

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

Fiction

19-2-0133

Bodden, Marlen Suyapa. *The Wedding Gift*. Charleston, S.C.: CreateSpace, 2010. 324 pp. ISBN 978-1-4392-6989-3, \$27.99 (cl); 978-1-4392-5583-4, \$18.99 (pb).

Women in this book are very skillful with masks. Layered in elaborate, physically confining costumes and surrounded by fragile treasures, plantation wives dutifully pretended they had power, teetering at the top of huge pyramids of house slaves, overseers, and field hands. But often the master's sexual adventures created deep fault lines.

Theodora Allen, after discovering a beautiful slave woman in her husband's bed, confides in another wife, who comments that since importing slaves has become illegal, propagating your own adds wealth to the plantation—it's best not to "dwell" on these things. The beautiful Emmeline services the master to keep him from selling her children away, while Theodora secretly teaches Emmeline's daughter Sarah along with her own child. But when a woman, not a man, crosses the sexual color line, a crisis ensues,

and Sarah, now grown, uses her ability to read to topple the pyramid completely.

Based on actual events, Bodden's novel describes nineteenth-century African-American smokescreens, secret codes, and finely constructed bluffs, such as counterfeit manumission papers written with a stolen pen hidden in a jar of rice, or a finely sewn suit concealing the gender of a runaway slave. While the novel is long and the dialog a bit stilted, I never lost interest as new facts emerged of how enslaved Africans navigated the monstrous world they lived in.

Gail Hall Howard
Norwalk (Conn.) Community College

19-2-0134

Castellanos Moya, Horacio. *The She-Devil in the Mirror*. New York: New Directions, 2009. 160 pp. Trans. from Spanish by Katherine Silver. ISBN 978-0-8112-1846-7, \$14.95 (pb).

Sirias, Silvio. *Meet Me Under the Ceiba*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 2009. 256 pp. ISBN 978-1-55885-592-2, \$15.95 (pb).

Although *Meet Me Under the Ceiba* and *The She-Devil in the Mirror* are both novels about a woman being murdered and both take place in Central America, they offer different perspectives on life in the region.

Sirias's novel is the story of a reporter investigating the murder of a lesbian woman, Adela, who would never have hurt anyone. Everyone in the small Nicaraguan town seems convinced about who committed the crime and they even put two people in jail for it. Although I was convinced these two people, the selfish mother of the victim's lover and the rich man to whom she sold her daughter, Ixelia, were evil, vile people, I was not convinced they *physically* committed the crime. The reporter talks to anyone who knows anything about Adela and her young lover, including the local priest who condemns their lifestyle and the judge who only wants justice for the victim and her family.

Castellanos Moya narrates his novel from the point of view of the murdered victim's so-called best friend. As the story goes on, it becomes increasingly apparent that the narrator is quite jealous of her friend's life. While Olga María had a great husband and two beautiful daughters plus two or three lovers on the side, Laura, the unreliable narrator, is divorced with no children and seems utterly unhappy with her lot in life. Olga María owns a boutique while Laura doesn't seem to have any job or even to have had one in the past. Laura seems to have tried having affairs with the same lovers her friend slept with, though she claims she was just trying to help out her friend when she visits these lovers. Laura finally loses it when she discovers that her friend also slept with her lazy, to-

tally un-sexy ex-husband while they were still married. Although it seems she discovers this later, as the narrator is relating all this to a (imaginary?) friend, we see that she is losing her bearings and ends up institutionalized.

Both stories are filled with illicit sex between lovers, friends, and even the occasional paid rendezvous, but *Meet Me Under the Ceiba* takes place in the Nicaraguan countryside while *The She-Devil in the Mirror* takes place in San Salvador, the capital. The poor people, barely eking out a living in their little town, for the most part, are much more accepting of difference than the rich of San Salvador.

Both authors show us how jealousy and can lead people to places that are worse than hell and that money often *is* the root of all evil. Sirias really gets us into the mind of his protagonist, not a difficult task considering that he really was a reporter investigating this woman's death. He wrote the story as fiction so he could fill in details that were never discovered. Castellanos Moya, on the other hand, gets into the mind of an upper class Salvadoran woman filled with jealousy and longing for a life that gives her some fulfillment, and he does this very well. I recommend both of these books to anyone interested in Central America, its people and history, and its diverse cultures.

Sherrie Miranda
San Diego, Calif.

19-2-0135

Coetzee, J. M. *Summertime*. New York: Viking, 2009. 266 pp. ISBN 978-0-670-02138-3, \$25.95.

Summertime is the third volume of J. M. Coetzee's fictionalized autobiography. Told in the third person for the most part, the John Coetzee of *Summertime* is not entirely the same as the real Coetzee. The main narrator of this volume is a Mr. Vincent, who presents excerpts from journals supposedly written by Coetzee and the transcripts of five "interviews" which are interrupted by Vincent's own comments. Vincent says "what Coetzee writes ... can not be trusted, not as a factual record—not because he was a liar but because he was a fictioneer ... he is making up a fiction of himself" (p. 225).

The Coetzee of *Summertime* is a middle-aged man, unmarried, teaching English in a high school and literature at a university, living with his elderly father while writing the novels that will win the real Coetzee the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2003. This achievement is mentioned in passing, although the Coetzee in this fiction is otherwise presented in an unflattering light. Women, even the two interviewed who had affairs with him, see him as unmanly, unattractive, and weak. One, his co-teacher in a literature course, says "his work lacks ambition" (p. 242). For the reader, the cumulative effect of the diary entries and interviews is to present a complex and original character, one who is a passive but sharp observer of South Africa in the 1970s, yet whose personal life and voice are unique in world literature.

Richard Lachmann
State Univ. of New York, Univ. at Albany

19-2-0136

Duarte, Stella Pope. *Women Who Live in Coffee Shops and Other Stories*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 2010. 192 pp. ISBN 978-1-55885-600-4, \$15.95 (pb).

Women Who Live in Coffee Shops and Other Stories draws the reader into worlds where lushness of character and life seep up through the cracked cement and parched desert of urban Phoenix. Duarte doesn't dress her characters and their circumstances in false pretense, but instead with a deft touch, she trusts the details of their humanity to shine through and speak for themselves.

Tragic and tender lives create the landscape of these worlds.

We meet the child forced into prostitution in the tunnels beneath the border, and the bag lady who calls herself Margaret, Queen of Scotland. We experience the wife who nurses her husband through starvation in a Mexican prison. We are there when a woman suddenly finds herself helping her supposedly unmarried lover's wife give birth to their firstborn, the pain of remembrance as if "someone [the Spirit Women?] took an invisible hammer into the very center of the biggest wound, and bloody foam gushed to the surface." We listen as a father counsels his daughter, "Men are like runaway horses. Half the time they don't know where they're going, but figure they'll get there," and she learns, *Don't chase them, they'll only run faster.*

A delicate hope and resiliency thread these hard-bitten lives of austere poverty and mystery. As if "Spirit Women linked hands, playing Ring around the Roses, making a huge white halo all around the room. They pranced so fast, they turned into ashes landing in a heap, tangled in their own spirit gowns."

So fully are we absorbed into these worlds, whose wounds and beauty resonate deeply with our own, that on reading the last sentence and lifting our gaze from the page, we look around in surprise—and wonder which world is real.

Dawn Wink
Santa Fe, N.M.

19-2-0137

Gomez, Iris. *Try to Remember*. New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2010. 356 pp. ISBN 978-0-446-55619-4, \$13.99 (pb).

Gomez's debut novel is the coming-of-age story of Gabriela de la Paz, the hyper-responsible eldest daughter of a dysfunctional Colombian immigrant family living in Miami in the late 1960s. Gabi's father, a former oilfield worker in Colombia, has just taken the family to Miami from Queens following a mysterious run-in there. Now he writes disjointed letters applying for jobs, which Gabi must type, and his periodic violent outbursts put family



members—and possibly their immigration status—in jeopardy. Meanwhile, Gabi's mother hides the nature of the job she has taken to ensure the family's survival, and her youngest brother begins using drugs. Every time Gabi envisions a way out, family members seem to slam the door shut. But during these years, the teenager experiences love, lust, heartbreak, and the power that comes with discovering her voice.

Gomez does a fine job of showing Gabi's attachment for her father—and his basic humanity—despite his descent into madness. Her setting, Miami at a time of large-scale Cuban immigration that dwarfed the much smaller Colombian community, is well drawn. A strong beginning draws readers in, while the ending leaves them satisfied. Like M. Sindy Felin's powerful young adult novel *Touching Snow* (2007), *Try to Remember* shows the vulnerability of recent immigrants who silently endure domestic abuse and violence because they fear deportation if they seek help. Gomez's love for her characters and attention to their complex relationships make this a good choice for book clubs and readers interested in the literature of Latino immigration.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

19-2-0138

Hart, Ellen. *The Mirror and the Mask: A Jane Lawless Mystery*. New York: St. Martin's/Minotaur, 2009. 300 pp. ISBN 978-0-312-37527-0, \$25.99.

The latest Jane Lawless book by Hart, the author of two popular culinary mystery series, features the Minneapolis restaurateur, who delays opening another business because of the poor economy and takes on investigative work for her private investigator friend. Nearly 20 years old, this is a cold case. In addition, Jane hires the client, bartender Annie Archer, who is searching for her stepfather. Meanwhile, a well-known real estate vice president, Susan Bowman, is murdered at the home she shares with her husband Jack and her children, including Curt, a medical student. Complicating the case is the romantic tension between Jane and Annie and between Annie and Curt. As Jane's investigations progress, she is convinced that the two cases are related and that Annie and others are in danger.

The book's title is a reference to the Medusa myth, suggesting dualities, paradoxes, the loss of innocence, and the abuse and concomitant rage of women. Although the main investigation is limited and the ending not quite consistent with previous characterization, Hart, called the "gay Agatha Christie," explores issues of interest to gays and lesbians, as well as those of the human condition, particularly in a culture that values money and commerce over life.

Ellen F. Higgins
www.higginsmysteries.com

19-2-0139

Hwang Sok-yong. *The Old Garden*. New York: Seven Stories

Press, 2009. 540 pp. Trans. from Korean by Jay Oh. ISBN 978-1-58322-899-9, \$30.00.

Kenzaburo Oe calls the author of this book "the most powerful voice of the novel in East Asia today." Indeed, beyond being a commanding literary voice against oppressive regimes and their seemingly insatiable lust for domination of the powerless, Hwang Sok-yong is a disarming literary master, a remarkable storyteller, a true lyrical and universal voice.

This novel is the story of an idealist, a painter, fleeing the South Korean authorities as a result of his participation in the pro-democracy Kwangju Uprising, whom fate joins with a beautiful and brilliant woman at the most inauspicious time of his life—just before he is to be incarcerated for 20 years and forbidden from having any contact with her or the outside world. Revolutions leave untold victims in their wake. War, whether civil or foreign, is hell.

The story is told forward and, in a sense, lived backward, as the narrator tells us the saga of his release from prison into a democratic South Korea; his breathless search for Yoon Hee; and his discovery of her letters, diaries, and paintings that document the life of the woman he loved and lost forever. At its core, *The Old Garden* contains the best of operatic lore. It sings of a great and iconic story of love won and lost at the hands of cruel fate, one that any opera lover can easily see translated musically on the great stages of La Scala or the Met. However, true to the author's mastery and literary restraint, there is never a hint of bathos. The novel is fast-paced, terse, and laser sharp. No word, adjective, emotion, or description is even minimally superfluous. Jay Oh's brilliant English translation is seamless. In fact, as one reads it, it is hard to imagine this is a work in translation.

Hwang Sok-yong has received countless literary awards, including South Korea's highest prize, and is the author of nine works of fiction, most of which have been translated into English. He is also his country's best-selling novelist. To commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the start of the Korean War, he organized a peace train from Paris to Seoul along with North Korean author Hong Seok-jung and a group of Nobel laureates, including Orhan Pamuk, Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio, and others.

The Old Garden is a book worth reading and rereading. It is also a wonderful text for young writers in search of an author and a teacher.

Himilce Novas
<http://supernovas.org>

19-2-0140

Montoya, Maceo. *The Scoundrel and the Optimist*. Tempe, Ariz.: Bilingual Review Press, 2010. 272 pp. ISBN 978-1-931010-65-8, \$22.40 (cl); 978-1-931010-67-2, \$13.50 (pb).

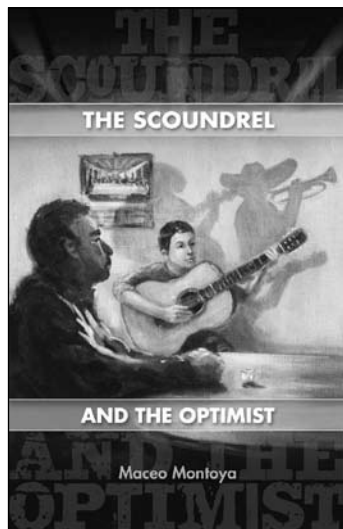
When a doctor tells town drunkard Filastro Agustín not to beat his children or they'll turn on him when he needs them most, Filastro chooses to spare his frail youngest, Edmund. One by one, Edmund's brothers and sisters flee their Mexican village for the United States, and his mother—now the sole recipient of Filastro's blows—falls into a deep depression. Edmund, meanwhile, develops a crush

on Ingrid Genera and strikes an unusual deal with the local loan shark in order to improve his guitar skills to woo her.

