than themselves, and even him, was the same as King's during the civil rights movement. Of course not to be missed are the charisma and oratorical skills of both men to move large crowds in the name of hope over fear and division.

There seems to be a general sense of agreement that when Dr. King died in 1968, the civil rights era died with him. The grim realities are that life for many Blacks began to drift backwards upon his death, and has continued to do so. For those African Americans elected to office, the challenges are tremendous. There just are no easy answers.

There is no doubt that this country has made racial and social progress in electing its first Black president, but critics remind us that full Black participation remains an unrealized ideal, with segregation "worse in those parts of the country that have the highest levels of black participation in public life." New York, Chicago, and the state of Massachusetts are given as examples. Ironically as the author points out, New York and Massachusetts both have Black governors, and Chicago is the city from which the president comes. Sad commentary that. Reading this book will cause people to rethink the notion that we live in a post-racial era. There is still much to be done for the dreamer's dream to become the president's promise.

Henry C. Griffith, Sr.  
Powell, Ohio

#### 19-1-0065

Hagopian, Frances, ed. *Religious Pluralism, Democracy, and the Catholic Church in Latin America*. Notre Dame, Ind.: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2009. 528 pp. ISBN 978-0-268-03087-2, \$45.00 (pb).

This sterling work looks at the first European institution in America—the Roman Catholic Church. It consists of 11 articles written by nine authors, all of whom are political scientists save one. The leading theme of the work is the challenges facing the contemporary church. Hagopian points out how a majority of citizens in Latin America accept the idea that the church should stay outside of politics, although she and other authors discuss the persistent influence of the ecclesia in social, economic, social, and political movements. The most glaring example of this is, of course,

the Christian Democratic Parties. Indeed, church-affiliated organizations have led labor, university students, and human rights movements in the struggles towards re-democratization.

Protestantism, New Age, Atheism, Deism, and ambivalence all challenge the church. Consequently, it has been unable to stifle debates on social issues, such as same sex marriage, abortion, stem cell research, and more. Nevertheless, a majority of young people continues to identify with Catholicism.

The articles are well documented and cogently written by experts in this field. University/college libraries and Latin Americanists would do well to add this important study to their collections.

Salvador Rivera  
SUNY-Cobleskill

#### 19-1-0066

Mansour, Ahmed. *Inside Fallujah*. Northampton, Mass.: Interlink, 2009. 358 pp. ISBN 978-1-56656-778-7, \$20.00 (pb).

Fallujah saw some of the heaviest guerrilla warfare during the Iraq War. One news organization remained in the city to report on the fighting, but much of its coverage was considered biased against the American army—at least by the Americans. This is the first person account by al-Jazeera's reporter who was kicked out by the Allied military when they regained control. What often got lost in the political cross-fire was the story of ordinary citizens and their families. This account helps balance the journalism produced by "embedded" reporters.

Even those who dislike al-Jazeera for its independence need to understand how Arabic journalism is emerging as its own force. Researchers will also like the index, which gives quick entry to the battles and people involved. Readers will see an Arabic perspective that is not a polemic but is also not favorable to the United States.

Patrick M. Valentine  
East Carolina Univ.

#### 19-1-0067

Mooney, Margarita A. *Faith Makes Us Live: Surviving and Thriving in the Haitian Diaspora*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2009. 296 pp. ISBN 978-0-520-26036-8, \$21.95 (pb).

Free of sociological jargon, this study of the Haitian diaspora in Miami, Montreal, and Paris provides a refreshing and much needed account of the impact of faith on the lives and adaptation of immigrants to host societies. Weaving together the personal accounts of individual immigrants and their stories with sociological concepts and theories of immigrant adaptation, Mooney provides us with a well written and nuanced analysis of how immigrants value the creation of a religiously based moral community as much as economic progress in their new home countries. The focus of this work is on creating Catholic communities and does not address other religious traditions among Haitian immigrants. Mooney's thesis is that cultural mediation and political mediation via moral communities based on faith allows immigrants to

adapt and participate in a new society. Social action coming from faith-based communities is embraced by immigrants who share a common sense of a religious fellowship and sense of worth based on a common religious tradition.

This is a transnational study of the Haitian problems of adaptation in the diaspora communities in the United States, Canada, and France. Ironically, in the United States Mooney found that faith-based institutions had an easier time getting the attention of public authorities to create a cooperative relationship between government agencies and faith-based organizations like Notre Dame d'Haiti and the Toussaint Center. In contrast, the secularization of Quebec political institutions that divorced the Catholic Church from Quebec political and cultural nationalism creates conflict between Haitian church-based organizations and public authorities who prefer to support ethnic but non-religious bodies. French republicanism emphasizes citizenship and acceptance of French cultural values and rejects the existence of religious-based institutions, making the Haitian institutions invisible to French authorities. While Haitians in all three societies share similar problems of creating faith-based communities and immigrant adaptation, the willingness of public authorities to work with faith-based organizations differs considerably. Faith as cultural mediator is essential to both first- and second-generation immigrants and may provide a clue to the failure of second-generation immigrants to integrate successfully into their host societies.

Harvey J. Strum  
Sage Colleges of Albany

#### 19-1-0068

Prieto, Yolanda. *The Cubans of Union City: Immigrants and Exiles in a New Jersey Community*. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 2009. 224 pp. ISBN 978-1-59213-300-0, \$25.95 (pb).

*The Cubans of Union City* is an important addition to the field of studies on Cuban Americans. While most social observers write about Cubans in Dade County, Florida, very few have ventured to explore the experience of the Cuban exiles who reached Union City after 1959 and the small community of Cuban immigrants that lived in the town prior to the Cuban Revolution. Prieto has written both a history of the town and a profile of the vibrant Cuban community.

Through a series of extensive interviews with long-term residents, both Cubans and non-Cubans, as well as her own personal narrative (the author lived in Union City for many years), Prieto details a clear history of the arrivals of Cubans in northern New Jersey. Those who moved to the town in the 1940s and 50s had left the island because of their inability to find employment in Cuba. Without the glamour of being political refugees and not participants in the major historical event that was the Cuban Revolution, these immigrants found a community that was not receptive to Latinos. While many did not suffer ethnic discrimination and persecution (since they were White), they certainly did not always feel welcome. Still, they prospered by opening small stores and finding employment in New York City, less than five miles away across the Hudson River. They also stayed in touch with friends

and relatives in Cuba.

Because of that connection, when the Cuban exodus began in 1959 and the U.S. government encouraged the refugees to settle outside Miami, hundreds of Cubans relocated to Union City between 1959 and 1962. These Cubans formed informal networks of help, and when new families arrived, they found them apartments, paid a month of rent, supplied them with food, and took them to factories and shops that needed workers. By 1965, there were 10,000 Cubans in Union City. By 1970, there were over 14,000.

Prieto ably reconstructs the Cuban community of the 1960s and 70s: the establishment of *municipios*, hometown clubs, Masonic lodges, cultural activities in the Catholic Church, and the flourishing of *periodiquitos*, little newspapers reporting on the community and helping Cuban exiles assimilate. She also reports on the anti-Castro organizations that emerged, many clandestine, and the gradual involvement of Cubans in the city's political structure. What emerges is a rich canvas of an energetic community that was grateful to be in the United States and proud to call themselves Cubans and Americans. Prieto also chronicles the decline of the Cuban community in the 1980s and 90s as older Cubans retired to Florida and their children moved to the suburbs. Still, the political and business infrastructure in Union City was controlled by Cuban Americans.

There are a few areas for further study. For example, Prieto does not explore the fact that post-Castro Cubans continue to describe themselves as exiles and not immigrants and that there are differences in the anti-Castro tenor of Cubans in Miami and Cubans in Union City. Perhaps these were areas outside her scope. My recommendation is for Prieto, who writes with ease and clarity, to come up with a follow-up study on Cubans in Union City.

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

#### 19-1-0069

Taylor, Henry Louis, Jr. *Inside El Barrio: A Bottom-Up View of Neighborhood Life in Castro's Cuba*. Sterling, Va.: Kumarian Press, 2009. 217 pp. ISBN 978-1-56549-282-0, \$69.95 (cl); 978-1-56549-281-3, \$24.95 (pb).

This work is a study of Cuban society at the micro level. It focuses on the local committees created by the Cuban Communist Party to involve citizens in the governance and resolution of their own affairs.

The author begins with a review of Cuba's history, recognizing not only Hispanic influence but, equally important, its U.S. heritage, which turned it into a vassal state of Washington. The economic foundation of the island with its slavery and monoculture was viewed as similar to that of the southern United States. Taylor points to the geo-strategic interest the United States had in Cuba as evolving from military-naval concerns in which Washington sought to control the Caribbean via hegemony in Cuba. A factor in favor of U.S. dominance by the 1880s was the large body of Cubans educated in the United States. Taylor argues that the 1959 revolution succeeded by expanding democracy at the local level via committees. These local councils were placed into effect by the

continuing economic crises the people experienced. The study is well cited but depends heavily on secondary sources.

Salvador Rivera  
SUNY-Cobleskill

## Reference

#### 19-1-0070

*Agriculture in History*. Hackensack, N.J.: Salem Press, 2009. 3 vols., 1,296 pp. Series: Magill's Choice. ISBN 978-1-58765-551-7, \$217.00.

As claimed in the publisher's note, the three-volume, chronologically arranged, *Agriculture in History* is not a comprehensive history of world agriculture, but its articles touch on a remarkably large proportion of important world developments in food production," spanning prehistory through the turn of the twenty-first century. Nearly 150 scholars contributed to this effort, covering the gamut of perspectives, including those of anthropology, technology, animal husbandry, politics, government, human health, climatology, environment, genetic engineering, and more. Each entry is illustrated, and the essays are very readable, allowing one to readily jump around to topics of interest. A span of dates is given at the head of each entry as well as a one-sentence synopsis, a locale, keywords of the basic issues covered, and a summary of the event. There are good lists of further reading and *see also* suggestions, making these volumes very useful as ready reference. The myriad indexes are beautifully composed, giving readers entry by way of geographical location, broad category or subject, historical figure, or food, plant, or animal type.

While not shying away from the political aspects of agriculture, the editorial selections do not yield to polemics, making this group of essays an objective contribution to this area of study. From middle school through post-undergraduate, this set should be considered essential for any collection where readers are interested in the history of agriculture.

Sue Ann Gardner  
Univ. of Nebraska-Lincoln

#### 19-1-0071

*Musicians and Composers of the Twentieth Century*. Hackensack, N.J.: Salem Press, 2009. 5 vols., 1,800 pp. ISBN 978-1-58765-512-8, \$399.00.

This major biographical dictionary is edited by Alfred W. Cramer of Pomona College. The signed articles are well written by dozens of worthy contributors.

There are good black-and-white photo illustrations, with splendid bibliographical information accompanying each textual story. The subjects are numerous, ranging from Louis Armstrong to Toru Takemitsu. The writing and scholarly work are terrific, with each

## Travel

author stretching out to tell the story of, for example, John Denver, Yo-Yo Ma, or Leonard Bernstein. Biographical subjects are successful people who are an important part of musical history and cultural life in the twentieth century.

This century witnessed an explosion of population worldwide, from perhaps two to five billion people around the globe. With this population growth came advances in communication and transportation that ushered in a heightened interaction among cultures. Musicians became superstars not only in their own countries but also throughout the world. And musicians from small countries and remote regions gained international exposure. The scope of this reference source reflects these trends; it is truly global.

The books' covers each have a color photo of a well-known popular musician. In summary, this significant series is important as well as an example of excellent academic work. I strongly recommend this series.

Geary H. Larrick  
Stevens Point, Wis.

### 19-1-0072

Nelson, Emmanuel S., ed. *Encyclopedia of Contemporary LGBTQ Literature of the United States*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood, 2009. 2 vols., 800 pp. ISBN 978-0-313-38459-4, \$195.00.

This encyclopedia provides users with a comprehensive and inclusive introduction to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and queer writing in the contemporary United States. While a majority of the entries are on individual authors, the encyclopedia also allows users to explore the diversity within diversity. For example, there are entries on Mexican American Lesbian Literature, Gay Male Coming-Out Narratives, Transgender Young Adult Literature, and Multiculturalism and LGBTQ Literature.

Nelson is a professor of English at the State University of New York at Cortland. He has taught at various international universities as Fulbright Visiting Professor and has edited several major reference works, including *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature*.

The over 300 entries are arranged alphabetically by title. Each is signed by the author—over 120 scholars reflecting a wide variety of styles, perspectives, and approaches. Each entry provides a bibliography for further reading, directing users to the most useful secondary materials available on the topic. The encyclopedia includes an alphabetical list of all entries, a guide to related topics, and a selected bibliography, as well as information about the editor and contributors. The second volume ends with a detailed index for pinpoint access.

While the focus of the encyclopedia is on contemporary literature, mostly (but not exclusively) works published since 1980, it includes references to topics of historical importance (such as the Stonewall Riots) and seminal texts (such as *Angels in America*).

The audience for the encyclopedia will include serious scholars, high school students and their teachers, community college and undergraduate students, curious general readers, and librarians. The latter will particularly appreciate the encyclopedia's potential as a tool in readers' advisory services.

Edana McCaffery-Cichanowicz  
Brentwood (N.Y.) Public Library

### 19-1-0073

Barker, Adele. *Not Quite Paradise: An American Sojourn in Sri Lanka*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2010. 320 pp. ISBN 978-0-8070-0061-8, \$24.95.

Barker's narrative is divided into two general sections: before the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and after. Each section is loosely structured by a journey to Sri Lanka, the first as a Fulbright scholar and teacher, the second as a reporter driven to know and tell the story of a beloved nation's struggle to survive and rebuild in the wake of a tragedy.

Barker works her way around the small island nation through territories made treacherous by both the tsunami's destruction and the Tamil Tigers' ongoing conflicts with the Sri Lankan government and the Sinhalese southern majority. She seeks out the diverse perspectives of Sri Lankan society, listening to the stories of Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, and Christians, while she tries to make sense of the civil war that divides a nation of people who, as she notes, "have managed to live gracefully during times that have been anything but graceful." Pointedly honest, her observations about post-tsunami Sri Lanka also reveal the shortcomings of high-profile international aid doled out without an understanding of this complex nation's cultural and political systems and without the input of the people themselves.

As the title suggests, Barker writes with an awareness of the ironies and contradictions of Sri Lanka's reputation as the "Pearl of the Indian Ocean." Reflections on the legacies of British colonialism and the neocolonial implications of her own travel to Sri Lanka are woven throughout the descriptions of the nation's land, culture, and traditions. As a result, Barker's narrative touches on interesting questions about the politics of travel and the ethical contradictions and obligations confronting those privileged enough to engage in it.

Shealeen Meaney  
Russell Sage College, Troy, N.Y.

### 19-1-0074

Galbraith, Patrick W. *The Otaku Encyclopedia: An Insider's Guide to the Subculture of Cool Japan*. New York: Kodansha, 2009. 250 pp. ISBN 978-4-7700-3101-3, \$19.95 (pb).

As Americans or Westerners, we might assume that U.S. pop culture has tremendous influence around the world. What many might not be aware of is the influence of Japanese pop culture. We're all familiar with video games, such as Mario Brothers, from Nintendo and Sega, and maybe cartoons, such as Speed Racer and Transformers, and certainly sci-fi movies, such as Godzilla and Rodan. But to some, Japanese pop culture is addictive. If that applies to you, then you're an *otaku*, and you probably need *The Otaku Encyclopedia*.

The title is self-explanatory—once you know what *otaku* means (nerd, geek). So *The Otaku Encyclopedia* is just that, a 240-page collection of anything considered "cool" to *otaku*.

For those who are into manga (comics and graphic novels) and anime (animated movies or TV programs), Galbraith gives encyclopedic information on such topics as shopping districts in Tokyo that cater to otaku or museums devoted to toys of spun-off cartoon characters.

But for those of us who aren't, we can find out about some of the famous TV personalities who formed careers based on dressing up in French maids outfits, but not the phenomenon of maid or school-girl outfits or the popularity of "maid cafes." Also not explained: why things associated with nerds are considered cool.

Al Hikida  
Seattle Central Community College

## Juvenile

### Primary (Gr. P-3)

#### 19-1-0075

Colato Laínez, René. *The Tooth Fairy Meets El Ratón Pérez*. Berkeley, Calif.: Tricycle Press, 2010. 32 pp. Illus. by Tom Lintern. ISBN 978-1-58246-296-7, \$15.99.

It is no surprise that in his latest title, Colato Laínez (*I Am René, The Boy/Soy René, el niño*) once again brings together two seemingly distinct cultures, only to show that ultimately there are more similarities between peoples than not. In this case, Colato Laínez does so by sharing two folk legends having to do with children losing their teeth and who or what magically appears to retrieve them. In his "Author's Note," he writes that in English-speaking countries, it is the Tooth Fairy who "collects lost teeth from children," while in Latin America, this responsibility belongs to el Ratón Pérez.

In Colato Laínez's rendition of these two traditions, the two collectors meet face to face when Miguelito places his tooth under his pillow and falls asleep. The Tooth Fairy believes the tooth is hers to pick up because the boy lives in the United States. Ratón Pérez feels the *diente* is his to take because the boy is Latino. An argument ensues, during which there is much yanking of the tooth back and forth, resulting in the tooth lodging itself just out of their respective reaches. Together, they come up with a plan to recover it.

The story is a lesson on how teachers can successfully use multicultural literature in their classrooms. It is not enough for us to teach children the differences between cultures; we must also show them how to bridge these gaps to the betterment of the greater culture. Lintern's illustrations are reminiscent of the early Disney animations, soft and magical.

René Saldaña, Jr.  
Texas Tech Univ.

#### 19-1-0076

Compestine, Ying Chang. *Boy Dumplings*. New York: Holiday House, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by James Yamasaki. ISBN 978-0-8234-1955-5, \$16.95.

This idea for this picture book came from the author's family. In watching her son fill out, she thought, "He looks good enough to eat," so she made up this story about a hungry ghost who catches a chubby boy and sets about to make dumplings out of him. The boy outsmarts the ghost by offering him a good recipe. It takes the ghost so long to find all the horrible ingredients that the sun comes up before he can finish, and he "melts" away like the Wick- ed Witch of the West in *The Wizard of Oz*.

According to tradition, ghosts can only come out once a year. They wander the earth in search of food by night and vanish with the morning light. However, there is no ghost in Chinese tradition similar to the one depicted in this story.

The book's illustrations are grotesque and nightmarish. The ghost is not just scary, he is revolting. Even the boy is not particularly appealing. Given the fact that the story is made up, even though the author is Chinese, and also that the illustrations are so very unpleasant, this is not the book this reviewer would choose to represent China.

On the positive side, there is a lovely recipe for "boy-free" dumplings in the back of the book, along with an explanation of the Chinese celebration of the "Ghost Festival" which falls on the 15th of the seventh month of the Chinese calendar.

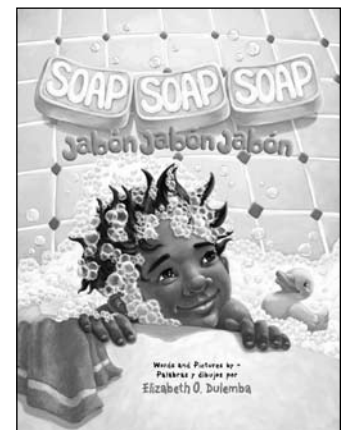
Ginny Lee  
Syracuse, N.Y.

#### 19-1-0077

Dulemba, Elizabeth O. *Soap, Soap, Soap/Jabón, jabón, jabón*. McHenry, Ill.: Raven Tree Press, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by the author. Bilingual (Spanish-English) ed. ISBN 978-1-934960-62-2, \$16.95.

Troublemaker Hugo has a chore to do. His mama sends him to the store to buy soap. Do you think he goes straight there? Of course not. This would have made for a very simple and short story. Hugo takes the long way. Along the way he encounters silly adventures. Even though at first he forgets what he is supposed to buy at the store, he finds remote reminders to prompt his memory. In the end Hugo not only ends up in a muddy mess, but he returns home with the soap he bought. Can you guess who will be using the soap first?

Dulemba borrows from the classic Appalachian Jack Tale. She enhances the story by giving it a silly bilingual contemporary twist. This story is presented in English in rojo (red) text and in Spanish in black. In addition, there is a vocabulary page for enrichment.



This soapy cross-cultural folktale-based original story is a delightful bilingual tale. It is recommended for story time. The illustrations are vibrant and pleasant to the eye. The tale is light and humorous, and it will delight readers of all ages.

Madelene R. Barnard  
Manatee County (Fla.) Library System

#### 19-1-0078

Gonzalez, Maya Christina. *I Know the River Loves Me/Yo sé que el río me ama*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by the author. Bilingual (Spanish-English) ed. ISBN 978-0-89239-233-9, \$16.95.

A young girl, illustrated in black and white, is drawn to the colorful, lively river. She doesn't have to hear spoken words to know that the river loves her as she cares for it. She has what most children have, a deep, instinctive connection to nature that most of us as adults have lost. She goes from her black-and-white world to one of warmth and comfort when wrapped in the water's waves and does not need to be convinced to appreciate its wonders. The unnamed girl describes how the river is motherly and friendly to her and how she feels a sense of responsibility toward it.

Allowing our children to foster this sense of purpose toward nature will help keep our world cleaner and greener. Reading *I Know the River Loves Me* would be a wonderful way to reinforce this idea in students. They will be enchanted by its verbal and visual imagery in both Spanish and English while feeling as if the gentle and tranquil text is taking them along the current to somewhere they also belong.

Kena Sosa  
Dallas, Tex.

#### 19-1-0079

Grimes, Nikki. *Make Way for Dyamonde Daniel*. New York: Putnam, 2009. 74 pp. Illus. by R. Gregory Christie. ISBN 978-0-399-25175-7, \$10.99.

*Make Way for Dyamonde Daniel* is the first of two books about Dyamonde Daniel, an eight-year-old African-American girl. In this installment, Dyamonde is the new kid in school and has yet to find a "bff" (best friend forever). That is until Free, a boy from Detroit, joins the class. Will he be her new bff?

The characters are well delineated, and the plot should be easy for beginning readers to follow. Grimes captures children's language exquisitely: it is both poetic and funny. In her description of Dyamonde, Grimes writes, "So what if she had wild-crazy hair and was skinnier than half a toothpick? ... she had more brains in her tiny little pinky than most kids had in their whole entire bodies." As such, this book would make a great read aloud or basis for reader's theater or drama productions.

Laretta Henderson  
Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

#### 19-1-0080

Jules, Jacqueline. *Duck for Turkey Day*. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Kathryn Mitter. ISBN 978-0-8075-1734-5, \$16.99.

Tuyet, a Vietnamese girl in kindergarten, hears about turkey as the American way to celebrate Thanksgiving. Disappointed to find out that her own family is having duck, she tries to compensate by putting her pine cone and paper turkey on the table. Later, back at school, she discovers that her many multicultural classmates also had something other than turkey for Thanksgiving—noodles and chicken, lamb, roast beef, enchiladas, and more. Her teacher tells her that the important thing about Thanksgiving is to have fun with your family.

We rather imagine that duck, as a celebratory dish, is probably not a new notion for Tuyet as a life-long member of her Vietnamese family. However, the lesson—that the importance of Thanksgiving lies not in what you eat but in being glad for the people with whom you eat it—is a valid one. The illustrations are simple, colorful, and clear—very appropriate for young children—and will be appreciated by both the children and the adults who read to them.

Ginny Lee  
Syracuse, N.Y.

#### 19-1-0081

Lauren, Jill. *That's Like Me! Stories About Amazing People with Learning Differences*. Long Island City, N.Y.: Star Bright Books, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. with photos. ISBN 978-1-59572-207-2, \$17.95.

This is an upbeat collection of voices of diverse Americans who have struggled as students. The book is illustrated "scrapbook-style" with photos from the life of each participant. The snapshots of these diverse lives are entitled with a passion or occupation next to each name. We read first about the "inventor," "artist," "trapeze artist," "soccer player," "graduate student," or "dancer," and only later about the serious struggles each had with learning, a small part of their story. Each narrator discusses the pain of being left behind a grade, called names, put in special classes, or wondering what it meant to be called "learning disabled," but these experiences are all followed by triumph.

Each participant is at a different stage of life, and so the story of an eighth grade female wrestler is presented alongside the story of a factory worker who returned to school in his forties and became a veterinarian. The chroniclers are racially and ethnically diverse and include a lesbian explorer/teacher who was the first woman to cross the ice to the North Pole. Yet it is refreshing that these learners are largely "everyday" people. While many of us know that Albert Einstein and Whoopie Goldberg had learning differences, it is affirming to read about unsung successes.