A drunken misadventure causes Filastro to mend his abusive ways, and Ingrid's move to the United States, coupled with Filastro's desire to seek his other children's forgiveness, propel father and teenage son on a dangerous journey north.

Montoya's picaresque characters imbue this novel with equal portions of bittersweet humor, social commentary, and morality play. Filastro initially appears as a machista stereotype—a hard-drinking womanizer who considers it his right to beat his wife and children. But there are consequences to his actions, as there are for the other characters. Far from a saint himself, Edmund cripples a dog in anger, only to become the dog's caretaker. From the loan shark he learns the importance of a promise and of getting up every time you fall down. In all, multi-dimensional characters, a well-drawn setting, and Montoya's light touch on the commentary make this a charming and worthwhile read.

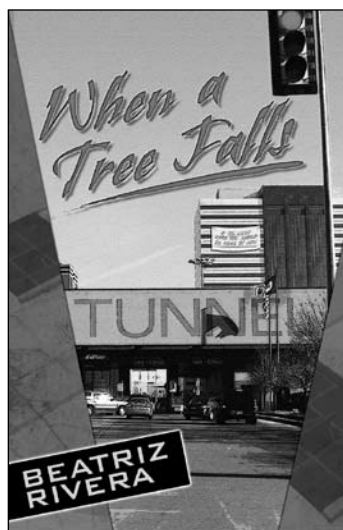
Lyn Miller-Lachmann



19-2-0141

Rivera, Beatriz. *When a Tree Falls*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 2010. 272 pp. ISBN 978-1-55885-596-0, \$15.95 (pb).

Rivera's latest take on politics, corruption, and sex in heavily Latino Hudson County, New Jersey, focuses on the tawdry affair between Freeholder Otilia Mancuso (nee Otilia Zona, in part the origin of her nickname O3) and Cuban-American psychiatrist Chico Chanca. Otilia's brief fling with the psychiatrist ends in a two-year prison term for her as well as hard time for two other political colleagues when she becomes the go-between for \$100,000 in bribes for Chanca's firm to run the county's psychiatric center. In addition to sex, Chanca supplies Otilia with Xanax, as she turns into an overweight, dyed-blonde addict, meeting Chanca in the filthy drive-through motels that seem to turn him on. Chanca's wife is a free-spending veterinarian with early-stage Multiple Sclerosis. At one point, Otilia takes her high-strung Pomeranian to Laura Chanca to get a peek, and



to Laura, that "other woman" will be forever known as the "Pomeranian." (As the Chancas' marriage unravels, Laura will come to date a "Boxer.")

Rivera has a nose for tabloid news events and their potential for humor. Her novel is based on real scandals in the communities on the other side of the Hudson River from New York City. While the characters are uniformly less than sympathetic, the juicy details of their lives, the description of the urban landscape, and the suffering meted out to the iniquitous will delight readers of the genre.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

19-2-0142

Sabato, Haim. *From the Four Winds*. New Milford, Conn.: The Toby Press, 2010. 152 pp. Trans. from Hebrew by Yaacob Dweck. ISBN 978-1-59264-240-3, \$24.95.

Israel, like our own country, is made up of people from all over the world. This book, written by an Israeli originally from Egypt, tells tales similar to the early days of his immigration. The newcomers were put in simply built areas together with other immigrants. In this series of stories, the two main groups are from Egypt and Hungary. They are very different in their practices, both religious and secular, and in their general temperaments. Except for their shared religious heritage, they are very dissimilar. In addition, the European Jews are survivors of the Holocaust who are silent about their lives before coming to Israel.

The Egyptian Jewish narrator befriends an older man from Hungary and slowly, over the years, learns this man's history and the history of his family's life in Europe going back another generation. Ultimately, they become close, and the Hungarian inspires the narrator to continue studying both Judaism and the family history of his friend from Europe.

Although this book was a best seller in Israel, I doubt it would be of great interest to a substantial group of Americans. I think that even among religious Jews, interest would not be great. This reviewer found the book a tough read. It failed to hold my attention or to generate any great involvement with the characters in the story.

Ruth Becker
Fresh Meadows, N.Y.

19-2-0143

Vafi, Fariba. *My Bird*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse Univ. Press, 2009. 120 pp. Trans. from Farsi by Mahnaz Kousha and Nasrin Jewell. ISBN 978-0-8156-0944-5, \$24.95.

Maman, a Farsi word for mother, is a woman who experiences the pressures of motherhood in the constructs of a patriarchic society. Set in Iran, *My Bird* unravels the story of a woman who is fettered by the traditional role of wife and mother and who is married to her momentum opposite, Amir. Amir dreams of a bet-

ter life and better future that can only be achieved by leaving Iran and traveling the world, but his wife is unmoving and reluctant to attempt a life outside their crowded Tehran apartment. Escape, Amir believes, is his only option. He quickly becomes disenchanted by his monotonous marital life and decides to leave his wife and two children for his own selfish fulfillment. Now, left alone, Maman is forced to raise her children on her own, fend for herself, and care for her sickly mother. Traumatized by the death of her father in her family's basement, and being raised in the neglectful presence of her mother, the narrator lives with guilt and low self-worth for much of her adult life. She must come to terms with her disposition and fight to become independent and develop a voice and identity of her own.

Vafi employs a style that is poetic in prose and rich in imagery. With her short chapters, she captures readers and transports them to a world not known by many Westerners. Her minimalist style and use of precise language embodies and develops the protagonist and at the same time lifts the silence that has blanketed her life for so long. Vafi speaks for marginalized characters that have been silenced by societal constraints and limitations of their culture and society. Vafi's characters are illustrative of many women in contemporary Iran. The author portrays how women of one family experience moments of power and hopelessness, while gracefully illustrating the social roles inherent in a culture unfamiliar to most. Through *My Bird*, Vafi is able to bring the reader to a world that is often cut off, misunderstood, and stereotyped to reveal a rich vibrant society of individuals, personalities, and dreams.

Lila Barzegar
Fountain Fort Carson (Colo.) High School

19-2-0144

White, Jenny. *The Winter Thief: A Kamil Pasha Novel*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2010. 384 pp. ISBN 978-0-393-07107-0, \$24.95.

The Winter Thief is a great winter read, or for any season. White's winter tale is another in the Special Prosecutor Kamil Pasha series; a previous one—*The Sultan's Seal*—was a finalist in the Ellis Peters Historical Crime Award. White is an anthropologist at Boston University who specializes in Turkey.

Not surprisingly then, White's accurate sense of detail and atmosphere are deeply woven. The setting is December 1888 Istanbul, with a plot involving illegal weapons and a bank robbery that leads to an investigation of the Armenian socialist Henchak organization. Specialist Pasha is called in to investigate. Multi-dimensional characters create the tension and intrigue. The story, while somewhat epic, is really very intimate; on a very human level each character's story unfolds around community, political and familial, struggle, and even, yes, love. White's characters represent a multiplicity of political viewpoints and self-serving ambitions.

Rosemary Aud Franklin
Univ. of Cincinnati

Poetry

19-2-0145

González, Ray. *Faith Run*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2009. 120 pp. ISBN 978-0-8165-2769-4, \$16.95 (pb).

This collection of poems written in English by the Mexican-American poet has three parts, and each contains free verse lyrics, long and short poems with images of nature, the animal kingdom, water, wind, mountains, and his native landscape of the American Southwest. These 62 poems express the poet's thoughts about life and his strong bond to ancestral culture. There are musical images and images of mystery interlacing the past and present events that afflict and uplift the human spirit and contemporary Chicano life.

There are also personal poems about family, history, traditions, religion, identity, politics, and social issues reflecting our time. Several of his poems pay homage to world poets, artists, and musicians, like Walt Whitman, Federico García Lorca, Robert Frost, Pablo Neruda, Octavio Paz, Pablo Picasso, The Allman Brothers, and Bob Dylan. Historical figures of the indigenous voices and traditions, like Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, also make cameo appearances. The language and poetic voice touches the roots of his ancestry beyond the borderlands. Acknowledgements and a short bibliography of González's other publications are highlighted at the end of this unique collection.

Faith Run is a fine collection of poems. It belongs in all library collections and can be used as a text for Chicano and cultural studies and literature classes.

Alva V. Cellini
St. Bonaventure Univ.

19-2-0146

Harper, Michael S. *Use Trouble*. Champaign: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2009. 368 pp. ISBN 978-0-252-03350-6, \$60.00 (cl); 978-0-252-07598-8, \$24.95 (pb).

Harper's latest book of poetry is a splendid hit. This library-worthy collection is a splash of this and that from Harper's personal life. In the midst of the "this and that," Harper seems to uncannily direct the reader's attention back to the book's cover and title *Use Trouble*. In fact, the second movement of Harper's extended rhythm and blues hymn is subtitled "Use Trouble" and is, perhaps, the most compelling of the three subsections of this poetry book.

Based on vignettes of widely circulated American history, Harper's own circle of family, friends, and associates, and Harper's personal sensibilities, *Use Trouble* is—at once—an inspirational, entertaining, and grave handbook for the intellectual at heart. The celebrated poet encapsulates the historical and, often, ahistorical features of United States history to map a unified plane of human interactions from early American colonization to present-day American public crises. Harper's soothing, academic vibe throughout this collection of poems provokes and challenges the reader to assay his or her own stories against the backdrop of a collective

American history rife with music, politics, and cultural crossings. In a straightforward fashion, Harper encourages the reader to use personal conflict as a springboard to public redress.

Marsha I. Walker
Johnson C. Smith Univ.

19-2-0147

Martínez Pompa, Paul. *My Kill Adore Him*. Notre Dame, Ind.: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2009. 88 pp. ISBN 978-0-268-03518-1, \$18.00 (pb).

In his breathtaking debut poetry collection, Martínez Pompa bursts onto the contemporary Latino scene with literary guns ablaze. He is precisely what we need right now: a brave poet just as critical of himself as he is of others. Within the pages of this clever and brutally honest text lie the words of an old soul—who just happens to be a young poet. Martínez Pompa's youth and aged wisdom coexist in each and every poem, resulting in a fresh, yet deadly serious new voice that is not to be trifled with. No topic ducks his scathing critiques. In fact, his deft handling of language makes subjects such as day laborers, hit-and-run victims, those beaten by police and terrorized by neighborhood thugs—all set against the gritty backdrop of Chicago's streets—the stuff of serious contemplation. And yet he manages two miraculous feats: he neither sensationalizes horrific images, such as immigrants locked in the back of a semi truck and left for dead, nor trivializes what it means to be a poet seriously attempting to contribute to a political dialogue while American soldiers are dying overseas in two wars.

Martínez Pompa's most impressive skill is how he steers clear of tired Latino tropes—the *abuelita* or *tortilla* poems that bog down the collections of so much young Latino writing. In fact, he skillfully addresses this phenomenon by having his *abuela*, who he admits to calling “grandma,” tiring herself out with her tendency to “flip the factory fresh / El Milagros” or “knead the buttons / on the telephone, order me food / from Pizza Hut.” There is no *comal* here. No *sarape* weaving. Martínez Pompa upends the commodification of Latinos and Spanish masterfully in the collection's most humorous poem, “Commercial Break.” The poetry here drips with equal parts humor, rage, disgust, and humility. Take “Amputee Etcetera,” a brutal satire that ponders the atrocities of war: “Nothing cuter / than a war amputee,” writes the poet, in an obvious reference to our tendency to simultaneously praise and pander to war heroes. Yet in that same poem he lowers the same accusing finger toward the mirror, in one of the collection's most thought-provoking and disconcerting stanzas: “Nothing truer / than a poet who resists / on paper. Admire his nerve / to condemn from a safe / distance, where he can / keep his shoes / and his conscience / perfectly clean.”

My Kill Adore Him is a desperately needed wake-up call, a punch in the face with a fine set of literary brass knuckles. Highly recommended reading for anyone on the lookout for what comes next in Latino poetry.

Aaron Michael Morales
Indiana State Univ.

19-2-0148

Medrano, Michael Luis. *Born in the Cavity of Sunsets*. Tempe, Ariz.: Bilingual Review Press, 2009. 70 pp. ISBN 978-1-931010-66-5, \$11.00 (pb).

Adding yet another impressive book to their ever-growing roster of up-and-coming Latino writers, Bilingual Press serves up a pleasing debut collection of poetry by Medrano. Though he has been publishing poems for some time now, he retains the energy of a writer who has only just discovered the joy and catharsis of writing poetry. This is a collection broken up into three parts, with the first section primarily consisting of Medrano returning to the Fresno of his youth, a place littered with “mud puddles of a permanent sadness,” to document the decline of his city. There are wannabe gangsters who grow up to become real ones. Caskets and funerals and drive-bys aplenty. “I will lay at your feet the melancholia that is Fresno,” the first section seems to declare, and melancholy is served up buffet style. Though, admittedly, there are a few too many mentions of coffins, dead relatives, and even the strange repetition of phrases like “out-loud dream” (referring to the horror of a loved one's death), once the first section is over, the book's remainder is simply amazing.