This book will be helpful to teachers by contradicting the emphasis on acquiring "reading, writing and 'rithmetic" on a set timetable. The authors of the selections remember the teachers and parents who were helpful to them, and they describe what

helped them maintain their sense of self and purpose.

Students reading the book will find good adventures, good role models, and experiences that may mirror their own or help them develop respect for students who learn differently. This book is geared toward readers at the middle elementary level and up, as well as the friends, family, teachers, and community of people labeled with learning disabilities. The point of good teaching is to guide students towards their life purpose; these learners have all embraced that journey.

Grace Nichols  
Albany, N.Y.

### 19-1-0082

Levy, Janice. *Gonzalo Grabs the Good Life*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Bill Slavin. ISBN 978-0-8028-5328-8, \$17.50.

One of the surest ways I know a picture book is worth anybody's while is to sit with my six-year-old son Lukas and read it together. I know he enjoys it if it mysteriously disappears from the pile of titles I'm reading or reviewing and I catch him rereading it on his own. That's exactly what happened with Levy's most recent picture book. We went through it together, and it became the latest book to grow legs.

Gonzalo is a rooster who hits the big time after winning the lottery. Immediately thereafter he announces to Farmer Chucho, "I'm rich!" so "Get another rooster. I quit!" Bags packed, he heads to the big city to live "*la vida loca*." The proverbial prodigal, this rooster blows his wad of cash on material stuff: a mansion; a maid, butler, chauffeur, and chef; a yacht; and partying. It all comes to naught, though. He grows fat and homeless. Still in search of fulfillment, he turns to the church to join its choir, but if it's not one thing, it's another with Gonzalo. He does nothing but complain to the priest who, done with the rooster's negativity, shares a nugget of wisdom: "A wise man once said, 'When you can't find your car keys, they're usually in your pocket.'" The priest's advice serves as a catalyst for Gonzalo to seek yet another, more satisfying route.

The problem I have with this book is that as much fun as the story is to read, great as Slavin's accompanying illustrations are, it relies heavily on ugly stereotypes. Gonzalo happens to be Latino, who happens to spend his originally hard-earned money to purchase lotto tickets (a fool's tax) because of the get-rich-quick false nature of gambling. He then quits his responsibilities, leaving the farmer in a tight spot, and irresponsibly wastes his new money: ¡Ay, caramba! And talk about being in a jam, because doesn't conventional wisdom say that anything that gets a child to read must be good? But continuing to share this story with my son, who is part Mexican and part Swedish American, I worry that he will begin to think of Gonzalo (and therefore Mexicans and Mexican Americans) as fat, lazy good-for-nothings who would rather waste it all on *la vida loca* than show some restraint. The overall moral is obvious: appreciate the blessing of life, but the likely unintended message is there, too.

René Saldaña, Jr.  
Texas Tech Univ.

### 19-1-0083

Lyon, George Ella. *You and Me and Home Sweet Home*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Stephanie Anderson. ISBN 978-0-689-87589-2, \$17.99.

Sharonda and her mother have been living with an aunt for over a year, but her uncle needs the space so the protagonist and her mother have to find someplace else to live. Even though the mother works two jobs, she cannot afford a place of her own. But with the help of community members and an unnamed organization that resembles Habitat for Humanity, the African-American protagonist and her mother build their new home.

The story conveys the power of community and the strong sense of pride the family has by helping to build their own house. Lyon has written many books that feature characters of diverse backgrounds growing up in poverty, but with a sense of pride and hope. The book would also be useful as a means of encouraging volunteerism.

Laretta Henderson  
Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

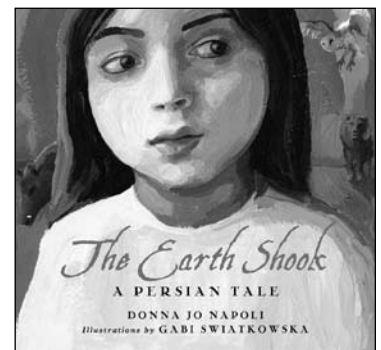
### 19-1-0084

MacDonald, Margaret Read, and Taibah, Nadia Jameel, ret. *How Many Donkeys? An Arabic Counting Tale*. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Carol Liddiment. ISBN 978-0-8075-3424-3, \$16.99.

Napoli, Donna Jo. *The Earth Shook: A Persian Tale*. New York: Disney/Hyperion, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Gabi Swiatkowska. ISBN 978-1-4231-0448-3, \$15.99.

The wise fool, or at least the funny fool, is a source of endless humor in many cultures, not least of all Middle Eastern, where he goes by such names as Jouha, Goha, Jeha, and more. It's said that in serious Jeha-joke circles, the stories are all numbered and everyone knows which story goes with which number. All you have to do is say the number—and your audience will roar with laughter.

*How Many Donkeys?* is based on a far-flung traditional favorite. In his Saudi Arabian persona, Jouha takes his ten donkeys, laden with dates, to market. While riding on one, he counts them, just to make sure none have strayed. What? Only nine? He gets down, goes from donkey to donkey, and counts again. Ah, now there are ten. Much relieved, Jouha gets back on his riding donkey, and a little later decides to count again. But again he sees only nine! So he gets off, counts ... and so on and on. This version, with charming colorful illustrations of Jouha traversing sand dunes with his ten darling donkeys (or ... are there only nine?), is a counting lesson in Arabic. Young children will enjoy repeating numbers in



Arabic, while they laugh at the supremely silly story.

*The Earth Shook* explores the human condition at a deeper level. The story takes inspiration from both the poems of the thirteenth-century Persian mystic Rumi and the actual earthquake in December 2003 that devastated half the Iranian city of Bam. One night a terrible earthquake destroys a city, and only a little girl named Parisi is left. In her search for companionship, she encounters one wild animal after another—snake, boar, wolf, lion. Each threatens revenge for some harm it has suffered from humans and tells Parisi to cover herself and run away. Finally Parisi decides that she is not likely to meet other humans but must start to do things that only humans do. She waters the flowers; she makes a drum and dances; she laughs; and because everybody needs to eat—but only humans cook—she makes a pot of rice with nuts and dried fruit. Gradually all the animals join her and help. With restored courage, she shares the food.

The expressive illustrations of beautiful little Parisi and the animals are painted loosely with muted colors evocative of mysticism. This elusive story can inspire thoughtful discussion in elementary-school classrooms—about life, relationships, and lions.

Elsa Marston  
Bloomington, Ind.

#### 19-1-0085

Mora, Pat. *Gracias/Thanks*. New York: Lee & Low, 2010. 32 pp. Illus. by John Parra. Bilingual (Spanish-English) ed. ISBN 978-1-60060-258-0, \$17.95.

Beginning with the morning sun, the boy in *Gracias/Thanks* is grateful that it wakes him so that he won't grow a long, white beard. He is not only thankful for the obvious, but also for what matters to him, such as his brother making him laugh and his friend showing him a new book. Putting a positive spin on his day even when things do not go well, such as when he falls during his school play, makes this poetic story of appreciation one that children everywhere should hear.

*Gracias/Thanks* is a bilingual book that puts the Spanish text first, giving it importance rather than featuring it as a bonus. Also, it might be hard to spot at first, but this story is about a biracial family. Parra's illustrations are like paintings, full of texture and fullness that add breadth to the text. More literature where families are painted as they are without requiring explanation are much needed.

For this book I would like to say, "gracias, Pat Mora," for the little things you notice and point out to children so that they may enjoy a fuller taste of the world.

Kena Sosa  
Dallas, Tex.

#### 19-1-0086

Nelson, Kadir, and Obama, Barack. *Change Has Come: An Artist Celebrates Our American Spirit*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009. unpaginated. Illus. by Kadir Nelson. ISBN 978-1-4169-8955-4, \$12.99.

The time has come to read *Change Has Come*. This juvenile book is best suited for elementary school age. The drawings are by award-winning illustrator Kadir Nelson. The author is not a traditional children's author. The author is our very own President Barack Obama. Illustrator Nelson has woven Obama's words onto an inspirational canvas of black-and-white etchings. The quotations within the book are taken from a variety of Obama's speeches. There are inspirational quotes that range from the Keynote Address at the 2004 National Democratic Convention in Boston, Massachusetts, all the way through Obama's address on November 4, 2008, as president-elect in Chicago, Illinois. There is even a tie-in to Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights marches.

As a picture book suitable for the lower grades, this is a perfect contemporary title. It can be used for school lessons, family reading time, or gift giving. Nelson has created a classic. *Change Has Come* is not a political book. Rather this juvenile book provides a patriotic perspective. As the illustrator notes, it is a book that "celebrates our American spirit."

Madelene R. Barnard  
Manatee County (Fla.) Library System

#### 19-1-0087

Nishizuka, Koko. *The Beckoning Cat*. New York: Holiday House, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Rosanne Litzinger. ISBN 978-0-8234-2051-3, \$16.95.

Folktales frequently explain the origins of things. Such is the case with *The Beckoning Cat*, a picture book story based on a Japanese folktale. Yohei, the central character, lives with his father. Because his father is ill, Yohei must earn a living; he does this by selling fish. One evening, a disheveled and hungry stray cat comes to the door. Yohei cleans up the cat and shares his meager meal with it. After the cat has eaten, it disappears. Three days later when Yohei is selling fish, a neighbor comes to tell him that his father is very ill. Yohei immediately goes home with his unsold fish. As he is wondering what to do with the fish, customers begin to arrive, brought there by the "beckoning cat." The cat that Yohei had shown kindness to was now repaying him by beckoning customers to his house. Yohei becomes a successful fishmonger, and people begin to make good-luck porcelain cats holding up one paw like Yohei's cat. Beautiful full-color illustrations are the perfect accompaniment to the story and expand the text.

For an interesting comparison, read another picture book that explains the porcelain good luck cat: *The Tale of the Lucky Cat* by Sunny Seki (East-West Discovery Press, 2007). The facts may differ; the truths are the same. *The Beckoning Cat* is a satisfying tale for readers and listeners of every culture.

Mary J. Lickteig  
Univ. of Nebraska-Omaha

#### 19-1-0088

Okagaki, K. A. *Bait for Lunch*. Edmond, Okla.: 4RV Publishing, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Ryan Shaw. ISBN 978-0-9818685-8-5, \$11.99 (pb).

Okagaki's tale is one familiar to families whose second generation children seem to identify more with the environment of their peers than that of their cultural background.

Gilroy would rather go hungry than eat the scary, wiggling seafood Grandfather prepares when visiting from Japan. Grandfather even visits Gilroy's school to provide the class with snacks. The class is won over, except Gilroy.

In the end, Gilroy has Grandfather try his breakfast pizza in exchange for his trying one of his grandfather's dishes. This seems like a fair exchange; however, the book does not actually depict Gilroy giving it a try or his reaction. Grandfather makes the sacrifice, but we never know for sure if Gilroy fulfills his part of the bargain. This might create doubt for readers as to whether Gilroy just pulled a fast one. I would have also liked to see cultural validation so that readers understand that these foods are eaten regularly in Japan.

I did enjoy how Okagaki broke the short story into chapters. This is a great way to introduce the concept of chapter books to smaller children. I have not seen many of these on the market, making this book more of an asset.

Kena Sosa  
Dallas, Tex.

#### 19-1-0089

Paterson, John B., Jr., and Paterson, John B., Sr. *Roberto's Trip to the Top*. Somerville, Mass.: Candlewick, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Renato Alarcão. ISBN 978-0-7636-2708-9, \$16.99.

Renato Alarcão's luminous, breathtaking artwork takes *Roberto's Trip to the Top* into another realm, past the usual fare of children's picture books. The story, by the John B. Patersons (Junior and Senior), tells of one of those unforgettable days, when Roberto and his uncle take a tram ride to the mountain above Caracas.

Written in English with Spanish words sprinkled in, the book uses either parenthesis or context to make clear to non-Spanish readers what the words mean. A handy glossary in the back lets readers look up the meanings of all the Spanish words.

Readers get the smells, and sights and tastes and sounds of Caracas, as well as the heady feel of the language, as the boy and the uncle ride up to the mountain, then walk down. And, like in so many family vacations, when the boy's camera takes a header down the mountain, losing in the process the dozens of pictures he had taken to capture the magic of the day, the boy has to find a way to bring home a souvenir that will keep the memory.