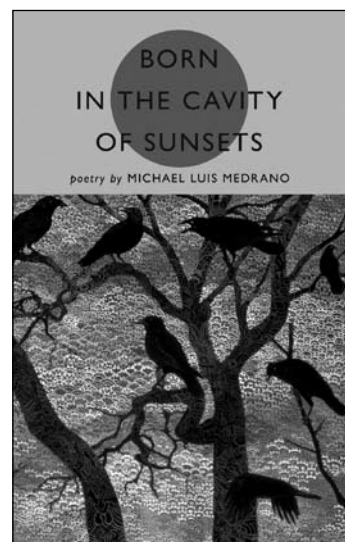
In sections two and three Medrano is at his best, wielding a powerfully jazzy voice that pops, dances, seduces, and trash talks. Watch him threaten Ginsburg for selling out, telling him if he doesn't clean up his act: “Brother I wrote you into this poem. / I'll write you out!” Long overdue words, to be sure. Medrano's portraits of hustlers, musicians, poets, as well as his letters and complaints, are marvelously vibrant and witty pieces that leave the reader wishing for more. We long for more Mexican clowns, more barrio contortionists, more cholos and vendors. If nothing else, the collection's brightest moment is its title poem which celebrates the forgotten men of places like Fresno, the men “of mustaches and oiled hair, brawn, and estrogen / dripping from our tortas de jamón.” Medrano's eye for original detail is a pure pleasure. And *Born in the Cavity of Sunsets* is a fine first collection. It will be a joy to watch his career unfold.

Aaron Michael Morales
Indiana State Univ.

19-2-0149

Sanabria, Ruth Irupé. *The Strange House Testifies*. Tempe, Ariz.: Bilingual Review Press, 2009. 77 pp. ISBN 978-1-931010-50-4, \$12.00 (pb).

In her first published collection of poetry, Ruth Irupé Sanabria, the daughter of well-known Argentine writer, Alicia Portnoy, pens protest poems against the military junta that ruled Argenti-



na between 1976 and 1983 and caused some 30,000 citizens to disappear. Most of the poems focus on violations of human rights and include excerpts from *Nunca Más: The Report of the Argentine National Commission on the Disappeared* that detailed the midnight raids and the torture and execution of citizens. Sanabria decries the policies of a cold-blooded government that snatched children from their families and allowed them to be adopted by high-ranking officials. Her work spotlights the victims of repression, kidnapping, or exile who never fully recover from these life-threatening experiences.

After the terrible events she experiences under the dictatorship, Sanabria explores the joy of freedom and escape from persecution. But exile in the United States is not perfect: racism and discrimination are facts of life, and the poet is in danger of losing both her culture and her language. The author laments the pressure she feels from Anglos to assimilate, and she responds by taking pride in her heritage and refusing to speak only English. In powerful poems, Sanabria defends Latinos against xenophobia and stereotyping.

Although this is a very worthwhile book that poetically combats both terrorism and racism, I felt that the juxtaposition of the two themes created an equivalence of evil. As horrible as discrimination is in the United States, it pales beside the experiences of state-sponsored terrorism in Argentina.



Roberta Gordenstein
Elms College, Chicopee, Mass.

19-2-0150

Weiss, Mark, ed. *The Whole Island: Six Decades of Cuban Poetry*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2009. 602 pp. Bilingual (Spanish-English) ed. ISBN 978-0-520-25894-5, \$29.95 (pb).

In 2002 Cristina García edited the anthology *Cubanísimo*, a compilation of contemporary short stories by Cuban writers living in the island or abroad. Seven years later Weiss bring us *The Whole Island: Six Decades of Cuban Poetry*. In my mind these two books complement each other beautifully. Each presents us with works by writers like Nicolás Guillén, José Lezama Lima, Nancy Morejón, and many others. Thanks to these anthologies we have the opportunity to break the wall of silence surrounding Cuba and its cultural accomplishments and expand our knowledge of the literary currents which these writers created or participated in for the last 60 years.

Weiss, the author of six poetry books, has translated the work of several Latino poets, including Cuban's José Koser, whose poems

are at times word games which would be very difficult to translate. Weiss's poetry anthology is a gargantuan effort—aided by 22 very skilled translators—that introduces us to 55 poets—22 living in Cuba and 23 abroad. Some are well known; the poems of others have never crossed the ocean separating our two countries.

In his introduction Weiss writes that “very little of the poetry of Cuba ... has made its way into the awareness of non-Spanish speakers.” He blames not only the embargo but also the lack of resources in Cuba to print and re-print books. During a recent reading in Hartford, Connecticut, Weiss explained that he was able to find many poetry books by searching in “used books” markets. To compile the anthology he familiarized himself with the works of over 100 poets. The poets give us glimpses of a Cuba, real and remembered, a Cuba which in the words of Heberto Padilla (who was both praised and imprisoned in Cuba) in “Poets Don't Dream,” or in the words of Miguel Barnet in “Cuban Suite,” “flowers in the garden of my local Committee of Defense burst into color” and the poet proclaims that he is “madly in love” with his country.

Seventy-three years separate the birth of Nicolás Guillén (1902), the first poet included, and Javier Marimón (1975), the last. Much has happened in pre- and post-revolutionary Cuba during that time, and these poems open a crack into the endless literary treasures, which politics—on both sides—have prevented us from unearthing.

Bessy Reyna
Latin Arte News, Hartford, Conn.

Criticism

19-2-0151

Cardamone, Tom, ed. *The Lost Library: Gay Fiction Rediscovered*. Fort Collins, Colo.: Haiduk Press, 2010. 240 pp. ISBN 978-0-9714686-3-4, \$19.00 (pb).

The Lost Library is a long, enjoyable memorial service for out-of-print gay male classics appreciated by the writers who read them. Unlike much literary criticism, the tone is personal, humorous, and emotionally truthful. Contributor Richard Reitsma explains, “As frequently happens when bookish gay men are exploring their sexuality, I assumed the library was my best bet. The stacks became my refuge. ... my censored sexuality directed me to the stacks, particularly a darkened forgotten and dusty corner of the library where I tremulously reached for different volumes.” The books were the breadcrumb trail along which we self-identified, found community, and stumbled towards emergence.

Some of these books labor to portray loving in the time of the HIV epidemic. Others contain broadly drawn stock characters often dismissed as stereotypes arising from a history of repression. I was fascinated to witness the authors reaching to redeem and reclaim these characters as part of their cultural inheritance. Perhaps this beautiful anthology of tribute to the lost library of gay male discovery will encourage some reprints. Kudos to Tom Cardamone at Haiduk Press for sharing this treasure trove with us.

Grace Nichols
Albany, N.Y.

19-2-0152

Danielson, Marivel T. *Homecoming Queers: Desire and Difference in Chicana Latina Cultural Production*. Piscataway, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2009. 218 pp. ISBN 978-0-8135-4571-4, \$72.00 (c); 978-0-8135-4572-1, \$23.95 (pb).

This is a collection of essays, a critical and academic study of the various approaches, styles, and cultural philosophies that inform queer Latina artists as they speak of their silence, invisibility, and struggle within mainstream heterosexist Anglo-American society. The various analyses encompass an extensive array of artists: novelists, filmmakers, activists, comedians, performers, and playwrights.

It is no wonder that the book is dedicated to the great Gloria Anzaldúa, for it was through this Latina genius who left this life much too early that the very idea of *fronteriza* Latina queer thought and art in America came into being.

While the essays themselves are demanding and require an a priori interest and perhaps scholarship in the various artists and genres discussed, the pages are enlightened with original insights into the borderland nature of being, all at once, queer, Latino, and a woman in a world that is hardly predisposed to like you or even care to understand you.

Homecoming Queers is not what one would call an easy read, but Danielson's scholarship and dedication to her subject matter is to be commended. The book is a useful reference, a one-stop shop for a collective genre that is still in its chrysalis form, ever-emerging in the shadows, side by side mainstream literature and art, like the parable of the tears and the wheat.

Himilce Novas
<http://supernovas.org>

19-2-0153

Ogunyemi, Chikwenye Okonjo, and Allan, Tuzyline Jita. *Twelve Best Books by African Women: Critical Readings*. Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 2009. 278 pp. ISBN 978-0-89680-266-7, \$28.00 (pb).

Twelve Best Books by African Women: Critical Readings is an important contribution to the development and appreciation of writing by women from the African continent. The text elevates these twelve writers—and, by extension, other African women writers—to the status previously held by men and acknowledge a canon that cannot be ignored.

An excellent prolepsis by Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi explains the book's genesis: from a list created at the 2002 Zimbabwe Book Fair, giving women a place for the first time. She cites important phases of writing by African women and says that the "diverse trajectories emanating from the creative works have also prompted the critical response in this book, one that looks at familiar material with new eyes." Most importantly, Ogunyeme

states: "This history and storytelling demonstrate that women have always actively participated as citizens, daughters, sisters, wives, other mothers, and mothers in the reproduction and evolution of the self, family, community, and nation."

After this inspiring introduction, each title is examined sensitively and in depth. The books chosen range from North to South Africa and were originally written in English or French; all are excellent fictional texts from the 1970s to 1990s.

The analyses are aimed primarily for college-level study, though secondary school teachers can find them useful. All are interesting and extremely insightful. The book is a welcome addition to literary study and a fine companion to *African Women Writing Resistance: Contemporary Voices* published in summer 2010 by University of Wisconsin Press.

Anne Serafin
Newtonville, Mass.

Visual and Performing Arts

19-2-0154

Beltran, Mary C. *Latina/o Stars in U.S. Eyes: The Making and Meanings of Film and TV Stardom*. Champaign: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2009. 224 pp. ISBN 978-0-252-03454-1, \$60.00 (c); 978-0-252-07651-0, \$25.00 (pb).

Mask, Mia. *Divas on Screen: Black Women in American Film*. Champaign: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2009. 320 pp. ISBN 978-0-252-03422-0, \$75.00 (c); 978-0-252-07619-0, \$25.00 (pb).

Both *Latina/o Stars in U.S. Eyes* and *Divas on Screen* by Beltrán and Mask, respectively, capture the essence of mostly American-based media representations of non-White, mainstream actors and actresses. Beltrán and Mask explore the cultural crossings of Latina and Black women film stars since the 1920's demise of the silent film era. While Beltrán deals with both female and male American film stardom, Mask exclusively examines the portrayals of African-American women on the big screen. Both authors proceed with the collective project of film ethnography by electing to deconstruct the imagined lives of some of the more popular Latina and African-American women film and television stars in American history.

Beltrán does an excellent job in her selection of case studies. She chooses to analyze popular Latina/o celebrities such as *I Love Lucy's* Desi Arnaz, *West Side Story's* Rita Moreno, *Chico and the Man's* Freddie Prinze, *Selena's* Jennifer Lopez, and *The Dark Angel's* Jessica Alba. In her survey case studies, Beltrán meticulously unfolds the layers of media and political bureaucracy that have largely informed the shifts and trends in popular tastes and sentiments regarding American film and television stars. Beltrán clearly exposes the range of reactions to any given set of Latina/o film and television stars, covering the entire span of the Latina/o star status in the twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries. At each historical interval in American film and television, Latina/o stars have contended with the Black-White polarization of American society and the American

exoticism of brown-skinned persons born within and outside U.S. borders. "Hollywood Latinidad" has always already been a hybrid pastiche of color and flavor highly constructed by the American media and, most often, not by the Latina/o artists themselves.

Working in a similar vein, Mask explores the Hollywood careers of Dorothy Dandridge, Pamela Grier, Whoopi Goldberg, Oprah Winfrey, and Halle Berry. According to Mask, a major gap in cinematic scholarship is the inclusivity/exclusivity politics surrounding African-American women. Mask even points to the increasing visibility of Latina stars in recent popular films and television series—a nuanced visibility that often functions as an adequate substitute for Blackness on camera.

Using a wide range of theoretical foregrounding, including neo-Marxism, feminism, and critical race theory, Mask identifies the challenges in Hollywood for African-American actresses. More critically, Mask draws on the successes of certain Black actresses to help her audience better understand Black women film stars' necessary compliances and deflections in order to achieve fuller inclusion in the American mainstream film and television industries. These women's varied "charismas" allow them to permeate spaces that most African-American actors and actresses have not been able to enter and abide.

Beltrán and Mask assert the positive sides of ethnic celebrity status for Latina/o and African-American women artists while, simultaneously, cutting to the grit of ongoing Hollywood Jim Crowism. For these two authors and film critics, ole' Jim Crow is certainly not dead. Instead, Jim has masterfully reinvented himself through the changing faces of American cinema.

Marsha I. Walker
Johnson C. Smith Univ.

19-2-0155

Harrison, Anthony Kwame. *Hip Hop Underground*. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 2009. 224 pp. ISBN 978-1-4399-0061-1, \$24.95 (pb).