The Patersons' story is right on the mark, deftly laying out the sights and smells of Caracas, but the sure, knowing illustrations by Alarcão, a Brazilian artist, really bring the story to life. The illustrations of the city spread out below from the tram car are breathtaking enough to make you dizzy. John Sr. an experienced writer, teamed with his son, John Jr., a first time writer, and aptly, they have captured a trip to Caracas. *Roberto's Trip to the Top* is charming and heady, and will find happily find its place in anyone's classroom or home library.

John Michael Tracy  
Katy, Tex.

#### 19-1-0090

Paul, Ann Whitford. *Tortuga in Trouble*. New York: Holiday House, 2009. 40 pp. Illus. by Ethan Long. ISBN 978-0-8234-2180-0, \$16.95.

Paul has done it again. She has taken her beloved and well-known characters, Iguana, Conejo, and Culebra from stories such as *Mañana Iguana* and *Fiesta Fiasco*, and spins them into another golden tale of the past. In this case, *Tortuga in Trouble*, a spicy new Southwest version of Little Red Riding Hood, brings readers into a familiar story with unfamiliar results.

Complete with a glossary of Spanish words at the back, the occasional Spanish words in the text are used in an authentic way. They are sprinkled like chili powder here and there in an otherwise English sentence, just as many people speak today. Reflections of the Southwest can also be found in Ethan Long's illustrations, such as the geometric patterns on Tortuga's shell. The colorful and cartoonish illustrations instantly involve the reader in the emotions of the characters as they learn the lessons found in standard fairy tales—loyalty and friendship, learning to be cautious, being wary of strangers, and that good, sometimes with help, will usually triumph over the bad—but with a sassy cultural kick.

Kena Sosa  
Dallas, Tex.

#### 19-1-0091

Paul, Chris. *Long Shot*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Frank Morrison. ISBN 978-1-4169-5079-0, \$16.99.

The power of positive thinking and a family's love and support are the themes running through *Long Shot*. Chris Paul, the author and NBA basketball star, was constantly told as a youngster that he was too small to play basketball. Fortunately, Chris ignored those comments and went on to become an All-Star player with the New Orleans Hornets. In this story, eight-year-old Chris is preparing for the school tryouts, which are one week away. Although the average height of an NBA player is 6 feet, 7 inches tall, Chris realizes that at 4 feet, 1 inch tall, he isn't going to get taller overnight.

His friends constantly tease him about his height, but through it all, his family continues to support him. "Work harder than everyone else on the court and your size won't matter," says Papa Chilly. His mom encourages him to do the best he can with the gifts he has. Chris spends hours practicing his layups and shooting foul shots. His brother even offers him some tips. During tryouts, Chris learns that his big dreams and determination have finally paid off. *Long Shot* is an engaging book that encourages boys and girls to dream and dream big. Morrison's vibrant illustrations are charming.

Valerie A. Canady  
Mental Health Weekly

**19-1-0092**

Polacco, Patricia. *In Our Mothers' House*. New York: Philomel, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by the author. ISBN 978-0-399-25076-7, \$17.99

*In Our Mothers' House* is the perfect example of a “do” when writing a children’s book on controversial issues, such as gay marriage, interracial adoption, and multicultural families in general. Polacco’s story does not use any of the words I just did to tell her story. She simply allows the oldest child to talk about her family the way she sees them. She describes what is special about each one, how they came into the family, and what joys they bring to the family.

When trouble does come around, in the form of a disapproving neighbor, it is simply told as part of the story, not the entire plotline, as conquering the fears or disagreements of others should not be what dominates our lives. We can be fulfilled and rejoice regardless. The focus of this story is one of love.

Marmee and Meema, the two mothers, contribute to their community with their crafts, talents, and zest for fun. They motivate and inspire their children to be creative and be themselves. *In Our Mothers' House* can show children from any type of family or background that love and acceptance come in many different forms from many different kinds of people.

Kena Sosa  
Dallas, Tex.

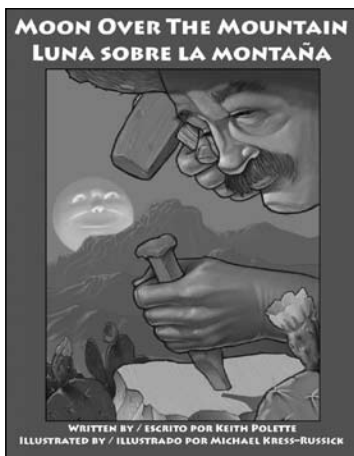
**19-1-0093**

Polette, Keith. *Moon Over the Mountain/Luna sobre la montaña*. McHenry, Ill.: Raven Tree Press, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Michael Kress-Russick. ISBN 978-1-932748-85-7, \$16.95.

Kress-Russick’s illuminating, playful artwork lights up this book that tells the story of Agapito, a poor Mexican stonecutter who has the fortune—or misfortune—to be granted all his wishes. With each wish, he is content, then unsatisfied, leading to one more wish. In succession, he becomes a merchant, the sun, the wind, a majestic mountain, and at last, a contented coyote, howling at the moon.

As a bilingual educator, I have to say I would never read or use this book exactly as written. Despite its title in two languages, it is written in a mixture of Spanish and English. Polette, director of English Education at the University of Texas at El Paso, commits a capital sin in mixing two languages. It’s a shame, because the story is delightful, written by an author with a command and an understanding of children’s stories that few writers possess.

That said, I confess that I can’t wait to read this to my



kindergartners. Not only is the story delightful, but it lacks the pat, thoughtless, happy ending that infects so many children’s books. I’ll read it in all English, or all Spanish, and it will become a permanent part of my classroom library.

Children, perhaps even more than adults, love a spooky, unsettling book. *Moon Over the Mountain*, though not spooky in any sense, has a terrific ending that will raise many thought-provoking questions in children. It’s the kind of book—perfectly complemented by detailed, wonderful illustrations—that lingers in the mind long after the first reading.

I would urge Raven Tree Press to reissue the storybook that is truly bilingual, in both languages, not the motley mixture of languages that was the unfortunate choice. Mixture of languages aside, this book is a gem—worth getting, worth reading, worth having on your bookshelf.

John Michael Tracy  
Katy, Tex.

**19-1-0094**

Rivera Marín, Guadalupe. *My Papa Diego and Me/Mi papá Diego y yo: Memories of My Father and His Art/Recuerdos de mi padre y su arte*. San Francisco: Children’s Book Press, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Diego Rivera. Bilingual (English-Spanish) ed. ISBN 978-0-89239-228-5, \$17.95.

An important theme in Gabriel García Márquez’s fiction, especially emphasized in his novella *El cornel no tiene quien le escriba*, is amnesia. Of course, García Márquez’s amnesia, unlike the medical varieties, represents an a-historical worldview in which political struggles, even recent ones, are neatly tucked away in the far reaches of cephalic folds we no longer care (or choose) to access in the common-sense realism of neo-liberal worldviews in Mexico, the United States, wherever...

*My Papa Diego and Me* invites teachers and students to suspend the amnesia, for a moment, or maybe even longer if we choose to be thoughtful. The author recalls her father’s work, situates herself within it, and allows us to remember the aspirations of the Mexican Revolution, visually, in ways a six-year-old can understand. My favorite painting represented in this children’s book is *The rural teacher*, in which an armed Revolutionary soldier protects the teacher and children while parents in the background labor to provide for families. Work, physical and educational, was-is-will be required to consummate our hopes. Belongs in every library!

James C. Jupp  
Central Arkansas Univ.

**19-1-0095**

Rivera, Rafael, Jr., and Hoppey, Tim. *Baseball on Mars/Béisbol en Marte*. Houston: Piñata Books, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Christina Rodriguez. Bilingual (English-Spanish) ed. Spanish translation by Gabriela Baeza Ventura. ISBN 978-1-55885-521-2, \$15.95.

*Baseball on Mars* is an imaginative story true to a young boy's mind; a rocket ship constructed out of wood and household appliances takes off for the red planet, piloted by Roberto, the boy, and co-piloted by Roberto's dad. The narrative transforms fantasy into reality, as Roberto's backyard becomes outer space and mundane objects convert into celestial materiel with even a pigeon turning into a meteor. The conflict arises when the father, who is a baseball fan, refuses to go on the trip because he plans on watching a baseball game on television. Nevertheless, fatherly love wins out and the baseball aficionado turns into an astronaut, just to be with his son on Mars.

The narrative is fast paced, the characters very real, and the humor plentiful. Readers turn the pages eager to see how the trip will conclude. The realistic drawings, with cartoonish elements, manage to combine fantasy and reality in a convincing style. The setting evokes New York City quite realistically. Throughout the illustrations and narrative, there is a clear expression of love, family loyalty, and the joy of childhood. This is a bilingual edition with the authors and translator demonstrating easy mastery of English and Spanish.

What's the one issue I have with this book? I wish that I had written it myself.



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

#### 19-1-0096

Rotner, Shelley, and Kelly, Sheila M. *Shades of People*. New York: Holiday House, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. with photos by Shelley Rotner. ISBN 978-0-8234-2191-6, \$16.95.

*Shades of People* is a delightful addition to the preschool multicultural genre. The photographs by Rotner are not only engaging, but also heartwarming. The text by Rotner and coauthor Kelly combines complex concepts with big basic words. This nonfiction title could be a perfect fit for story time. Themes could encompass "Random Acts of Kindness Week," patriotism, heritage, color concepts, diversity, world peace day, and the list goes on. As a quilt of many faces, the reader sees the youthful snapshots as an upbeat glimpse into the future. Moreover, multiracial families, playgroups, neighborhoods, and classmates are brilliantly illustrated.

This picture book is a wonderful complement to other great picture books, such as *All the Colors of the Earth* by Sheila Hamanaka and *Color of Us* by Karen Katz. The authors embrace the philosophy that different is good. It follows the thought path that if all the trees in the forest were the same, what a boring place it would be. Like a tree, the United States is strong because of its many roots. The leaves here are the photographs by Rotner and the branches are the words. Why not sit a spell under this shady tree and read *Shades of People*.

Madelene R. Barnard  
Manatee County (Fla.) Library System

#### 19-1-0097

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *The Anne Frank Case: Simon Wiesenthal's Search for the Truth*. New York: Holiday House, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Bill Farnsworth. ISBN 978-1-8234-2109-1, \$18.95.

Following the Holocaust, Simon Wiesenthal, a survivor of the death camps, made great efforts to hunt down Nazi murderers and deniers of this mass destruction. Having lost many family members and friends at the hands of the Nazis, Wiesenthal, who was born in Austria in 1908 and died there in 2005 at the age of 96, devoted his life to preventing a recurrence of this reign of terror.

Written for young children, this book is a description of Wiesenthal's efforts and accomplishments. According to Rubin, his work began in earnest when neo-Nazi protesters disturbed a performance of the play, *The Diary of Anne Frank* at the Landes Theatre in Vienna in 1958. The author describes Wiesenthal's search for the Nazi who had arrested the Frank family. She also talks about Wiesenthal's own struggle to emerge from the Holocaust alive. At the end of the book there is a detailed biography of Wiesenthal together with family photos.

While the book was informative, it is written with too much historical detail for young readers. Readers old enough to understand this book might consider the narrative condescending, as the author is clearly talking to younger children. A good starting point, this book is educational but could have been more age appropriate. The message of this book is clear: that we must never forget the Holocaust.

Hannah M. Heller  
Baltimore, Md.

#### 19-1-0098

Schroeder, Alan. *In Her Hands: The Story of Sculptor Augusta Savage*. New York: Lee & Low, 2009. 48 pp. Illus. by JaeMe Bereal. ISBN 978-1-60060-332-7, \$19.95.

Woven together with the scarcely documented facts of her life, *In Her Hands* tells the story of sculptor Augusta Savage and her journey from Florida in the 1890s to New York City in the 1920s. Although the story begins abruptly, seeming somewhat awkward and stiff at first, Schroeder quickly pushes through and uncovers the life of a very private yet very important African-American artist. Readers are invited into Savage's somewhat thwarted childhood and share in her sadness and disappointment as her minister father forces her not to sculpt. Then we are privileged enough to watch as she journeys to New York City where, after winning an art contest, she is able to afford attending Cooper Union for the Arts.

With sensitively created paintings, Bereal adds a dimension to Savage's story that words alone could not have captured. Large, clear facial features help shape Schroeder's thoughtful portrayal

of this Harlem Renaissance sculptor. It is not easy to recreate the life of someone so private, but Schroeder and Bereal did more than just scratch the surface in helping share Savage with yet another generation of readers. The essence of August Savage shines through with every page.