Hip Hop Underground covers a different sort of "ground" not heretofore explored in print. While film documentaries like *Rize* and *I Am Hip Hop* work to espouse homespun, hip hop-based traditions, little written scholarship has focused on the variety of grassroots hip hop present across the globe. Harrison challenges scholars to fill in the gaps with his own ethnography of local, underground hip hop artists in the San Francisco Bay area. Joining rank and file with these underground artists, Harrison is able to tell their stories more effectively.

Exposing his own vulnerabilities, Harrison seeks out popular underground hip hop MCs and DJs on the West Coast as a means of analyzing growing American shifts in musical tastes and racial perspectives. Harrison enters the multiethnic enclaves of Black, White, Filipino, and Hispanic hip hop performers. These performers' regular cipher circles are testaments to the sustaining force of hip hop around the globe as the genre is now often criticized as having faded out of youthful consciousness in the late 1990s and early twenty-first century. In his interactions with Bay area underground hip hop artists, Harrison resurrects the notion

of a global hip hop underground that continues to be the heartbeat of hip hop as a legitimate culture. In a major anthropological move, Harrison suggests the use of his multiethnic, underground hip hop adventure as a nuanced vantage point from which serious cultural critics may rethink race politics in the United States.

Marsha I. Walker
Indiana Univ. of Pennsylvania

19-2-0156

Hofstetter, Phillip. *Maya Yucatan: An Artist's Journey*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2010. 160 pp. Illus. with photos by the author. Foreword by David Friedel. ISBN 978-0-8263-4694-0, \$60.00.

Analysis of stone fragments from medieval buildings in Egypt prove that building blocks were "quarried" from ancient temple structures at Luxor and that Tutankamun himself approved the reuse of *talatat* blocks from Akhenaten's Luxor Temple's second pylon for the construction of his own mortuary temple, in the late Eighteenth Dynasty, in the thirteenth century B.C.E. No surprise, then, that Spanish colonists quarried Mesoamerican pyramids and temples for materials to build their churches and haciendas. Yet (and sadly), little has been made of this significant appropriation. The original *Catedral de la Asunción de Maria* in Mexico City sits atop the Aztec "Templo Mayor" of Tenochtitlán, and is built of its stones. Happily, this phenomenon is the thrust of Hofstetter's book: the pervasive Mayanism to be found in the Northern Lowlands of the Yucatán Peninsula—the unbroken life ways—and the reuse of Mayan masonry to construct a Spanish Catholic vision of America. The strength of the book is in the photographs (varnished duotones and color images), carefully chosen and shown to excellent advantage in both layout and design by Mina Yamashita.

Employing as his source many years of personal experience—the book is in large part a memoir—Hofstetter shows how the Maya have been hiding in plain sight since the fifteenth century (by Western means of counting time), participating in, and shaping, the European colonization of their traditional homeland.

Glenn A. Long
Salem, N.Y.

19-2-0157

Perry, Susan, ed. *Holiness & the Feminine Spirit: The Art of Janet McKenzie*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2009. 146 pp. Illus. by Janet McKenzie. ISBN 978-1-57075-844-7, \$28.00.

Holiness & the Feminine Spirit examines a series of beautiful religious paintings by artist Janet McKenzie. McKenzie, best known for her controversial painting *Jesus of the People*, which won the *National Catholic Reporter's* Jesus 2000 international competition and which had its official unveiling on NBC's *Today Show*, puts a whole new spin on religious art. In her paintings, McKenzie takes

images of women and a few men from the Bible and paints them as people from different ethnic backgrounds and traditions. Mary, Jesus, and even Mary Magdalene often appear as Asians, Africans, and Native Americans. By painting these religious figures as belonging to a variety of ethnic backgrounds, McKenzie is trying to illustrate the idea that holiness lies within all women and men and in all traditions.

Twenty-eight paintings (including *Jesus of the People*) are examined by a group of female writers, scholars, and theologians, including Sister Wendy Beckett and Ann Patchett. Each author was allowed to write what she wanted to about the painting she was examining; so one finds essays, poetry, and personal stories. A gorgeous book, it will be a welcome addition to public and academic libraries. Highly recommended.

Melissa Aho
Univ. of Minnesota

19-2-0158

Willis, Deborah. *Posing Beauty: African American Images from the 1980s to the Present*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2009. 242 pp. Illus. with photos. ISBN 978-0-383-06696-8, \$49.95.

What is beauty? This is a very powerful and thoughtprovoking question and one that author Willis tries to answer. Willis (a professor at New York University and an art photographer) has been researching this question for over ten years and responds to this question by exploring the idea of beauty in African Americans from the 1890s to the present, including images of President and Michelle Obama. The book is broken down into the themes of constructing a pose, body, and image; modeling beauty and contests; and a final section of color plates.

The strikingly beautiful images (and they really are beautiful) range from photos of slaves, to businesswomen and men, to celebrities and athletes, to images of people in bathing suits, to everyday people on the street. Over two hundred black-and-white and color photographs are included in the book, as well as a bibliography and index. Willis has created a remarkable work that poses interesting and hard to answer questions, on aspects of our society that have long been neglected in the historical record. Highly recommended.

Melissa Aho
Univ. of Minnesota

Biography/Autobiography

19-2-0159

Caistor, Nick. *Che Guevara: A Life*. Northampton, Mass.: Interlink, 2010. 160 pp. ISBN 978-1-56656-759-6, \$15.00 (pb).

The rebel iconography of Ernesto "Che" Guevara (1928-1967) is uniquely modern. For the pilgrimage of his youth he mounted not

a mightily steed but a motorcycle. His afterlife is commemorated in a silhouette photograph of bold heroism stamped on posters and tee-shirts around the world. Beyond such images, what is the reality? Caistor, a veteran BBC correspondent for Latin America, chronicles the facts of Che's life in this summary biography, presented with numerous black-and-white photographs and a brief bibliography.

During Che's childhood and youth in Argentina, he struggled with asthma and against the status quo. Becoming a doctor, he traveled Latin America, particularly intrigued by the revolutionary governments in Bolivia and Guatemala. Fleeing the latter after a U.S.-backed overthrow of its leftist regime, Che proceeded to Mexico. There in 1955 he met another exiled revolutionary, the Cuban leader, Fidel Castro. Together in 1956 they entered Cuba, mounting a guerilla campaign that swept from east to west, consolidating victory in Havana in 1959. Che's government role became supervising industrialization and globetrotting as spokesman for the new regime. His final years, though, were spent outside Cuba, attempting to establish revolutionary governments in the Congo during 1965 and Bolivia, where he was assassinated late in 1967. The people who ended his life hallowed it with martyrdom, ensuring iconic witness by future generations.

Edward A. Riedinger
Ohio State Univ. Libraries

19-2-0160

Charron, Katherine Mellen. *Freedom's Teacher: The Life of Septima Clark*. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2009. 462 pp. ISBN 978-0-8078-3333-2, \$35.00.

Rosa Parks is a name familiar to most Americans. Septima Clark is known to very few, and that's a shame. Clark deserves recognition equal to Parks, for her work fostering citizenship among African Americans. Born in 1898, Septima Poinsette grew to maturity in an era when the rights of African Americans were nearly extinguished. At 18 she began teaching on Johns Island, South Carolina. There she learned to compensate for inadequate educational resources by improvising. When school was not in session, she taught basic literacy skills to adults.

For 30 years Clark combined teaching with extensive civic involvement. Her career took a decisive turn in 1953 when she attended a workshop at the Highlander Folk School. On her return to South Carolina she developed a program to prepare Johns Island residents to become registered voters. Clark was fired from her public school teaching job for refusing to resign from the NAACP. She then joined the staff at Highlander where she created a network of citizenship schools. Operating with a philosophy that stressed the leadership potential of ordinary working people, these schools became an integral part of the emerging civil rights movement. Her Citizenship Education Program trained southern activists to nurture grass-roots leaders and prepare African Americans to pass voter registration tests.

When she retired in 1970, Clark was celebrated for more than half a century of dedicated service. She never marched at the head of a demonstration or delivered a fiery sermon in front of television

cameras. Because she worked quietly behind the scenes and did not seek personal acclaim, Clark's contributions to the civil rights movement have been largely overlooked. Charron's carefully researched biography should help correct that omission.

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

19-1-0161

Chávez-Silverman, Susana. *Scenes from la Cuenca de Los Angeles y otros Natural Disasters*. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2010. 176 pp. ISBN 978-0-299-23524-6, \$18.95 (pb).

"This is not a memoir written outside the box; it is a memoir written to obliterate it," says *Publisher's Weekly* of this book. And one could go one further: it is not a memoir but a stream-of-consciousness literary quilt of memories and emotional buzz points of Angeleno culture, community, family, and the absurdity of life, which the author shares with abandon with the reader.

It is also a demanding book—not just because of its internal dialogue nature, but because it is written bilingually in full diapason. That is, the text moves from English to Spanish and back to English from one paragraph to the next, with strong Spanglish twine binding the mix. Ergo, by its intrinsically bilingual (and bicultural) genre, this memoir could be thought to exclude either Spanish-language readers or English-language readers. I tried reading just the English portions to see if they hung together without need of the Spanish text, but that took the corazón out of it. *Y el lector que me entiende, entenderá lo que digo* [And the reader who understands me will understand what I'm saying].

It is a niche book indeed—but an intelligent and virtuoso attempt at a new literary genre that seems to be finding its place in our general multicultural dialogue.

Himilce Novas
<http://supernovas.org>

19-2-0162

Lewis, Andrew B. *The Shadows of Youth: The Remarkable Journey of the Civil Rights Generation*. New York: Hill & Wang, 2009. 356 pp. ISBN 978-0-8090-8598-9, \$28.00.

The Shadows of Youth is a chronicle of the civil rights movement told from the perspective of the freedom fighters on the front lines of the struggle. Unlike most histories of this crusade that focus on Martin Luther King, Jr., Lewis shifts the center of attention to the activists of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). He contends that the movement led by King stalled after the Montgomery bus boycott. The student sit-ins brought energy and enthusiasm to a largely moribund venture. Following the sit-ins, the militants of the SNCC rescued the Freedom Rides and launched the Mississippi voter registration campaign. Even in the Birmingham and Selma demonstrations, widely credited to King's leadership, Lewis sees the influence of SNCC veterans Diane Nash and James Bevel.

Lewis uses biographies of seven key workers to trace the origin, evolution, and eventual disintegration of the SNCC. He argues

that growing prosperity allowed young African Americans to see themselves as part of a national generation of teenagers with the means to purchase the consumer goods that represented the American dream. Their relative affluence made exclusion from stores, trains, and restaurants more painful than for their parents. He states that without the postwar economic boom, "the civil rights movement as we know it would not have happened."

Many scholarly monographs have been written about the SNCC, but *The Shadows of Youth* is a most accessible introduction.

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

19-2-0163

McQuillar, Tayannah Lee, and Johnson, Fred L., III. *Tupac Shakur: The Life and Times of an American Icon*. Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 2010. 280 pp. ISBN 978-0-56858-387-7, \$15.95 (pb).

Rapper Tupac Shakur died almost 15 years ago, but his legacy lives on through documentaries, web sites, and books. This new work by historians McQuillar and Johnson does not necessarily break new ground in examining Shakur's meteoric rise and still-unsolved death, but it does reasonably well in establishing the dual personality of this oft-troubled young man. Shakur's public "gangsta" image, argue the authors, conflicted with his private persona, particularly the "nerd" (his own word) who loved to write poetry, act, read voraciously, and ride roller coasters and who was a graduate of the Baltimore School for the Arts. But the authors often skim over whole episodes in Shakur's life, save for his fatal last shooting, and too many long historical digressions on social issues weaken the narrative flow. Purchasers should also be aware of the raw language, particularly in direct quotes from Shakur's associates.

Despite its weaknesses, this book is recommended for academic and public libraries, to complement Molly Monjauze's collection *Tupac Remembered* (Chronicle Books, 2008).

Anthony J. Adam
Prairie View A&M Univ.

19-2-0164

Shen, Aisling Juanjuan. *A Tiger's Heart: The Story of a Modern Chinese Woman*. New York: Soho Press, 2009. 320 pp. ISBN 978-1-56947-586-7, \$24.00.

Shen tells her story of growing up in a rice-farming village in rural China. Her love of school and learning was her ticket out of her village and into college. After many unexpected turns, both for good and for ill, she wound up a successful businesswoman in Boston.

Her story is billed as also being the story of modern China—a billing it lives up to. Shen came of age just as China was trans-

forming itself from a primarily rural, agricultural economy into an international industrial powerhouse, and had she been born a generation earlier, cultural and economic restraints would have made it impossible for her to escape a life of illiterate poverty and hardship. Her story is also an inspiring tale that reads like well-written Horatio Alger novel.

A Tiger's Heart would be suitable for both students wanting a personal story of modern China to flesh out their more macro understanding of the nation, and for the general reader wanting insight into Chinese culture and economics without formal study. The book contains some graphic language that may not be suitable for all readers.