Juliet Roscigno-Filipkowski  
Brentwood (N.Y.) Public Library

#### 19-1-0099

Stehlik, Tania Duprey. *Violet*. Toronto: Second Story Press, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Vanja Vuleta Jovanovic. ISBN 978-1-897187-60-9, \$14.95.

*Violet* is an enchanting allegorical story colorfully and tastefully depicting the biracial and multiracial state. Violet's mother is red, and her father is blue. Violet, however, is violet. Kids at her new school are in awe, because they have only seen other children who are red, blue, or yellow. Violet was already worried about fitting in when other children began to ask curious questions that Violet had never been asked before, making her reflect for the first time on her own color.

Violet, as well as readers, gets a lesson in being different, being special, and even an academic one—how primary colors blend to mix very beautiful secondary colors. Children who are biracial, or multiracial, will be able to identify with Violet's confusion, no matter what their multiple backgrounds are, instead of reading only books about their particular combination of heritages. This makes the theme more universal and even more comprehensive for majority audiences and a great “tolerance” read for all.

Kena Sosa  
Dallas, Tex.

#### 19-1-0100

Wayland, April Halprin. *New Year at the Pier: A Rosh Hashanah Story*. New York: Dial, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Stephane Jorisch. ISBN 978-0-8037-3279-7, \$16.99.

This delightful and adorable children's book is told in first person by a young Jewish boy named Izzy, who describes the upcoming Jewish New Year celebration. Izzy tells of his conflicting emotions when he apologizes to his family and friends for difficulties he's caused in the past year. Some of the apologies are easy, while others present more of a challenge.

Izzy tells of the community gathering at the ocean on the holiday of Rosh Hashanah, for the ceremony called *Tashlich*. Singing prayers and psalms, members of the community throw pieces of bread into the water, representing their sins of the past year. As they symbolically discard their sins, they resolve to make improvements in the year to come and to let go of old grudges that may have hindered their relationships.

The author provides a cheerful mood as Izzy expresses his excitement over the changing weather, the fun with his friends, and seeing people from all over his town. He is greatly relieved when

he finds the courage to make up with his best friend and start over with a clean slate.

With colorful illustrations, the author gives the reader the inspiration to enter the new year with encouragement. He gives the message that we can take the first step to reconnect and repair strained relationships with family and friends. Reading this book is a great way to wrap up one year and enter the next with great hope, motivation, and joy.

Hannah M. Heller  
Baltimore, Md.

#### 19-1-0101

Weill, Cynthia. *Opuestos: Mexican Folk Art Opposites in English and Spanish*. El Paso, Tex.: Cinco Puntos Press, 2009. unpaginated. Illus. by the author. ISBN 978-1-933693-56-9, \$14.95.

Weill has once again created a colorful canvas of Mexican folk sculpture that teaches children a concept while simultaneously treating their eyes to an art that is warm, basic, and organic. In this case, the concept is opposites. Each layout demonstrates the concept through carved wooden (brightly painted fantastical) *alebrije* animals, an art form local to the people of Oaxaca, Mexico, painted in bold and eye-catching colors. Even more appealing to young children, it is not the teacher or the parent explaining opposites to them, but curious-looking animals.

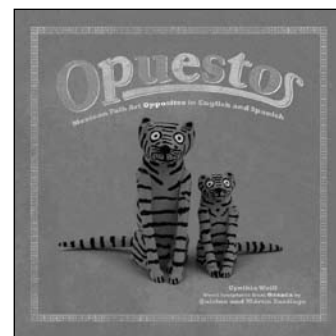
Both the idea and the visual depictions are easy to understand and grab readers' attention. Written in English and Spanish, books like *Opuestos* bridge cultural gaps in schools and society when they include children with different languages and backgrounds in this attention-grabbing style. Weill did not forget a thing. She even made sure the backgrounds for the pictures were in vivid, lively colors that only add to the mesmerizing work of the artisans of Oaxaca. Kids will learn their opposites and be entertained as well.

Kena Sosa  
Dallas, Tex.

#### 19-1-0102

Williams, Karen Lynn, and Mohammed, Khadra. *My Name Is Sangoel*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Catherine Stock. ISBN 978-0-8028-5307-3, \$17.00.

Many student refugees have problems with the local U.S. population pronouncing their family names. Williams focuses on this common frustration in *My Name is Sangoel*. After his father was killed in the long-term Sudanese civil war, he, his mother, and sister immigrate to the United States. Among the many issues San-



goel must deal with are name-calling and malicious jokes. He is particularly sensitive to the pronunciation of his Dinka name since his dignity rests with his name. Rather than change his name to Sam or use a nickname, Sangoel insists that everyone learn to pronounce it. So at school, he cleverly creates a way for the students and teachers to learn the pronunciation with some accuracy: he uses illustrations to associate sound and meaning. He draws a sun and a soccer goal: "sun goal." By using art, Sangoel also learns the correct pronunciation of his peers' names. Through the period of acculturation, Sangoel learns much about the United States and its educational system.

Williams enables young students to identify with this outsider and see how he solves a problem and builds friendships. His initiative and courage as well as diplomacy are worth further discussion. The author provides a note on the importance of names in many societies. The illustrations are in watercolor, portraying the dusty heat of southern Sudan and the cold snow of the northern United States. Recommended.

Patricia S. Kuntz  
Madison, Wis.

## Intermediate (Gr. 4–6)

### 19-1-0103

Castilla, Julia Mercedes. *Strange Parents*. Houston: Piñata Books, 2009. 96 pp. ISBN 978-1-55885-590-8, \$9.95 (pb).

*Strange Parents* tells the story of 13-year-old Marisol's reunion with her parents and a brother who are no more than strangers to her. For ten years Marisol has lived with her *Tia* and her grandmother in Mexico while her parents tried to build a better life for their family in the United States. However, none of this makes a difference to Marisol, who simply wants to return to the life she knows and loves in Mexico and leave this place where she is surrounded by parents she does not know, a brother who hates her, and a language she does not speak.

Marisol's struggle to belong unfolds in this new novel by Castilla; however, there are parts of the book that I wish had unfolded a little more. There were characters introduced who reappeared a few times and seemed like they would be important to Marisol, but they were never fully developed enough to be a significant part of her story. Also, the ending of the book seems incomplete. The plot starts to thicken, Marisol's relationships with certain characters begin to develop, and then the book ends abruptly. It leaves the reader dissatisfied and wishing the rest of Marisol's story had been told.

Heather A. Jones  
Cypress Lakes (Tex.) High School

### 19-1-0104

Clark, Kathy. *Guardian Angel House*. Toronto: Second Story Press, 2009. 200 pp. ISBN 978-1-897187-58-6, \$14.95 (pb).

Keeping alive the stories of Holocaust survivors becomes increasingly important as those who experienced its horrors near the end of their lives. Anti-Semites who make great attempts to deny the existence of the Holocaust are growing in number. Books like *Guardian Angel House* serve as reminders that the messages of the survivors must never be forgotten.

This book concerns the lives of two sisters, Susan and Vera, who are living in Budapest, Hungary, during the Nazi reign of terror. Written by Kathy Clark, Vera's daughter, the book provides insight into the perspectives of young girls who were hidden in a convent by nuns dedicated to saving their lives. Defying Nazi laws, the nuns take great risks to rescue young Jewish girls by providing food, shelter, and emotional support. Together the girls and the nuns share customs of their cultures as they combine religious holiday celebrations.

During a time when society persecuted Jews, these courageous women went out of their way to stand up for humanity. Thanks to their efforts, children like Susan and Vera managed to live to tell their story. This book is a moving account of their experiences and one which I would highly recommend for readers of all ages.

Hannah M. Heller  
Baltimore, Md.

### 19-1-0105

Clements, Andrew. *Extra Credit*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, 2009. 183 pp. ISBN 978-1-4169-4929-9, \$16.99.

Both Abby-in-Illinois and Sadeed-in-Afghanistan are smart kids, and each can write an excellent letter. For underachieving Abby, however, it's almost a punishment at first. This pen pal correspondence is a requirement—along with studying a lot harder—for getting promoted to seventh grade. For top-student Sadeed, it's a chance to show off his mastery of English; although his younger sister is supposed to be the pen pal, he secretly takes over the job of writing. But this is a conservative village in rural Afghanistan, and when the elders discover that it's actually Sadeed who is sharing his thoughts with an American girl, they insist that the correspondence be stopped.

By then both of them have learned something about the other's life, as well as insights into themselves and their worlds. Seeing the flat cornfields of Illinois as Sadeed must imagine them, Abby begins to appreciate their beauty, while he recognizes that there is majesty as well as danger in the mountains near his home.

Written in lively, accessible language, with attractive descriptions of Afghan village life and pencil drawings by Mark Elliott, this book provides a painless introduction to a culture vastly different from middle America, and it will encourage awareness of similarities that transcend differences. Enjoyable for upper-elementary classroom discussion and leisure reading.

Elsa Marston  
Bloomington, Ind.

**19-1-0106**

Couloumbis, Audrey, and Couloumbis, Akila. *War Games*. New York: Random House Children's Books, 2009. 240 pp. ISBN 978-0-375-85628-0, \$16.99 (cl); 978-0-375-95628-7, \$19.99 (rlb).

In 1941, in a small Greek village, Petros, age 12, lives with his family. The confused Petros asks, "Why is it so bad to be American?" Old Mario replies, "Not bad. Dangerous." His father insists all possessions with any American significance be burned or buried and all family members speak Greek, not English. The Italian troops inhabiting the village have caused some unease; however, the fear of the impending arrival of German troops provokes many villagers to flee. The ones remaining trust no one.



Up to now, Petros thought war was like a game of marbles or stoning three birds in a row. He admires his cousin Lambros, who is serving in the Greek army. Misgivings start to build when his cousin Stavros kills the red-throated swallow, a sure sign of bad luck. His attitude completely changes when the German commander takes up quarters in his family's parlor and his wounded cousin is concealed in their well. Now the war games begin, as Petros follows his brother's lead in playing a deadly game of catch.

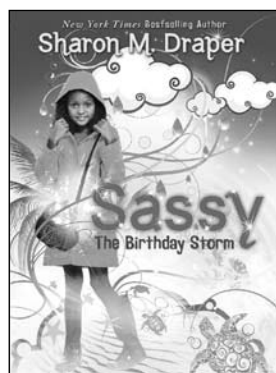
Newbery Honor author Audrey Couloumbis has collaborated with her husband Akila to give a rare picture of country life in war-time Greece, which includes wells, gardens, and goats. Though fiction, the plot follows along with true incidents from her husband's childhood. Although he was born in the United States, he returned with his parents to their native Greece in the 1930s and 1940s and was caught up in the war. *War Games* works for readers in the middle grades. Brief violence; brothers and cousins of a similar age to the reader; realistic feel; story of family and extended family; and the bravery of Petros and the other boys make for a compelling read.

Carolyn Thompson  
Skokie (Ill.) Public Library

**19-1-0107**

Draper, Sharon M. Sassy: *The Birthday Storm*. New York: Scholastic, 2009. 108 pp. ISBN 978-0-545-07152-9, \$14.99.

This second installment in the Sassy series finds Sassy's family preparing to celebrate Grammy's birthday by visiting her in her Florida beach house. But the festivities are stalled by a tropical hurricane that also threatens a nest of sea turtles' eggs. Sassy is able to avert a small crisis with the help of her Sassy Sack, but will she and her family be able to save the baby sea



turtles? How will they celebrate Grammy's birthday during the hurricane?

Draper portrays a loving extended family through a clear plot line and characterization. She also includes information on hurricanes and sea turtles in the text and in the endnotes. This makes the book an excellent addition to a unit on environmental issues.

Laretta Henderson  
Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

**19-1-0108**

English, Karen. *Nikki & Deja: Birthday Blues*. New York: Clarion, 2009. 92 pp. Illus. by Laura Freeman. ISBN 978-0-618-97787-1, \$15.00.

"It's my birthday, it's my birthday"—well, not quite. Deja is excited about her pending eighth birthday and along with friend Nikki plans a phenomenal party. Her prominent birthday wish is to see her estranged father. But, at the last minute Deja's aunt/guardian leaves town on a business trip, and Deja has to stay with an elderly neighbor. In the meantime, a popular girl schedules a party for the same day as Deja's. Will Deja's friends come to her party or will she be there alone? Will her father come?

Freeman's black-and-white illustrations, plenty of white space, and 11 chapters of approximately ten pages each in large print make this a welcomed transition book for independent readers. A sequel, *Nikki & Deja: The Newsy News Newsletter* is forthcoming.

Laretta Henderson  
Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

**19-1-0109**

Giff, Patricia Reilly. *Wild Girl*. New York: Random House Children's Books, 2009. 160 pp. ISBN 978-0-375-83890-3, \$15.99 (cl); 978-0-375-93890-0, \$18.99 (rlb).

Giff draws readers into the story of two lives that are changing. The first belongs to Lidie, a 12-year-old horse lover who immigrates from Brazil to join her father and older brother in New York. The second is Wild Girl, a foal who is traveling to a new home. As their journeys unfold, the reader begins to see that the two are inexplicably linked through different experiences. They have both lost their mothers, and they are both uneasy about being in a foreign place where they have no comforts of home. For Lidie, leaving Brazil means leaving her aunt and uncle and the memories of her mother to live with her father and brother who still think of her as a little girl. Wild Girl also had to leave her mother and is frightened by the new sights and sounds that sur-



round her. Little does each know that in the end not only will they find each other, but they will discover that their new home is filled with wonderful experiences and people who love them unconditionally.

Giff yet again shares with readers a sincere story that shows some of the hardships of immigration and also how beautiful life and new travels can be. This book would be a great read for horse lovers and for all tweens.

Heather Jones  
Cypress Lakes (Tex.) High School

#### 19-1-0110

Peterson, Cris. *Birchbark Brigade: A Fur Trade History*. Honesdale, Pa.: Boyds Mills Press, 2009. 136 pp. Illus. ISBN 978-1-59078-426-6, \$18.95.

To today's readers, the trade in beaver pelts may seem a minor and eminently forgettable historical topic, but from the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries that trade was one of the largest and most lucrative in North America—sparking wars, providing a powerful incentive for European colonization, and creating widespread devastation and displacement of indigenous populations.

Retracing the trade's growth from the voyages of Columbus and John Cabot to the 1804 death of North West Company tycoon Simon McTavish, Peterson tells a rousing tale replete with rough Woods Runners and Voyageurs, powerful Iroquois and Ojibwa tribes, long river journeys, and the bustle at such remote trading posts as Grand Portage and Fort Charlotte, "a dismal cluster of fly-infested log shacks" (96). The author views it all from a Canadian angle, so that McTavish gets far more play than, for instance, John Jacob Astor. Also, rather than chronicle the trade's long decline from the 1820s to the 1840s, she closes with an account of the rediscovery and reconstruction of a trading post in modern Minnesota. Though hampered by pale black-and-white reproductions of prints and paintings, this eye-opening history offers more detail than Anastasia Suen's *Trappers and Mountain Men* (Rourke, 2007), and it closes with a useful reading list of recommended fiction as well as nonfiction.

John Peters  
New York Public Library

#### 19-1-0111

Rohmer, Harriet. *Heroes of the Environment: True Stories of People Who Are Helping to Protect Our Planet*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2009. 112 pp. Illus. by Julie McLaughlin. ISBN 978-0-8118-6779-5, \$16.99.

Using straightforward text, Rohmer profiles 12 individuals from the United States and Mexico who have succeeded in preserving the environment around them. Most are not trained scientists or environmentalists but everyday citizens who saw a need for change

in their communities. Some of these inspirational figures include recent college grad Omar Freilla. Tired of watching his South Bronx neighborhood become a dumping ground, Freilla founded ReBuilders Source, a cooperative that recycles construction and building supplies. Juxtaposing this story is that of Debby Tewa, who grew up without electricity on a remote area of the Hopi Reservation in Arizona. To residents like her, living too far from power lines, she brought solar panels and energy that was renewable, clean, silent, and fit into the traditional Hopi way of life.

A few of the profiles even comprise children and teens, such as 11-year-old Alex Lin, who organized e-waste collection sites in his Rhode Island hometown, met with state representatives, and garnered support for state legislation for the safe disposal of e-waste. Recent immigrant and high school student Erica Fernandez organized a demonstration before the California Land Commission to protest a natural gas project that would upset the coastal and community ecosystems—and won their support. Complementing these inspirational stories are black-and-white photographs and blue-toned, digitally rendered illustrations, as well as additional ideas for student involvement in an environmental effort.

Angela Leeper  
Univ. of Richmond

#### 19-1-0112

Ruelle, Karen Gray, and DeSaix, Deborah Durland. *The Grand Mosque of Paris: A Story of How Muslims Rescued Jews During the Holocaust*. New York: Holiday House, 2009. 40 pp. Illus. by the authors. ISBN 978-0-8234-2159-6, \$17.95.

In a world plagued by terrorists and destruction, it is refreshing to read a book that describes people who risked their own lives to save the lives of others. It is especially meaningful when it involves Muslims who rescued Jews during the Holocaust.

With beautiful illustrations and a detailed history, the authors tell us about the leaders of the Grand Mosque of Paris, who hid Jews from the Nazis. The rector, Si Kaddour Behghabrit, went out of his way to prevent the Nazis from discovering the Jews who were hiding there. The authors relate that since the Mosque was a holy place, the rector required the Nazis to remove their boots when they entered the sanctuary. The extra time this took allowed the Jews to move to a safe shelter. Dr. Ahmed Somia, a Muslim from Tunisia, was also instrumental in saving Jewish lives. The authors write about the way he managed to transport children to safe places away from Paris, using false identity papers and disguising them as Christians or Muslims. He also helped North African prisoners of war who had escaped.

The Muslim leaders of the time considered the people in exile to be like themselves, as brothers and members of the same family. Leaders of today would do well to learn from the acts of faith and courage of their ancestors. This book is a testimony that when the world around us is beset by evil, we do not have to stand idly by and watch the destruction. We can stand up for what is right and, with each life that is saved, make a huge difference in the world.

Hannah M. Heller  
Baltimore, Md.

**19-1-0113**

Russell, Ching Yeung. *Tofu Quilt*. New York: Lee & Low, 2009. 128 pp. ISBN 978-1-60060-423-2, \$16.95.

Brief, poignant glimpses into the life of a girl growing up in Hong Kong are written as sparse, free verse which does not pretend to either rhyme or scan, but which has a lyrical flow and, like a poem, suggests a more profound truth within a simple depiction of a slice of life.

There is a little something in each vignette to make the eyes open wider. Here, her cousin catches a water snake—the meat for soup, the skin to be sold to a musical instrument maker. There, her mother tells her that learning things in school will make her rich in many ways—not just in terms of money. Grandmothers gather and gossip about potential wives for their grandsons: “If she doesn’t care about her own husband, how can she care for the rest of us?” After shrimp wonton, a spoonful of red vinegar will help our digestion. Everyone who lives on that hallway hangs eight-sided mirrors in front of their doors so “the bad luck will bounce around with no place to land.”

The little vignettes make us smile. A delightful glossary in the back of the book gives both pronunciation and bits of culture along with the definition of terms used. Like a quilt, here is piecework of a life, a young girl’s impression of life in Hong Kong, in small pieces, which, taken together, offer a portrait of a whole culture.

Ginny Lee  
Syracuse, N.Y.

**19-1-0114**

Stotts, Stuart. *We Shall Overcome: A Song That Changed the World*. New York: Clarion, 2010. 80 pp. Illus. by Terrance Cummings. Foreword by Pete Seeger. Includes audio CD. ISBN 978-0-547-18210-0, \$18.00.

“We Shall Overcome’ is not elaborate or complicated,” explains author Stuart Stotts. And yet this straightforward song has become an anthem for social change around the world. Absorbing text traces the history of “We Shall Overcome” from its roots in the oral tradition of slave songs, African-American spirituals, and gospel songs, and their improvisational styles to the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee, which began as a center for the progressive labor movement and turned to challenging the injustices of segregation.

At a time when protesters needed strength and courage in the midst of violence and hatred, they turned to music and the simplicity of “We Shall Overcome.” The staff at Highlander understood “the importance of music in bringing people together” and introduced the song to Pete Seeger. This young musician, as well as Martin Luther King, Jr., Joan Baez, and other prominent leaders, brought the song to the forefront of the civil rights movement. Although the song is most notably associated with the struggles of African Americans, Stotts explains how it has come to represent the call for social change, and this call has continued through the Vietnam War, by Chinese students in Tiananmen Square, and during Barack Obama’s presidential victory.

An author’s note offers Stotts’s family history during the civil rights movement and connections to the song. Additional features comprise a recording by Pete Seeger, the song lyrics, numerous archival photographs, and striking, boldly colored mixed-media illustrations. This inspirational book imparts students with more details into this important tool used to change American history.

Angela Leeper  
Univ. of Richmond

**19-1-0115**

Tarver, Monroe S. *Tales from the Mapmaker: Imagia and the Magic Pearls*. Niles, Ill.: Wizarding World Press, 2009. 112 pp. ISBN 978-0-9723936-5-2, \$6.99 (pb).

The idea that “magic is awakened by children with a strong imagination” is the theme surrounding this charming tale featuring Imagia, an African-American elf princess from the kingdom of Zimbah. Imagia has a wonderful life with servants, magic worms to braid her hair, and mysterious but beautiful pearls. But with few friends or adventures, she finds her life boring and lonely. One day she finds a secret tunnel and travels to a new land where she finds friends, evil witches, and talking bats who seek to do her harm.

The concurrent themes of entertainment and education are present with silly sounds and funny names that children will enjoy, thus introducing them to text that encourages prediction skills and life lessons. The beautiful and detailed illustrations, as well as the inventive fantasy characters, will satisfy all readers. The next chapter in this enjoyable series will be anticipated by both children and their parents.

Margaret Auguste  
Franklin Middle School, Somerset, N.J.

**19-1-0116**

Thomson, Melissa. *Keena Ford and the Field Trip Mix-Up*. New York: Dial, 2009. 101 pp. Illus. by Frank Morrison. ISBN 978-0-8037-3264-3, \$15.99.

Keena is a spirited African-American second grader from Washington, D.C. Her adventures begin when she runs against Tiffany for classroom delegate to the student council. Then, Keena struggles with Tiffany for the honored place as the caboose of the class line. If that were not enough, Keena accidentally cuts off one of her braids the day before her fieldtrip to the U.S. Capitol. How will she hide the missing braid? How will she and Tiffany get along on the field trip? Will Keena’s special day be a disaster?

Morrison’s black-and-white drawings break up the text and provide insight into Keena, her family, friends, and adventures. Plenty of white space and chapters in the form of journal entries make the book an excellent selection for early independent readers. This is the sequel to *Keena Ford and the Second Grade Mix-Up*.

Laretta Henderson  
Univ. of Wisconsin–Milwaukee

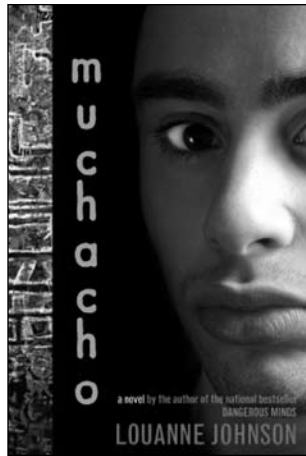
## Young Adult (Gr. 7 and up)

19-1-0117

De la Peña, Matt. *We Were Here*. New York: Random House Children's Books, 2009. 368 pp. ISBN 978-0-385-73667-1, \$17.99 (cl); 978-0-385-90622-7, \$20.99 (rlb).

Johnson, Louanne. *Muchacho*. New York: Random House Children's Books/Knopf, 2009. 208 pp. ISBN 978-0-375-86117-8, \$15.99 (cl); 978-0-375-96117-5, \$18.99 (rlb).

Well-known for her first book and its eventual film adaptation *Dangerous Minds*, Johnson has written another book that recounts the life of a young man who finds himself in an alternative school. Through the first-person narration, Johnson displays her keen ear for the language of youth: quick, poetic, erratic, lyrical. Eddie Corazon is close to graduating, though closer to failing out if he had his way. He's "a junior at the alt school" who "used to get straight A's before [he] started being a juvenile delinquent," and who is suffering from enormous loneliness. He states,



"if I walked into the Rio Grande I would sink to the bottom so fast that I wouldn't even make a ripple and nobody would even notice I was gone." In the story, readers get to see Eddie's everyday life up-close, his every thought, his dreams and fears. Throughout, the boy compares one of his favorite teachers, Miss Beecher, to the latest, Mr. McElroy. Miss Beecher had her quirks, but she was about promoting real discourse; McElroy, not so much. When what should have been a current events discussion turns ugly, McElroy futilely tries to quell the fire. One boy says of another that "he was advocating hate crimes" after the latter made the point that perhaps Blacks should react as violently if not more so against cops when they cause harm to the citizenry. But this in-class talk comes across as disingenuous because every single student in the school appears to know so much about everything in such an enlightened way. It reads more like the author is injecting herself into their story rather than allowing the characters to speak for themselves. Eventually, the story falls apart because it reads more like the author's laundry list of the political beliefs she's advocating for or against, usually left-leaning in nature, ranging from censorship, to homosexuality, to poverty, and to race, to name a few. Good as the writing is, the book is weakened because it is more agenda-driven than character-based.