Elizabeth Redkey
Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

19-2-0165

Smith, Charlene, and Feister, John. *Thea's Song: The Life of Thea Bowman*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2010. 319 pp. ISBN 978-1-57075-868-3, \$28.00.

In 1948 four Franciscan nuns came to Canton, Mississippi, to establish a school at the Holy Child Jesus Catholic Mission. Among their eager students was ten-year-old Bertha Bowman, daughter of the town's only Black physician. Young Bertha felt an instant affinity for these dedicated women and resolved to become a nun herself. At the age of 15 she traveled to the Franciscan motherhouse in Wisconsin where she took the name Sr. Thea. A precocious student and gifted singer, she prepared for a teaching career, eventually earning a doctorate in English literature.

The late 1960s and early 1970s were a time of turmoil in the Catholic Church. Sister Thea emerged as a spokesperson for Black Catholics, pressing for greater recognition within the Church and persuading bishops to incorporate Black expression in Catholic liturgies. In 1978 Thea began working as a consultant on "inter-cultural awareness." Her charismatic personality, beautiful singing voice, and message stressing the need for greater cultural understanding made her a speaker much in demand for Catholic audiences. Thea was diagnosed with cancer in 1984. She continued her ministry despite a weakened body and frequent pain. "I'm going to live until I die," was her recurrent refrain.

Thea's Song recounts the career of this inspirational woman. The author is a fellow nun with access to Thea's personal papers. Her strongest chapters are those covering Thea's final decade, where her eloquent words speak directly to contemporary readers.

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

19-2-0166

Spagna, Ana Maria. *Test Ride on the Sunnyland Bus: A Daughter's Civil Rights Journey*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2010. 270 pp. ISBN 978-0-8032-1712-6, \$19.95 (pb).

Ana Maria Spagna was eleven years old when her father died. Many years later she stumbled across an Internet reference to his arrest in a civil rights protest. No one in her family could tell her much about this incident, so she began a quest to learn more about this hidden chapter of his life.

In 1957 Joseph Spagna was one of six young men, three Black and three White, who boarded a Tallahassee bus to test the city's compliance with a desegregation order. When Joe and two Black men took seats in the front section traditionally reserved for Whites, they were arrested. An appeal of their convictions failed, and Joe hastily left Florida rather than serve a long jail sentence.

Ana Maria traveled from her home in Washington State to Florida where she pored over old newspapers and dusty court records to unearth further details about her father's arrest. Her best sources, however, were three elderly men who had known Joe Spagna in his younger years. They described an aspiring beatnik, passionate about literature, who answered a call when White volunteers were needed.

Test Ride is the story of Ana Maria's voyage of personal discovery, as much autobiography as biography, as she comes to terms with memories and family relationships. In the closing chapter she describes her participation in the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Tallahassee bus boycott to honor her father's only act of social protest.

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

19-2-0167

Steltenkamp, Michael F. *Nicholas Black Elk: Medicine Man, Missionary, Mystic*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2009. 296 pp. ISBN 978-0-8061-4063-6, \$24.95.

Nicholas Black Elk is one of the few Native Americans (other than warriors) whose name is familiar to many Americans, largely because of his association with author John Neihardt. Neihardt's account of Black Elk's life and thoughts, *Black Elk Speaks*, is a touchstone of Native American literature. Perhaps because of his celebrity and his Catholic faith, some considered Black Elk a defeatist, subsumed by the dominant White culture while at the same time searching for his lost heritage.

In his new biography of Black Elk, Steltenkamp, a Jesuit priest and professor of Religious Studies, seeks to dispel this belief and reinforce Black Elk's position as an important Native American spiritual leader. Beginning with a cultural history of the Lakota People, Steltenkamp traces the life of Black Elk from his birth on the banks of the Powder River in Wyoming, through his involvement in the battles of the Little Big Horn (when he was ten) and Wounded Knee, his participation in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, his conversion to Catholicism, and his later life as a visionary and mystic.

Steltenkamp's well-researched account achieves his purpose, though some readers may note the author's insistence on viewing Black Elk's beliefs through his own Catholic values. Despite this inherent bias, *Nicholas Black Elk: Medicine Man, Missionary, Mystic*, is a valuable addition to the biographical record of influen-

tial Native American leaders. Includes notes and black-and-white photographs.

Andy J. Deering
Central Wyoming College

19-2-0168

Weaver, Kathleen. *Peruvian Rebel: The World of Magda Portal*. University Park: Penn State Univ. Press, 2009. 328 pp. ISBN 978-0-271-03549-9, \$60.00.

Peruvian Rebel is a wide-ranging biography of Magda Portal (1900-1989): poetess, social activist, and cofounder of a well-known Peruvian political party, the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), during the 1930s. The first part recounts the story of Magda from her childhood in Lima in a middle-class family to the death of her father. Later, Magda awakens to Peru's social injustices and struggles to improve its politics, controlled by right-wing governments in alliance with the United States, causing disarray among her exploited people. Her political and intellectual journey led her to associate with prominent Peruvian literary and political figures such as César Vallejo, José C. Mariátegui, and Victor R. Haya de la Torre. Because of her leftist views, she was exiled and traveled to Cuba, Mexico, and Chile, among other countries. She also made perilous trips within Peru to teach and help the mistreated indigenous people, especially women. She became the voice of Peruvian feminism, interested in helping both men and women with education, health, and social reform. As a poet, she honored Peruvian writers. In 1981, she was designated as Writer of the Americas. In her poetry, she reminisces about childhood memories, the sea, injustices, and her loneliness.

Peruvian Rebel is not a traditional chronological biography. Weaver intersperses historical, political, and cultural accounts of Latin America and Europe. She touches on the legacy of the socialist movement to the present, highlighting Portal's contribution to Latin America's social struggles. Her writing is clear and intertwines the facts eloquently with feelings, narrating Portal's endurance amidst betrayal and the loss of her daughter. The book is engaging to read and will be a great asset to students and scholars in literature, history, and politics, as well as to those who want to know the truth about the oppressed people of the American continent. Included are a map of Peru, Portal's personal photos, copious notes, and a comprehensive bibliography. The section on Portal's poetry, both in Spanish and in English, is also valuable.

Rosita Chazarreta-Rourke
Duquesne Univ.

19-2-0169

Zulu, Princess Kasune, and Collins, Belinda A. *Warrior Princess*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2010. 240 pp. ISBN 978-0-8308-3725-0, \$22.00 (pb).

Princess Zulu knew all her life that God had singled her out for

a special purpose or calling. She didn't understand what that calling was until she was diagnosed with HIV/AIDS.

The author grew up as Princess Kasune in a loving family in Zambia. She was a bright young woman who had to forgo her education after her parents died of AIDS and she became pregnant. At the age of 18, she married Moffat Zulu, yet she continued feel this calling.

After her diagnosis, she was given a pink pamphlet that provided her with a great deal of information on HIV and AIDS, and it was as though a light had come on for her. Even though she was a married woman with two young daughters, she was determined to be tested for the virus and also insisted her husband be tested as well (his two previous wives had died of AIDS). On finding that they were both HIV positive, neither gave in to the disease. Princess defied the many restrictions in her culture in order to educate as many people as she could about the virus. From her humble origins in a small African city, she became a world renowned advocate for HIV/AIDS education

Warrior Princess is easy reading, but has a very powerful message. The number of lives saved because of Mrs. Zulu's efforts will never be known, but it is certain to be many. The book is appropriate for teens as well as adults and is recommended for public library collections.

Charlie Spencer Lackey
Duke Univ. Medical Center Library

History

19-2-0170

Berlin, Ira. *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations*. New York: Viking, 2010. 290 pp. ISBN 978-0-670-02137-6, \$27.95.

As he did with *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in Mainland North America*, Berlin has painted with a broad stroke an amazing "new narrative" of not one but of successive waves of African descendants evolving over time into African Americans. In a rather physically and spiritually traumatic fashion, and situated on a continuum of movement and place, African descendants in what the author depicts as Four Great Migrations have followed patterns unlike what any other "coming to America" group went through or is going through.

The author describes African people who, over a 400-year period, have been an important variable in "the ever changing demands of global capitalism and its voracious appetite for labor which has reduced men and women—whether slave or free—into factors of production that can be extracted from one place and located elsewhere" (p. 12). Place and movement, the driving force behind the "contrapuntal narrative" during that 400-year span, "informed the development of a distinctive African American way of thinking and acting, as black society unraveled and then was re-knit" (p. 19).

Three of the four great migrations, of which the unraveling and re-knitting of Black society was a byproduct, were the Atlantic

crossing (the Middle Passage) of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; the movement of slaves from the Atlantic seaboard to the deep southern interior during the first half of the nineteenth century; and the flight from the South to northern cities during the mid-twentieth century. The fourth migration of the late twentieth century and into the twenty-first is a diasporic influx into the United States of “people of African descendants ... from all over the world—Africa, the greater Caribbean, South America, and Europe—again changing the composition, character, and cultures of the black population of the United States” (pp. 16, 207-208).

Although this recent diasporic influx was helped by such legislation as the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act and the 1986 Immigration and Control Act, creating place and/or common ground has not been as easy as with the previous waves of immigration. “The unity of past centuries proved more elusive ... in the fourth great migration” (pp. 206, 219): differences, some beyond resolution, remain, fostering tensions and defining African America as a balkanized people, identifiable as native (African American), African (Nigerian, Ghanaian, and so on), and Caribbean (Dominican, Jamaican, Haitian, and others). Many wrap themselves in the flags of the country of their birth, not only as “a message to the white community that they expect to be treated differently [but as well] to emphasize their difference from African Americans” (p. 221)—thus the potential to remake African-American life, “and, with it, the nation” (p. 242).

Putting those differences aside, the election of Barack Obama as the first African-American president demonstrates the strength and worth of the evolutionary process. As the author clearly states in the book, “Obama—like so many before him—articulated the master narrative of slavery to freedom. But, also like many before him, he has lived the narrative of movement and place. His experience—like theirs—suggests the utility of the new narrative” (p. 242).

The book is suitable for students at the high school and college levels as well as the general reading public.

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

19-2-0171

Brown, Judith M. *Windows into the Past: Life Histories and the Historian of South Asia*. Notre Dame, Ind.: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2009. 136 pp. ISBN 978-0-268-02217-4, \$20.00 (pb).

Windows into the Past is based on a series of lectures given in 2008 at the University of Notre Dame by Brown about new approaches for historical research on the history of British rule in India (the Raj) and the Indian Nationalist Movement led by Nehru and Gandhi.

Unfortunately, this book disappoints because a person who knows something about India will not find much that is new. There is nothing new in Brown’s “discovery” that political and economic elites come from the same background, attend the same schools, share common values, and marry each other. I was surprised that she was surprised that important political leaders preserved their private papers. She also thinks that longitudinal family histories are different from normal biographical studies and oral histories,

which they are not.

Another problem is that she emphasizes the value of photography as a historical source without discussing its weaknesses. Although photography certainly has a role, it is doubtful that historians can draw conclusions about attitudes from pictures; for instance, the view that Susan B. Anthony was a dour person and not a cheery individual, as her friends wrote, is based on a single picture, which reflected nineteenth-century photography when a subject had to hold a pose for several minutes.

The book’s greatest value lies in its footnotes and bibliography that helpfully suggest further resources about India, including Brown’s own in-depth biographies of Gandhi and Nehru.

Rick Sirvint
West Hartford, Conn.

19-2-0172

Browning, Christopher R. *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2009. 376 pp. ISBN 978-0-393-07019-4, \$27.95.

Written by an American professor and historian of the Holocaust, this volume focuses on the brutal destruction of a Jewish community in Poland (Wierzbnik-Starachowie) during World War II, and the role of SS man and police chief Walther Becker in sending about 4,000 Jews to their death in Treblinka as well as 1,600 Jews to slave-labor camps and local armament factories. Only 600-700 people survived; 292 of them (presently living in Israel, United States, and Canada) were interviewed by the author. On the basis of their depositions, one can distinguish four special aspects: a) the Jews, humiliated and hated by the Nazis, were subjected to difficult living and working conditions, lost their property, and lacked food and medicine; sick people and newborn babies were killed, while others were victims of random executions; Jewish leaders (Judenrat) and policemen were viewed critically (“some good, some bad”) or as privileged opportunists; b) German officers included both very cruel and occasionally merciful individuals, as well as some who were greedy and could be bribed; c) the Polish people in many cases displayed anti-Semitic sentiments; some openly showed joy at the humiliation of Jews or denounced them to the Germans, but there were also others who helped their Jewish friends, neighbors, or business associates; d) many Ukrainian guards were brutal anti-Semites who beat and killed Jews; others were lenient and helped them to smuggle food or permitted other favors for bribes.

We also find descriptions of Jewish life before the Holocaust, ghetto conditions, massacres, and post-war investigations, and trials. Ironically and astonishingly, in 1972, the Hamburg State Court of war crimes against Jews acquitted police chief Becker, interpreting that the testimony of the 100 witnesses and the 51 statements of other survivors were “notoriously unreliable” depositions of interested parties. Maps, photos, copious reference notes, and a general index are useful additions to this scholarly study. Recommended for Holocaust collections in the United States and abroad.

Vladimir F. Wertsman
New York Public Library

19-2-0173

De Bellaigue, Christopher. *Rebel Land: Unraveling the Riddle of History in a Turkish Town*. New York: Penguin Press, 2010. 270 pp. ISBN 978-1-59420-252-0, \$25.95.

A combination of historical detective story, travelogue, philosophical musings, folklore, and sociology, *Rebel Land* is a beautifully written and emotional account of the author's journeys to the eastern Turkish town of Varta and its environs in an attempt to discover the truth and effects of the 1915 Armenian genocide.

De Bellaigue examines the kaleidoscopic nature of ethnic and religious conflict in Turkey from the late Ottoman Empire until the present. Conflicts among and between Turks, Kurds, Armenians, and others are analyzed insightfully and provide a profound understanding of the nature of societal strife. The author makes the point that no single ethnic group was totally good or bad. The Armenian massacres and Kurdish nationalism are complex issues, perhaps even more difficult to understand than the Holocaust, where no doubt exists as to who the perpetrator of evil was.

De Bellaigue uses folktales to emphasize his theses and explores the role of myths in perpetuating conflict. His command of Turkish sources provides additional information. This is a powerful, soul-searching book by a writer with tremendous literary ability, sensitivity, and wisdom. It is the best book I have read about Turkey and, in particular, the struggle of Kurdish guerrillas against the Turkish government.

Rebel Land made me think that the happiest people in the world today are probably Kurds living freely in northern Iraq, and that the worst thing in history is prejudice against people because of their DNA, the one thing they cannot control.

Rick Sirvint
West Hartford, Conn.

19-2-0174

Dittmer, John. *The Good Doctors: The Medical Committee for Human Rights and the Struggle for Justice in Health Care*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2009. 324 pp. ISBN 978-1-59691-567-1, \$30.00.

The Medical Committee for Human Rights (MCHR) was established in 1964 by a group of left-leaning physicians in support of the southern civil rights movement. Recruitment of doctors and nurses for the Mississippi Freedom Summer project was its first major effort. There the MCHR volunteers encountered African Americans with untreated medical problems and lacking access to health care. Working with local Black physicians, the MCHR developed innovative medical programs for impoverished Mississippians. The following year MCHR volunteer medics accompanied civil rights marchers from Selma to Montgomery and helped organize the first Head Start program in Mississippi. Its activists also picketed the American Medical Association for excluding

Black physicians from its southern affiliates and petitioned Washington to deny federal funds to segregated hospitals.

In the late 1960s the MCHR shifted its focus and emerged as the medical arm of the New Left. MCHR members protested the Vietnam War and provided emergency care at anti-war rallies, including the 1968 Chicago Democratic convention. MCHR chapters launched pioneering projects to deliver health care to underserved urban populations. They joined forces with the Black Panther Party in Chicago and the American Indian Movement at Alcatraz and Wounded Knee. During the early 1970s the drive for national health insurance absorbed the MCHR members, but ideological clashes split the organization and membership plummeted.

Dittmer's carefully researched study places the MCHR within the web of organizations that populated the 1960s and reminds readers how this small group of medical activists planted the seeds that led to a national network of comprehensive community health centers.

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

19-2-0175

Elinson, Elaine, and Yogi, Stan. *Wherever There's a Fight: How Runaway Slaves, Suffragists, Immigrants, Strikers, and Poets Shaped Civil Liberties in California*. Berkeley, Calif.: Heyday Books, 2009. 512 pp. ISBN 978-1-59714-114-7, \$24.95 (pb).

Elinson and Yogi have written a powerful twelve-chapter book. Each chapter focuses on a particular issue Californians have fought over, some since first becoming a state. Some of these issues include immigrant, worker, and women's rights; racial inequality; GLBT rights; religious freedom; and disability rights. I found myself quite incensed while reading, due to the continual injustices that group after group of Californians had to face while fighting for basic human rights.

While readers can discern the root cause, the authors refuse to specify. Doing so remains "politically incorrect" in my opinion, though things are moving in the direction of making this less so. Therefore allow me to decipher, by sheer process of elimination, the culprit behind each of the twelve issues this book describes—White Christians. Not all White Christians are liable. However, with few if any exceptions, all culprits were of White Christian backgrounds. I hate to throw the word Christian around so loosely because this implies that Christ has some connection to these pagans. In fact, with few exceptions these Christians have pretty much inverted one of Christ's basic messages, to help the downtrodden. Kicking the downtrodden is more like what these heathens have done, and without a major theological change, I see no reason to expect anything different in the future.

Potential readers who haven't yet been convinced that anger is some horrible, unacceptable emotion, something to repress at all costs, this book may be for you. *Wherever There's a Fight* should anger decent people who read about continual abuses of power. I hope those readers will use their right to "freedom of speech and press" to let those who continue to abuse their power know

what they think of such abuse. You might even offer them your prayers.

Richard Levik
Los Angeles Unified School Dist.
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19-2-0176

Florence, Ronald. *Emissary of the Doomed: Bargaining for Lives in the Holocaust*. New York: Viking, 2009. 336 pp. ISBN 978-0-670-02072-0, \$27.95.

Florence offers well-documented and captivating writing on the Holocaust in Hungary during the final stages of World War II. In order to save Hungarian Jews from deportation to death camps, three Jewish leaders (Joel Brand, an ardent Zionist and "Emissary of the Dead;" Rezso (Israel) Kastner, a noted lawyer; and Bandi Grosz, a smuggler of Jews from Slovakia) gained access to Adolf Eichmann and his close associates, and started bargaining on the basis of Eichmann's proposal: "a million Jews for ten thousand trucks is cheap," later adding machines, spare parts, raw materials, leather, coffee, tea, and soap. At the end, in the absence of any agreement, over 450,000 deported Jews were killed in Auschwitz and other death camps. Only Kastner succeeded in saving a group of Jews, including his family, and sending them on a train to Switzerland.

The three negotiators blamed England, America, and the Jewish Agency from Palestine (later Israel) for refusing to provide financial means and to negotiate with Eichmann. We also find several interesting biographical details. For instance, Brand's wife became Kastner's steady concubine; Grosz was also a secret Nazi agent, served six years in a Turkish prison, and immigrated to Israel; and Kastner was assassinated in Israel and blamed as a Nazi collaborator for his friendly relations with SS officers. Brand, who also immigrated to Israel, constantly complained about the Jewish Agency for not helping to save the Hungarian Jews, and he served as a main prosecution witness during Eichmann's trial. An extensive list of reference notes, relevant photos, and a useful general index supplement this valuable book, which is certainly deserving of a place on the shelves of libraries and organizations with Holocaust collections in the United States and abroad.

Vladimir F. Wertsman
New York Public Library

19-2-0177

Goodman, Jordan. *The Devil and Mr. Casement: One Man's Battle for Human Rights in South America's Heart of Darkness*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2010. 320 pp. ISBN 978-0-374-13840-0, \$30.00.

Sir Roger Casement (1864-1916) is most noted as a distinguished Anglo-Irish diplomat hung for treason for supporting Irish republican revolutionaries during World War I. The British

government, in attempting to erase his previously notable reputation for international humanitarianism, released his "black diaries," containing entries on his homosexual encounters. His humanitarian efforts focused on exposing the exploitation and abuse of indigenous peoples in the Belgian Congo River basin (Joseph Conrad's "heart of darkness") and the Putumayo River, a Peruvian tributary of the Amazon.

Goodman is a historian affiliated with the University of London, who here narrates the details and moral drama of Sir Roger's efforts in Peru to expose and remedy the abuses of the enslaved Putumayo Indians who were held on the plantations of the rubber baron, Julio César Arana. Casement journeyed to the remote regions twice (in 1910 and 1911) as British consul in Brazil. He reported the diabolical conditions on the baron's landholdings, which were incorporated in London as the Peruvian Amazon Company. The exposure led to the company's dismantlement.

This book is substantively supported with black-and-white photographs, a map, chronologies, notes on the text and illustrations, and an extensive bibliography, primarily of English sources.

Edward A. Riedinger
Ohio State Univ. Libraries

19-2-0178

Henderson, Timothy J. *The Mexican Wars for Independence*. New York: Hill & Wang, 2009. 240 pp. ISBN 978-0-8090-9509-4, \$27.50.

Much has been written about Mexican independence. The quantity is appropriate insofar as the struggle that led to it was prolonged, contradictory, and conflicted. Elites vied with each other as to who would lead a new country, while others challenged whether there should be such an entity. The battles between 1810 and 1821 that led to independence resemble a series of civil wars both between Mexican and Spanish elites and against a loosened peasantry.

Henderson, a historian specializing in Mexico, reviews the confusing etiology of Mexican nationhood. He concentrates on the initial phases of the conflict and the conspiracies and tactics of its early clerical leaders, Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos. The contradictions and populist brutality of their actions left a legacy of nationhood riveted by inequality, violence, and anarchy. The irony of Mexican independence is that a royalist military commander who opposed it, Agustín de Iturbide, achieved it. He came to see that the status quo could best be achieved if Mexico became an independent empire, with he himself its monarch. The status quo, nonetheless, became cycles of socio-political breakdown and authoritarianism. Accompanying the text are black-and-white illustrations, a map, a chronology, and suggestions for further reading primarily in English. Chapter notes mainly cite secondary sources.

Edward A. Riedinger
Ohio State Univ. Libraries

19-2-0179

Huntley, Horace, and McKerley, John W., eds. *Foot Soldiers for Democracy: The Men, Women, and Children of the Birmingham Civil Rights Movement*. Champaign: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2009. 264 pp. ISBN 978-0-252-03478-7, \$75.00 (cl); 978-0-252-07668-8, \$25.00 (pb).

Too often histories of the civil rights movement focus on the leading personalities. This is true of the historic 1963 Birmingham confrontations where published accounts are dominated by the conflict between African-American ministers Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy, and Fred Shuttlesworth pressing for integration and racist Commissioner "Bull" Connor defending segregation. By presenting transcripts of interviews with 29 ordinary citizens who participated in the Birmingham movement, *Foot Soldiers for Democracy* offers a valuable corrective. The subjects range from Emma Smith Young, a laundress who was 61 at the time of the demonstrations, to Audrey Faye Hendricks, a nine-year-old elementary school student who was one of the youngest protestors arrested in 1963. Their accounts were selected from a larger collection of oral histories gathered by the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

Each of the interviews is accompanied by a brief biographical sketch. Two short introductory essays explain the larger significance of the incidents covered in these interviews. A detailed chronology clarifies the sequence of events described by these "foot soldiers." Scholars and serious students of the civil rights movement will appreciate these compelling first-person accounts of the Birmingham protests.

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

19-2-0180

Sand, Shlomo. *The Invention of the Jewish People*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Verso, 2009. 432 pp. ISBN 978-1-84467-422-0, \$34.95.

Many nations incorporate history and legend into their foundation story and perhaps no historical narrative of nationhood has more gravity in contemporary world affairs than Israel's. It is this story of the Jewish people that Sand puts under the lens of historical scrutiny. Sand, a professor of modern French history at Tel Aviv University, presents essentially a historiography of the many accounts of Jewish history from the Old Testament and Josephus Flavius to the German Jewish historians of the nineteenth century and contemporary histories of the Jewish people.

His work is a polemic argument against the Zionist conception of the Jewish nation since the 1950s. The Zionist view is that the Jewish people today are essentially the descendants of the Jews who were driven out of Judea by the Romans in the first century CE. Sand contends that the Jewish population was not driven out of Judea by the Romans after the first and second rebellions and that the Palestinian farmers in today's Israel are in all likelihood descendants of Jewish peasants who remained on the land. He also notes that many of the communities of the Jewish Diaspora of late

antiquity in North Africa, Spain, and other parts of the Mediterranean world were proselytizing Jews who won many converts. Perhaps Sand's most focused and strident argument is that most of the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe are the descendants of the Khazars, a Turkic people of the Caucasus region who converted to Judaism during the early Middle Ages. All of these arguments challenge a major Zionist tenet, the right of Jewish people everywhere to return to their national homeland, Israel.

Sand's book was published last year in Hebrew with an early 2009 translation into French. Needless to say it is a highly controversial work that will stir the pot we call the Arab-Israeli conflict. Recommended with caution for academic and public libraries.

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

Religion

19-2-0181

Greenspoon, Leonard J., ed. *The Mountains Shall Drip Wine: Jews and the Environment*. Lincoln: Creighton Univ. Press; dist. by Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2009. 200 pp. Series: Studies in Jewish Civilization. ISBN 1-881871-59-2, \$35.00 (pb).

This anthology of Jewish views on the environment contained certain stories that piqued my interest above others. Dean Bell's story regarding earthquakes in the early modern world garnered my attention. Philip Hollander's comparison and contrast of two Israeli films regarding immigration to the Holy Land was interesting, though no doubt better understood by those having seen these films.