Not so with de la Peña's (*Ball Don't Lie*, *Mexican WhiteBoy*) latest work. *We Were Here* relies on character to steer the plot. In this picaresque novel (minus the comic mishaps associated with

such tales but tragic nevertheless), the author pulls together the oddest crew in the likes of Miguel, Rondell, and Mong, each in a juvie home for one reason or another, each looking for a way out of or around the hassles of life. Miguel, or Mexico as Rondell calls him, wants to run away from the crime that landed him in his present situation and the accompanying guilt. He believes he must extricate himself from his past in order to make the pain he's caused his mother disappear. Part of his sentence involves keeping a journal. In it, the judge instructs him, he is to document his life and thoughts "so some counselor could try to figure out how I think." In addition, he records the group's journey in great detail. Rondell is running toward another sort of invisibility. Long in the system, he just knows that once they reach the Mexican seaside hideaway, as Mong has promised, life will be a dream. And Mong (who operates at two speeds: "Psycho Mong and Mellow Mong") is set on running toward a more permanent out, unbeknownst to his running mates. On their travels southward along the California coast the three learn some serious lessons about who they are at their core, which is not at all what they set out to discover. These boys have suffered greatly, and de la Peña doesn't shy away from the brutality of life's hard knocks as experienced also by many young people today. Perhaps it is this honest treatment of violence, suicide, friendship, and family that will strike a cord with teen readers. It might also be that instead of politicizing these issues, he simply relates the story of three boys who happen to be in search of something greater than even they know.



René Saldaña, Jr.  
Texas Tech Univ.

19-1-0118

Draper, Sharon M. *Just Another Hero*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, 2009. 280 pp. ISBN 978-1-4169-0700-8, \$16.99.

Arielle, Kofi, November, and Jericho are back for their senior year in high school in this third book in the winning series that began with *The Battle for Jericho* and continued with *November Blues*. November is struggling with being a single parent to her disabled baby girl while trying to return to school. The main characters of this story, Arielle and Kofi, are also struggling. Arielle appears to have it all—a beautiful home and all the clothes a girl could want. However, her home life is not what it appears to be. She wrestles with the choices she has made in the past and with what kind of person she wants to be in the future. Kofi has a wonderful girlfriend and many friends and has been accepted to MIT. However, his parents are distant, and he has the beginnings of a prescription drug problem.

How these students resolve their dilemmas and journey toward

adulthood with the help of family and friends is compelling and suspenseful, and it will ring true to teens. The surprising resolution to the story with unexpected villains and heroes pays tribute to the well-drawn characters. Fans of this wonderful series will not be disappointed.

Margaret Auguste  
Franklin Middle School, Somerset, N.J.

#### 19-1-0119

Ehrenberg, Pamela. *Tillmon County Fire*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2009. 176 pp. ISBN 978-0-8028-5345-5, \$9.00 (pb).

A discontented adoptee, a gay male, a religious zealot, a pregnant female, and an autistic boy are among the nine disparate teens narrating their versions, using different fonts and writing styles, of a shocking fire in their small town. As individual information is expanded and intertwined, a complete portrayal of their lives and the fire emerges.

Each teen's background is dysfunctional, with personal lives equally problematic. Aiden and lackluster Jeremy are tentative friends, but Aiden's descent into Christian fundamentalism and his plans of ridding their high school of those he considers evil disturb Jeremy. After Jeremy grasps that their unsuccessful attempt to burn a gay peer's house was real, he realizes Aiden's malevolence and notifies the police. On arrival at the station he learns the house is ablaze but quickly leaves, presuming the innocence of Aidan and his friends.

During routine questioning Jeremy confesses to the arson, but his surprising and shocking admittance is meant to protect the actual culprit, whose identity and intentions are shocking and heart-rending. Readers will ponder this murky crime and its meaning, culminating from long-standing abuses, misunderstandings, and unforeseen circumstances.

Although the teens' circumstances are realistic, portraying all as exceptionally troubled is excessive; a conventional voice would have provided steadier insight and balance. Regardless, this gripping crime and its narrators will captivate readers.

Lisa A. Hazlett  
Univ. of South Dakota

#### 19-1-0120

Friesner, Esther. *Sphinx's Princess*. New York: Random House Children's Books, 2009. 368 pp. ISBN 978-0-375-85654-9, \$17.99 (cl); 978-0-375-95654-6, \$20.99 (rlb).

Oh, to have lived in the eighteenth dynasty! Never a dull moment for two centuries—or so it appears some three thousand years later. A stellar cast including strong women, warrior pharaohs, religious eccentrics, and power-mad priests, steeped in treachery and intrigue, revolution and counter-revolution, mysterious deaths and disappearances, tomb- and temple-building of a splendor

that dumbfounds us today—and much, much more. No wonder this period in ancient Egypt's history, sixteenth through fourteenth centuries B.C.E., continues to provide thrilling fodder for fiction. Much is false and unduly sensationalist, but some novels provide an exciting and fairly accurate look into the past.

*Sphinx's Princess* is one of the latter. The author has chosen Nefertiti, wife of the "heretic king" Akhnaton, and constructed a life for her up to the point where they become a team: the breathtakingly beautiful girl and a man portrayed in the art of his time as physically grotesque, despite his strength as an intellectual and artistic innovator. The reader can have confidence that the author has researched carefully and has created a convincing vision of life in ancient Egypt's royal palaces, with very few noticeable anachronisms (a "Phoenician merchant" does appear a few centuries too early).

Nefertiti tells her story in natural-sounding English, neither present-day "flip" nor nineteenth-century ponderous, and the prose moves along smoothly. This novel will appeal to many ancient Egypt buffs, young and adult, who are looking for a pleasurable and informative read about believable people bringing history to life.

Elsa Marston  
Bloomington, Ind.

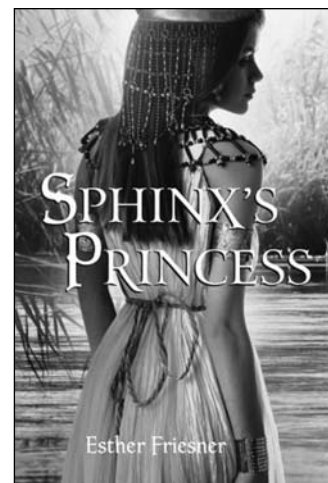
#### 19-1-0121

Hurwin, Davida Wills. *Freaks and Revelations*. New York: Little, Brown, 2009. 234 pp. ISBN 978-0-316-04996-2, \$16.99.

Beginning in 1973 and alternately narrated by antagonists Doug and Jason, this novel chronicles their wildly diverse lives and initial tragic encounter. While Doug finds identity and belonging within the angry punk rock scene, Jason's parents' divorce, with his mother soon becoming rigidly religious. After the 13-year-old announces he is gay, his father abandons him and his mother demands he live elsewhere until he renounces his sinful homosexuality.

During Doug's hazy adolescence of drugs, alcohol, violence, and evolution from punk to skinhead supremacist, Jason is living perilously on the streets, prostituting himself. In 1980 Doug, who despises non-Whites and homosexuals, becomes enraged after glimpsing Jason and others at a favorite restaurant. He and others attack, with Doug brutally beating Jason and fleeing.

The author notes reveal that the story is based on the now-reconciled Matthew Bojer (Jason) and Tim Zall (Doug), speakers for the Museum of Tolerance, which promotes acceptance and respect. They share their experiences to demonstrate change's possibility, and they hope readers will grasp a multifaceted under-



standing of *respect* from this book.

High school students will find this poignant, harrowing, and ultimately satisfying novel engrossing. Minor criticisms are that Doug's clubbing scenes become repetitious and current family relationships of both are absent, but these flaws hardly mar this must-read story.

Lisa A. Hazlett  
Univ. of South Dakota

#### 19-1-0122

Kor, Eva Mozes, and Buccieri, Lisa Rojany. *Surviving the Angel of Death: The Story of a Mengele Twin in Auschwitz*. Terre Haute, Ind.: Tanglewood Press, 2009. 120 pp. ISBN 978-1-933718-28-6, \$15.95.

Hearing from Holocaust survivors becomes more important as people who suffered during this time period are dying of old age. This book is not just a testimony about the effects of the Nazi reign of terror; it is also a detailed description of a special type of situation. Twins in Jewish families were tortured with medical experiments by the famous Nazi, Joseph Mengele, who used innocent Jewish children to test for genetic traits and diseases. The author notes that of the 3,000 twins who suffered at Mengele's hands, only about 200 survived.

Growing up in Romania, Eva tells of the anti-Semitism her family experienced under the Nazis. Her narrative contains an account of the pain and humiliation that she and her twin sister Miriam suffered at Auschwitz-Birkenau as twins for Mengele's experiments. She describes in great detail the many hours of sitting naked in a cold room, being injected with harmful drugs, the starvation, the long roll calls, and the constant fear that she and her sister would die. If one twin died from the experiments, the other twin was taken away to die as well. Eva notes that because she was a strong-willed person, she had the courage to fight for survival. With great effort, she encouraged her twin never to give up the struggle. Miraculously, they both survived the war. Unfortunately, their parents and two other sisters did not.

This book is a real page-turner, one in which the reader can feel as though he or she is right in the scene. While reading about the years under Nazism can be intense, the reader comes away with a positive message of courage, wisdom, and determination that good can triumph over evil if we want to make it happen. I highly recommend this book as an essential testimony to a dark time in world history.

Hannah M. Heller  
Baltimore, Md.

#### 19-1-0123

Landman, Tanya. *The Goldsmith's Daughter*. Somerville, Mass.: Candlewick, 2009. 280 pp. ISBN 978-0-7636-4219-8, \$16.99.

In an expository style that glosses over key historical events, Landman creates a character who defies death, the priests, and

the gods in her struggle to survive in a pre-contact Aztec culture where girls' options were limited. In a series of improbable feats, Itacate fools everyone all the time and witnesses everything that happens in Tenochtitlán. Although forbidden to learn the goldsmith's trade, she acquires a great aptitude for the craft on her own, surpassing her professional goldsmith father's skill.

A dog named Eve in a world where Náhuatl and Spanish were the rule, a lover essentially rising from the dead, and contemporary clichés such as "it almost stopped me in my tracks" trip up the reader. This reader was stopped in *her* tracks with such exchanges as Itacate saying to her golden lover, "Let us go." "Where?" Francisco was aghast. "Not to my people?"

Landman says she's taken liberties in order to make the plot work. Such liberties give the story a fantastical flavor and reduce the characters to caricatures. A story about a strong, well-developed protagonist would have been much more believable and satisfying than one of a supergirl who excels at everything, proves everyone wrong, realizes she wasn't the reason that disaster came to her city, and declares, "I knew I was invincible."

Estela Bernal  
Portland, Ore.

#### 19-1-0124

McKissack, Fredrick, Jr. *Shooting Star*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, 2009. 280 pp. ISBN 978-1-4169-4745-5, \$16.99.

*Shooting Star*, another powerful sports novel by Fredrick McKissack, Jr., who also wrote *Black Hoops* (Scholastic, 1994), deals with the controversial practice of using steroids to enhance performance in high school football. Jomo Rodgers, the protagonist, is a talented high-school football player, but, according to his coach, he needs to commit to performance excellence, particularly if he has the ambition to be recruited by big-time college football programs.

As Jomo begins a new workout regimen that promises to make him stronger and faster, he is approached by a dealer in steroids, known simply as juice to athletes, and is assured that there are no harmful side effects. That is almost true, with the notable exception of inducing uncontrollable rage at the slightest provocation. Jomo picks fights and takes offense at the smallest jokes, and, in the process, loses his girlfriend and withdraws more and more from his family and friends.

The character of Jomo is convincingly real and well-developed. The novel portrays him as a dedicated young man who makes a big mistake and strives with all his courage to overcome it. He is more than a shooting star; he is a winner and role model. *Shooting Star* is a must-read for all high-school athletes and those who love high school sports, especially football.