Gary Rendsburg's story about Israel in relation to the land of Canaan would be of special interest to history buffs. Rendsburg discusses an ancient Egyptian courtier, Sinuhe, and his encounter with the land of Canaan. Rendsburg found that Sinuhe's discoveries matched those found in Deuteronomy 8:8, written centuries later. Deut. 11:10-15 is also referenced where Rendsburg points out God's intention for the Promised Land was for seasonal rains to make life easier than life in Egypt, where water needed to be diverted from the Nile and other similar sources to irrigate the crops and land. However, seasonal rains were dependent on Israel's obedience to their covenant with God.

Alon Tal is the former chair of Life and Environment, the umbrella group of Israel's 90 environmental organizations. Tal's story is loaded with scriptural references along with some rabbinic references to ancient Israel, ancient Judea, and modern Israel. Tal also lists and describes some of the many worldwide leaders of Jewish background within today's environmental movement.

If the intersection of God, religion, history, ethnicity, and the environment from a Jewish worldview is of interest to you, then this book will capture your attention. Some of the essays, however, are stronger and more relevant than others.

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

300 pp. ISBN 978-0-470-43326-3, \$24.95.

A mixture of memoir and theological reflection, this book considers the future of organized religion in the current climate of fear and hatred between religious groups. The assumption is that most people turn away from religion, striving to be spiritual instead. Jews, Christians, and Muslims are endangering their futures by continuing to harbor hostilities toward one another. Selmanovic believes the world can change if religious adherents, as well as atheists, begin to communicate about religion on a broad scale that invites finding commonalities, accepting one another, and creating a unified and inclusive community.

The author writes from his location as a convert to Christianity from Islam, as an immigrant from Croatia to the United States, and as a Seventh Day Adventist pastor. He describes his life experiences throughout the book, reflecting on the deeper theological meanings related to interreligious dialogue and religious tolerance. While his book claims to be written for people of any faith, its strong Christian perspective and use of Christian language and imagery may limit its ability to reach a large readership beyond Christian communities. Designed for reading and discussing in a group setting, this book includes a hearty study guide of reflective questions to accompany every chapter.

Myka Kennedy-Stephens
Chicago, Ill.

Education

19-2-0184

Alonso, Gaston; Anderson, Noel S.; Su, Celina; and Theoharis, Jeanne. *Our Schools Suck: Students Talk Back to a Segregated Nation on the Failures of Urban Education*. New York: New York Univ. Press, 2009. 300 pp. ISBN 978-0-8147-8307-8, \$70.00 (cl); 978-0-8147-8308-5, \$22.00 (pb).

In allowing the voices of a few urban youth to be heard on the pages of this book, the authors have empowered millions. By referendum, those students and these authors challenge the message of all who say that inner city youth care nothing about their own education. Their contention is that such generalities paint a stereotypical picture that is far from the truth. Just as idiotic is burdening or blaming the students as opposed to the circumstances that many of them are born into: crippling poverty, which relegates them to neighborhoods where educational institutions are segregated and learning conditions are among the worst in the nation. Under such conditions, as discussed with these students, taking pleasure in learning, staying focused, and finding optimism for the future is very difficult, especially when their lives are consumed by fears associated with unemployment and various types of discrimination.

While it may be true that some students in these communities don't always attend classes or do their homework, as critics seem anxious to point out, what the authors found was that this

19-2-0182

Lorentzen, Lois; Gonzalez, Joaquin J.; Chun, Kevin M.; and Do, Hien Duc, eds. *Religion at the Corner of Bliss and Nirvana*. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2009. 400 pp. ISBN 978-0-8223-4547-3, \$24.95 (pb).

This collection of essays looks at the role of religion in binding new immigrant communities in the United States and how immigrants have retained transnational communities of faith. Several of the essays evaluate the contributions of immigrant churches to the revitalization of decaying religious institutions tied to older immigrant groups, like the Irish, and the positive contributions of immigrant churches and lay societies to the social capital and religious diversity of American society. An opening section provides examples of the interaction of faith, gender, and sexuality. Another section looks at the church as a community helping immigrants adapt to American society. Essays explore how immigrants change the communities they reside in by bringing their own unique cultural, religious, linguistic, and nationalist values to the larger society. One of the central themes of this section is how religion and faith remain essential for positive adaptation to American society and cushion the isolation and alienation of new immigrants to America. A third section emphasizes the transnational connections of immigrant religious communities, like the Filipino Global Church of Christ, the Catholic Kerygma movement of El Salvador, and the Buddhist Tianhou/Mazu cult of Taiwan. The fourth section deals with the civic and political engagement of immigrants in the United States. There is an important essay on how Filipino immigrants have played a crucial role in providing social capital to communities in California and reinvigorating voluntary social networks.

This is not a comprehensive survey of the role of religion in immigrant communities but rather a selective collection that concentrates on immigrants from El Salvador, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Taiwan. There is one chapter on the Mayan immigrants from the Yucatan of Mexico. Ironically, while this is a much-needed study of the role of religion and faith for new immigrants, it concentrates on the two major religious traditions in the United States, Protestant and Roman Catholic Christianity and how new immigrants have revitalized those—with limited attention to other religious traditions. However, this is a welcome addition to the literature on religion and new immigrants, a field that most social scientists have ignored.

Harvey J. Strum
Sage Colleges of Albany

19-2-0183

Selmanovic, Samir. *It's Really All About God: Reflections of a Muslim Atheist Jewish Christian*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009.

stemmed less from their not valuing education than from their “loss of confidence in themselves and the school to do right by them.” Throughout the book, there is evidence of the troubling dehumanization of urban youth connected to and by many of their schools. The authors emphasize the irresponsibility of the critics and the adults in charge of the school systems where there often is rampant disregard for the educational welfare of the children they are supposed to be teaching.

The authors conclude that education is a fundamental right by way of the federal government's role in setting standards for schools. Without violating local control of education, this should be grounds for constitutional protection so that all students receive equitable schooling. I find that a compelling argument. If that thought were to be put into new and vibrant reform for urban education, including the empowerment of students to help fix the problems plaguing their schools, it would put teeth into the original *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954, and finally allow it to live up to its promise of an equal education for all.

Instead of criticizing what urban youth are not doing, maybe those with the power of position should use their influence to urge on reforms that would genuinely help those students they seem to so enjoy tearing down.

Henry C. Griffith, Sr.
Powell, Ohio

19-2-0185

Begaudeau, François. *The Class*. New York: Seven Stories, 2009. 270 pp. Trans. from French by Lisa Asher. ISBN 978-1-58322-885-1, \$17.95 (pb).

The source for an award-winning film of the same name, *The Class* is narrated by a homeroom teacher of French language and literature in a middle school in France. Through this work, the reader is able to hear the raw voices of both the students and the teacher as they struggle to understand such issues as race, class, identity, colonial history, immigration, and education. It is the students' raw voices as they struggle to better understand themselves, the world around them, and the role of education in their lives that is guaranteed to capture and keep readers' attention. These students travel as a group to different teachers' classes to learn other subject areas. They are in their final year of middle school which ends with a high-stakes exam that partly determines their placement at the high school level. In France, this is known as the reverse counting system—*trisieme*. The ninth grade exam tracks students to either begin vocational training or courses in preparation for an academic baccalaureate program.

The Class will leave readers with an understanding of the commonalities and differences in students no matter where they are located in the world. This class of ninth grade 14-year-olds could easily be located in a middle school classroom in the Bronx, or Trenton, or South Los Angeles. Students, teachers, administrators, and teacher educators will benefit from *The Class*. Its relevance reaches across the boundaries of schools—urban, rural, public, private, and alternative schools.

Linda Rhone
Newman Univ.

19-2-0186

Kollar, Nathan R. *Defending Religious Diversity in Public Schools: A Practical Guide for Building Our Democracy and Deepening Our Education*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2009. 216 pp. ISBN 978-0-313-35997-2, \$39.95.

Kollar invites readers to a serious conversation about the Constitution's cornerstone principle of separating church and state, which dictates that American public schools stay away from advocating any religion in their curricula. Kollar warns that leaving students ignorant to different faiths altogether could be an open invitation to exactly the kind of insensitivity, lack of tolerance, and bigotry our schools should be lessening instead of perpetuating.

This work not only makes a powerful case for exposing students to the multifaith practices in the United States and around the world, it focuses on the skills teachers, counselors, and administrators must master to address diversity in religious faiths that will be effective and lasting over time such as: keeping up to date with all of the latest research developments from both the legal and educational communities, choosing a leader, forming an advocacy coalition, listening, cultural analysis, conflict resolution, and institutional development. This author's analysis and recommendations are enhanced by a cultural toolbox that readers will find useful in discerning the values and culture of an institution and a true/false exam for pre-assessment of legal knowledge about religion in the schools.

Ignorance of multiple religious faiths continues to keep many children and adults divided all over the world. As our nation grapples with the problems associated with our multifaith framework, this timely book will help people of different faiths to live in peace and with mutual respect. It is a must read.

Linda Rhone
Newman Univ.

19-2-0187

López Púlido, Alberto; de Alvarado, Barbara Driscoll; Samora, Carmen, eds. *Moving Beyond Borders: Julián Samora and the Establishment of Latino Studies*. Champaign: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2009. 312 pp. ISBN 978-0-252-03463-3, \$70.00 (cl); 978-0-252-07656-5, \$30.00 (pb).

Students and friends of Julián Samora provide a *festschrift* about the life and influence of a man often referred to as the father of Latino studies in the United States, with Latino studies generally meant here as border studies, Chicano studies, and Mexican American studies. A professor at Notre Dame from 1959 to 1984, Samora believed in being involved in community activities, not just studying them. Some 30 contributors provide personal memoirs and detailed aspects of his thoughts while also giving insight into an era when minority studies were neither common nor ap-

preciated. This is an upper level work meant for academics.

Patrick M. Valentine
East Carolina Univ.

19-2-0188

Urrieta, Louis, Jr. *Working from Within: Chicana and Chicano Activist Educators in Whistream Schools*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2009. 176 pp. ISBN 978-0-8165-2611-6, \$39.95.

Working from Within is a landmark study of Chicano identity and its relationship with whistream institutions and activism that should be on the shelves of every library. The book is instructive for anyone interested in studying subjectivity-identity as topics writ large.

Using life history, narrative interviews, and ethnographic data, and working with constructivist understandings of subjectivity-identity, Urrieta narrates the contours of Chicana and Chicano identities. Mirroring a deeply painful and honest biographical dilemma regarding his own activist identity and ability to enact change, his participants' stories explore critical conversations, engagement in activisms, and dilemmas of "authenticity" about selling out or being "down" down for the Cause. In the end, Urrieta, modest in his conclusion about local contextualized Chicano activisms, comes to understand his participants and himself as complex and multiple folks in rejecting dualisms of either "authentic activists" or "sell outs."

What is important here is Urrieta's self-love (a crucial political act today)—reflected in the way in which he embraces his participants—in narrating more ample, critically conscious, and progressive Chicano identities. As a critically conscious White educator trained by ex-*Raza* members in South Texas, it reminded me of the pleasures of coffee and conversation with the ones I love: Chicanos and those of many other identities.

James C. Jupp
Central Arkansas Univ.

Health and Medicine

19-2-0189

Bateman, William; Abesamis-Mendoza, Noilyn; Ho-Asjoe, Henrietta, eds. *Praeger Handbook of Asian American Health: Taking Notice and Taking Action*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2009. 2 vols., 800 pp. ISBN 978-0-313-34701-6, \$195.00.

This work covers almost every aspect of health that is of interest to Asian Americans of all backgrounds, as well as to health care providers, counselors, and others who work with Asian Americans. It is not the type of book you would necessarily sit down and read from cover to cover, but it is filled with such interesting information that you might just find yourself doing that. Information was provided that I had not read anyplace else. Even though I am African American, I found the information vital and important to me.

The handbook provides a great deal of statistical information on Asian Americans' health. Its graphs and charts are invaluable in showing differences between various groups of Americans. It compares Asian Americans with other Americans and tries to explain why some health issues are more common in one group than another.

The book looks at Asian Americans from a cultural, social, and health standpoint. It can be used as a ready reference handbook. *Asian American Health* is written in layman's terminology. This book would fit well in any Asian American's home library, the public library, or a medical library.

Charlie Spencer Lackey
Duke Univ. Medical Center Library

Social and Political Sciences

19-2-0190

Alden, Edward. *The Closing of the American Border: Terrorism, Immigration, and Security Since 9/11*. New York: HarperCollins, 2008. 346 pp. Published with the Council on Foreign Relations. ISBN 978-0-06-155839-9, \$27.95 (c); 978-0-06-155840-5, \$15.99 (pb).

This book purports to be an explanation of why the United States has tried to limit the number of foreigners entering the country. Readers are provided with an intriguing story of Homeland Security's bureaucratic development and its policies. It is also a disappointment.

The author who is a fellow at the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations fails to answer the forensic question of why the U.S.-Mexican border has been walled off. He treats the matter as if it were in a political, social, cultural vacuum. Alden provides corporate America's explanation of post 9/11 events. Though he mentions the anti-immigrant movement, Alden fails to adequately analyze it. He ignores the tremendous animus against immigrants, especially Hispanics, which already existed. Alden fails to recognize that the true significance of 9/11 was that it allowed various groups to become wealthy and amalgamate political power by turning on groups they disdained and pitting them against others. There is no discussion of the massive fundraising of the anti-immigrant lobby, nor an examination of why there is no Canadian wall, although a number of terrorists were caught there. Did any generals or admirals cite Mexico as a national security threat? There are endnotes, but the narrative lacks citations. It is not clear whether this problem is Alden's or his editor/publisher's.

Salvador Rivera
SUNY Cobleskill

19-2-0191

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press, 2010. 352 pp. ISBN 978-1-59558-103-7, \$27.95.

The topic of social and racial justice in the United States is multilayered, complex, and often controversial. As one segment of the society reviews the triumphs of recent political gain, there is another group that is regarded as second-class citizens.

In *The New Jim Crow* Alexander theorizes that the mass incarceration of Black men in America represents a system of social control and racial discrimination that rivals Jim Crow and slavery. She argues that the large numbers of Black men immersed in the criminal justice system face limited access to voting, housing, employment, and educational opportunities, thereby creating and perpetuating a modern caste system in our society.

The text offers explanations and hypotheses about crime and incarceration rates in the United States as compared to other countries. A summary of the types of social control mechanisms utilized in recent U.S. history, such as mandatory minimum sentencing and the "War on Drugs," is presented. A unique and valuable addition is the words, thoughts, and opinions of a group of men who are currently in prison.

The author is an attorney, law professor, and civil rights litigator who has worked extensively to fight discrimination and racial profiling. Her book is highly recommended.

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

19-2-0192

Breidenbach, Joana, and Nyíri, Pál. *Seeing Culture Everywhere: From Genocide to Consumer Habits*. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2010. 304 pp. ISBN 978-0-295-98950-1, \$24.95 (pb).

Breidenbach and Nyíri assert that "the dilemma this book raises is how to retain sensitivity to cultural impacts on and of policies and corporate decisions without falling into the trap of determinism, essentialization and misrepresentation" (p. 29). This is because, they argue, it is now the concept of culture that threatens to serve as "an explanatory paradigm in human institutions" (p. 23). Given that Western culture is still struggling with race as a concept and a material reality that once served as "an explanatory paradigm," one can surmise that Breidenbach and Nyíri are referring to the same "human institutions." Indeed Breidenbach and Nyíri's explanation of how today's "corporate employees and government officials are trained in 'intercultural competence'" sounds much like the ways their predecessors were trained in racial sensitivity.

Rightly so, and through diligent academic argument the authors demonstrate that culture, as a concept, can produce all the same "isms" reified by the concept of race. This book puts the "culture" in Cultural Studies. It is a must-read for post secondary level readers interested in the theories of paradigm shift.

Leslie Antonette
East Stroudsburg Univ. of Pennsylvania

19-2-0193

Breytenbach, Breyten. *Notes from the Middle World*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2009. 220 pp. ISBN 978-1-931859-91-2, \$18.00 (pb).

Breytenbach, the South African poet and writer, presently a professor at Yale, is in love with the sound of words and brings a sophisticated and international perspective to these discursive essays—what he calls, "shifting reflections." The title essay deals with the status of "uncitizens," those people who left their home worlds behind and "ventured into zones whose truths no longer fitted snugly and where certainties did not overlap," where "most likely they got lost." Lost but in a most cosmopolitan sense, in good company with the Dalai Lama, Mandela, Gandhi, all descendants of the Greco-Egyptian poet Cavafy. Several other essays deal with Africa.

Breytenbach, himself of White Afrikaans stock, was imprisoned and then in exile during apartheid. These are long thoughts to be read in the late stillness of night.

Patrick M. Valentine
East Carolina Univ.

19-2-0194

Detroit Arab American Study Team. *Citizenship and Crisis: Arab Detroit After 9/11*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2009. 280 pp. ISBN 978-0-87154-052-2, \$42.50.

A landmark study of social life, religious practice, cultural values, and political views among Detroit Arabs after 9/11, *Citizenship and Crisis* is an important book that provides accurate information about a community that is often misunderstood, underrepresented, and stereotyped.

As someone of Middle Eastern background who has been living in Michigan for nearly 30 years, I appreciated the complex questions addressed and the information gathered in the study, which surveyed over 1,000 Arab Americans living in the Detroit area. This book will better acquaint everyone in the United States with who Arab Americans are, the issues that form their characters, their values, and the desires they are in pursuit of. Given the current complex relationship between the United States and the Arab world, the book, though scholarly in its approach and writing, is a must read.

Weam Namou
President, Iraqi Artists Association

19-2-0195

Hine, Darlene Clark; Keaton, Trica Danielle; and Small, Stephen, eds. *Black Europe and the African Diaspora*. Champaign: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2009. 328 pp. ISBN 978-0-252-03467-1, \$75.00 (cl); 978-0-252-07657-2, \$30.00 (pb).

The social and political examination of race has been reviewed and studied in this country for hundreds of years. However, this

multidisciplinary subject is seldom intensely discussed from a global perspective. *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* is an anthology derived from a 2004 conference in Paris and most notably from a symposium of the same name that took place at Northwestern University in 2006.

The text offers a salient contribution to the historical account of Blacks in Europe. The editors have diverse academic backgrounds and present a plethora of opinions about the constructs of race, racism, and immigration from a European viewpoint. Among the topics discussed are the Black influence in the Netherlands in the sixteenth century and its subsequent influence on Dutch culture. A socio-historical account of Black Americans in France gives new perspectives on expatriation, migration, and geography. Essays detailing the Black influence in Italy and Germany are also included.

Copious notes supplement each chapter; additionally, an afterword reviewing contemporary Europe from a multicultural standpoint serves as a fitting summary statement to the book. Recommended for upper class students, faculty, and scholars of African Diasporic studies.

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

19-2-0196

Koditschek, Theodore; Cha-jua, Sundiata Keita; and Neville, Helen A., eds. *Race Struggles*. Champaign: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2009. 352 pp. ISBN 978-0-252-03449-7, \$75.00 (c); 978-0-252-07648-0, \$30.00 (pb).

Race Struggles presents a collection of essays that argue the importance of a materialist consideration of the concept of race. The postmodern turn of bringing to light the linguistic, relational, and arbitrary concept of race—as a concept—has allowed individuals to move away from considerations of the very material impact of the concept of race. In Helen Neville's essay, "Rationalizing the Racial Order: Racial Color-Blindness as a Legitimizing Ideology," she demonstrates the overriding argument of the collection through a discussion of quantitative psychological research. She uses the example of President Bush's remarks regarding Hurricane Katrina (2005). He is quoted as having said that Katrina was a "color-blind" natural disaster, and the rescue efforts would be just as color-blind (124). This statement demonstrates how Bush used race as a concept to ignore the very material reality of the demographics of the area that Katrina hit hardest. It was the poorest and by no coincidence the area with the highest number of people of color living in it. Bush's "color-blind" strategy of separating concept from material reality was repeated by subjects in the psychological study discussed by Neville. This makes race and racism a much more subtle and individual problem rather than a cultural problem that is openly addressed (124).

The collection was created to serve as a textbook in introductory college level courses. Each essay could be useful in any number of traditionally defined classrooms as well as in interdisciplinary courses.

19-2-0197

McFaul, Thomas R. *The Future of Truth & Freedom in the Global Village: Modernism and the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2009. 196 pp. ISBN 978-0-313-38196-6, \$44.95.

Chapter 1, page 1, paragraph 1 concludes, "all are driven by one basic desire: to know the Truth and to live by it." Apparently he naively considers the 180° inverse of truth, the repression of and hatred for truth, to be equivalent to a desire to know and live by truth.

McFaul's general theme is that everything is fine, people are good, and life is and has been going in the right direction. Maybe this is looking on the bright side or seeing the glass as half full. This is not my philosophy, and while it is quite common, I do not respect such a philosophy. My philosophy is realistic. Hope for the best, but expect and prepare for the worst. The glass may be half full, however it is also half empty. Those who consider this truth too painful to swallow will like this book.

Chapter 7, "A Common Thread," illustrates how the major religions share common principles. Jews have Moses, Muslims have Mohammed, Christians have Jesus, and then there's Buddha and all those Eastern religions/philosophies. Everything's just fine. Question: When has this scenario EVER been fine? Answer: Never. Why can't those with Jesus also have Moses, Mohammed, Buddha, and so on? Why can't those with Moses have Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, and so on? There is no reason, except for arrogance and willful ignorance by many involved.

One other theme, "Modernism and the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century," the book's subtitle, is a prime example of the arrogance to which I refer and to which virtually no one seems to object—because it is also the fifty-eighth century (Hebrew calendar), fifteenth century (Muslim calendar), and forty-eighth century (Chinese calendar), among others. The world is also round as it always was. Yet many of our half-baked ideas originated when those who expressed such radical views were excommunicated, tortured, threatened, and often punished with death.

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

19-2-0198

Monteón, Michael. *Latin America and the Origins of Its Twenty-First Century*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2009. 422 pp. ISBN 978-0-313-35249-2, \$54.95.

Monteón, a historian at the University of California San Diego, here posits an emerging alternative dynamic in Latin American democracy based on the changing relationship over the past two centuries between cities and countryside. He traces this develop-

ment in five historical segments. He begins by analyzing relations in the early nineteenth century between rural agrarian bosses and urban nationalist politicians. The next phase concentrates on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the rise of rural and urban oligarchies based on new means of wealth, particularly as reflected in Buenos Aires. From the early to mid-twentieth century, a phase of modernization and populist revolutions arises, apparent in numerous countries of the region. The next phase covers two decades from the mid-twentieth century to 1985, focusing on modernized lifestyles and related conflicts, reflected particularly in the Santiago of Pinochet's Chile and massively emerging in Brazil. The final and current phase covers from 1985 to the present, with a diffusion of entrepreneurship, non-government organizations, the predominance of urbanization, and the megalopolis phenomena of Mexico City and São Paulo.

The work sounds a hopeful note for participatory, democratic societies in the region, positing an alternative path that is overcoming a heritage of colonial hierarchy. The work includes extensive notes and bibliography but no maps or illustrations.

Edward A. Riedinger
Ohio State Univ. Libraries

19-2-0199

O'Shaughnessy, Hugh. *The Priest of Paraguay: Fernando Lugo and the Making of a Nation*. London, U.K.: Zed Books, 2009. 176 pp. ISBN 978-1-84813-312-9, \$119.95 (cl); 978-1-84813-314-3, \$29.95 (pb).

This work by British journalist O'Shaughnessy provides a capsule biography of the newly elected (2008) president of Paraguay, Fernando Lugo (1951-), and a history of his country. The Paraguay and Paraná Rivers form the Guaraní people's heartland. Sixteenth-century Spanish missionaries of the Society of Jesus consolidated it into a community network known as the "Jesuit Republic." Colonial landowners vanquished it, shaping an elite that subordinated the Guaraní. The modern expression of this dominance was the rule of the Colorado Party from before World War II until the election of Lugo. The darkest years (1954-1989) occurred under U.S.-backed General Alfredo Stroessner.

Born into a family persecuted by Stroessner, Lugo endured a hardscrabble life. Sympathetic to the oppressed, he entered the Roman Catholic priesthood in 1977, was elevated to bishop in 1994, and headed the poorest diocese of one of the poorest countries in the Americas. Influenced by Liberation Theology, he advocated agrarian reform and land redistribution. Recognized as the "bishop of the poor," he realized he could be most effective socially if outside the Church and within a government, and he resigned his bishopric in 2005. Forming an alliance of anti-Colorado movements, he won the 2008 presidential election, ending six decades of one-party rule. This book includes a map, a bibliography, and a postscript on reports of children fathered by Lugo as bishop.

Edward A. Riedinger
Ohio State Univ. Libraries

19-2-0200

Roberts, Terence. *Simple, Not Easy: Reflections on Community Social Responsibility and Tolerance*. Little Rock, Ark.: Parkhurst Brothers Publishing, 2010. ISBN 978-1-935166-16-0, \$24.95 (pb).

Simple, Not Easy is a small work of an autobiographical nature put together by one of the Little Rock Nine, Terrence Roberts. Roberts has collected a number of the pieces he has written over the years related to his participation in the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas in 1957. Roberts believes that the mythology of sameness "is part and parcel of our inability to cope with difference of any sort" (18). He explains that it is through confronting "the collective mental-maps of vast numbers of red-blooded Americans" with the material reality of America's cultural[ly diverse] identity is one way that Americans will learn to "confront the prevailing mythology [of sameness] around us" (13). For, as Roberts writes, "the only thing we have in common is difference" (18).

Roberts facilitates this confrontation with the myth of sameness through the speeches he presents in this collection. This is an excellent text for high school level readers, although post-secondary readers will enjoy it as well. It would work nicely across disciplines.

Leslie Antonette
East Stroudsburg Univ. of Pennsylvania

19-2-0201

Ross, Dennis, and Makovsky, David. *Myths, Illusions, and Peace: Finding a New Direction for America in the Middle East*. New York: Viking, 2009. 370 pp