McKissack is currently the managing editor of the Milwaukee-based education quarterly magazine, *Rethinking Schools*. His articles, opinion pieces, and reviews have been published in *The Washington Post*, *Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Service*, and *Vibe Magazine*, among others. McKissack along with his mother Patricia C. and his father Fredrick L. (Sr.) have numerous books

for children and young adults to their credit. In 1995, he and his mother shared the Coretta Scott King Honor Book Award for *Black Diamond: The Story of the Negro Baseball Leagues* (Scholastic, 1994).

Plummer Alston "Al" Jones  
East Carolina Univ.

**19-1-0125**

Pon, Cindy. *Silver Phoenix: Beyond the Kingdom of Xia*. New York: HarperCollins/Greenwillow, 2009. 352 pp. ISBN 978-0-06-173021-4, \$17.99.

Ai Ling is strong but shy, her shyness due to her time and place. Proper young ladies in this fantasy world based on ancient China are supposed to be quiet and acquiescent. But Ai Ling's father is missing and she must journey to the emperor's palace to find out what has happened to him. She encounters monsters, a large tree called the Love Lost Tree that has human hearts hanging from it, and Chen Yong, a young man on a similar quest. In the face of these challenges, she proves to be a skilled and brave warrior, especially when it really matters. A subplot involving Chen Yong and his younger brother Li Rong offers romance and humor. Some parts of the story remain unclear, perhaps to be developed further in a sequel.

Although it starts slowly, the novel is action-packed and filled with descriptions of places and characters that allow readers' imaginations to run wild. Faraway lands with mythical creatures based on Chinese folklore, beautiful scenes of nature, and sumptuous meals of Chinese food help to establish the setting.

Very few fantasy (and science fiction) novels for teen readers present people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Pon does so in a way that is vivid and original. A strong contribution to the genre, *Silver Phoenix* is recommended even for readers who do not consider themselves fans of fantasy. The novel has something for everyone—fantasy, action, comedy, and romance.

Ari Valderrama  
Chicago, Ill.

**19-1-0126**

Sáenz, Benjamin Alire. *Last Night I Sang to the Monster*. El Paso, Tex.: Cinco Puntos Press, 2009. 240 pp. ISBN 978-1-933693-58-3, \$19.95.

Stork, Francisco X. *The Last Summer of the Death Warriors*. New York: Scholastic, 2010. 352 pp. ISBN 978-0-545-15133-7, \$17.99.

Don't be fooled by Sáenz's (*Sammy & Juliana in Hollywood*) rambling style early on in his latest teen novel, because it is intentional. The seeming incoherence is meant to mimic his narrator's state of mind, one of confusion based on having witnessed a very traumatic event that led to alcohol poisoning. At the outset, Zach awakens to find himself in a rehab center where he is challenged

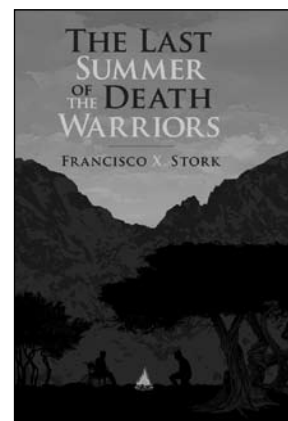
by his therapist, Adam, to remember as a means to recovery. Problem is, Zach doesn't "like remembering" because "remembering makes [him] feel things," and he doesn't "like feeling things." Reluctantly, and more often than not subconsciously, Zach begins this hardest of journeys because what memories do come do so "in little pieces." To say he's had a hard time of growing up is an understatement. And where one might find solace and a haven—family—well, let's just say it is the root cause of Zach's great suffering. From his inept, drunken father, to his manic depressive mother who offers herself in *that* way to Zach, to his maniacal brother who rules the house with an iron fist, it is no wonder Zach is in the predicament he's in. Remembering indeed is a difficult pill to swallow, and quitting is so much easier. But Zach is strong. And about the writing style: halfway through the novel, it straightens itself out, the story moves in a definite direction, and this too is deliberate. Sáenz is first a poet, and so he knows how to use words to his benefit, or as is the case with this book, to the benefit of the story. Stick with it; you will not be disappointed.

Similarly, Stork (*Marcelo in the Real World*) tells of two boys who are suffering greatly and, like Zach, both are looking for answers to some serious questions. Pancho is in a real bind: he's on a very important mission that involves a handgun, a partial description of a target, and a life filled with loss and rage, but he's landed himself at St. Anthony's, an orphanage for boys. There, he plans to bide his time until he figures out how to accomplish his task. All the while he will lay low, not get involved in any way with any of the other boys. Or so he thinks. Enter D.Q. (Daniel Quentin), a kid abandoned at the age of nine by his then-unstable mother. As if this were not enough to deal with, D.Q. has recently been diagnosed with cancer and has only months to live. He too is on a mission, one that requires Pancho's participation. Pancho is forced to think of others in the process, the catalyst for his transformation. D.Q. experiences great change as well; though it doesn't involve miraculously beating death, he does learn about true friendship. Both these stories will resonate with teens who find themselves in the tightest of spots and with no hope of a way out.

René Saldaña, Jr.  
Texas Tech Univ.

**19-1-0127**

Shames, Stephen. *Transforming Lives: Turning Uganda's For-*



*gotten Children into Leaders*. Long Island City, N.Y.: Star Bright Books, 2009. 40 pp. Illus. with photos. ISBN 978-1-59572-213-3, \$12.95 (pb).

Uganda's children have been forgotten even by those in North America who were activists against African civil wars over a decade ago. Shames brings young readers' attention to the great strides that Ugandan children have made against abduction, child abuse, child soldiering, HIV/AIDS, poverty, lack of education, and the lack of family support. LEAD Uganda endeavors to reverse the atrocities of the past decade. Some youth have witnessed unmentionable acts. These stories are not the contents of a video game; rather they relate the acts committed shamelessly upon children by children who fear for their lives.

Shames illustrates the children's recovery and achievements through the eyes of three former child soldiers, five AIDS orphans, three refugees, and two child laborers as they make new friends in the United States. The author solicits the reader's help in assisting Ugandan children as they struggle to take leadership roles. The stories, photos, and drawings help U.S. students relate with the struggles of children around the world, not just in Uganda. Although the book does not explain the acronym LEAD or its fund-raising mechanisms, the sentiments of the children are worthy of a read. There is a long list of people who contributed to this book and support this project.

Patricia S. Kuntz  
Madison, Wis.

## Audio

### 19-1-0128

Asheba. *In the Kid Zone*. Berkeley, Calif.: COV Productions, 2009. CD. 40 minutes. \$15.00.

This beautiful recording draws from African-American musical traditions. *In the Kid Zone* is produced for children, their parents, and adults everywhere.

Why, you may ask, is there anything to sing about for children, when Asheba has put out several records already? The answer is: there is definitely a need to educate people. I do so monthly during each school year as a practicing musician who writes, composes, sings, and plays percussion and piano. Indeed, the "Pied Piper of Calypso Music" is accompanied by another singer who plays the guitar. There is, of course, a percussionist who plays drums. The music is accessible and lively, with danceable rhythms and catchy tunes.

This reviewer has several times reviewed production of Putumayo Kids, which brings music to young people from the Caribbean, Latin America, and the world. *In the Kid Zone* recalls those excellent titles in terms of its quality and multicultural approach.

Geary H. Larrick  
Stevens Point, Wis.

### 19-1-0129

*Picnic Playground: Musical Treats from Around the World*. New York: Putumayo Kids, 2009. CD. 31 minutes. Includes liner notes in English, Spanish, and French. \$16.98.

This multiethnic music CD features songs from around the world having to do with food, especially food associated with picnics, like hamburgers and ice cream. Various artists sing the selected songs in English, Spanish, and French. Some of the titles include "Eat Like a Rainbow" from the United States, "Beautiful Day" from South Africa, and "Ice Cream" from Trinidad.

The CD includes liner notes that give the listener an idea of what each song is about, but because lyrics are not translated. The melodies are catchy and the lyrics repetitive, so teachers looking for a food-themed lesson might use this CD in the classroom. This CD is not for everyone, but it might appeal to those who are multilingual and enjoy songs from around the globe.

Ellen Loughney  
Academy of the Holy Names, Albany, N.Y.

### 19-1-0130

Strom, Yale, and Hot Pstromi. *Borscht with Bread, Brothers" Klezmer*. E. Grinstead, West Sussex, U.K.: ARC Music, 2009. CD. 76 minutes. \$16.98.

This CD features a delightful combination of Klezmer melodies. Some are only instrumental while others have vocals as well. The variety of numbers represents music from different countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

Capturing the spirit of Jewish folk music, this CD is a great addition to music collections for people of all ages. As I listened to it, I felt like I was back in the old *shtetl* towns of Europe at life cycle events in the Jewish communities. I can visualize people singing along with and dancing to the music.

Klezmer music, an important part of Jewish history, is kept alive by Yale Strom and his group. Despite the efforts of the Nazis and other enemies of the Jewish people, we as a nation still survive. Yale Strom and other Klezmer musicians provide proof that the spirit of the Jews lives on.

With the CD comes a booklet that explains the history and origin of each song. Each description is written in four languages: English, German, French, and Spanish, making it easy for people of various cultures to relate. I highly recommend this CD and look forward to continuous listening pleasure both at home and in the car.

Hannah M. Heller  
Baltimore, Md.

## Video

### 19-1-0131

Blank, Les, and Leibrecht, Gina. *All in This Tea*. Oley, Pa.: Bullfrog Films, 2009. DVD or VHS. 70 minutes. Color. \$275.00 (purchase); \$95.00 (rental).

“Why would I be interested in a film about tea,” I said to myself. I’ve rarely been so far off the mark. This interesting, informational, and beautifully poetic piece of work not only held my interest, but totally enchanted me. There is something here for everyone. If business practices in a difficult place is your thing, you will find it here. The story of David Lee Hoffman’s search for the best and purest tea leaves will hold your attention. If travel to exotic places interests you, you will also find it here. The striking contrast of modern China and the farming life, which has not changed much in generations, is fascinating. For those interested in ecology, the use of chemical fertilizers in the production of less than exquisite tea is a lesson to be learned. For the person with an eye for beauty, the scenery is like a study of old Chinese paintings.

This film is a treat for the eye, the mind, and with some imagination the taste buds. The smell of the tea leaves, the preparation and tasting of the boutique tea, forever change a tea-bag habitue. Thank you Blank and Leibrecht for a lovely treat.

Ruth G. Becker  
Fresh Meadows, N.Y.

### 19-1-0132

De Onis, Paco; Kinoy, Peter; and Yates, Pamela. *The Reckoning: The Battle for the International Criminal Court*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Skylight Pictures, 2008. DVD. 85 minutes. Color. \$29.95.

Since the Nuremberg Trials, the nations of the world have sought to bring to justice those government leaders and leaders of guerrilla and paramilitary groups who have committed crimes against humanity. The filmmakers, whose previous credits include *State of Fear* (2006) about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Peru, examine the origins of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and its initial efforts to build legitimacy and to bring war criminals to justice. Unlike the Rwanda and former Yugoslavia tribunals, which were limited to a single conflict and region, the ICC was created to have global authority as a “court of last resort” when individual countries are unable or unwilling to establish fair judicial proceedings for human rights violations.

The filmmakers focus on four case studies that demonstrate the aims of and challenges facing the ICC. The first is that of the Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda, where the ICC has succeeded in indicting its leaders for a variety of crimes against the Acholi people, but these leaders remain at large. The second case study is of the Congolese guerrilla leader Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, whose trial in The Hague for exploiting child soldiers has been ongoing for two years. Colombia is the third case study, where the threat

of ICC action has motivated the government to disarm paramilitary groups. However, the most significant test of the new court is taking place in Darfur. Having indicted Sudan’s Interior Minister and the head of the infamous Janjaweed militia, the ICC has now moved to indict Sudan’s leader Omar al-Bashir for his support of the Janjaweed and for his refusal to turn over the other accused war criminals.

Gripping, well paced, and clearly presented, *The Reckoning* is a fascinating study of this new tribunal and its challenges. Viewers leave with a sense of the high stakes involved and of the lives of people affected by human rights violators—from the families of massacred villagers to former child soldiers robbed of their innocence and their futures. As the United States has not yet signed the treaty accepting the jurisdiction of the ICC, viewers concerned about the genocide in Darfur and other atrocities around the world also leave with a clear prescription for action.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann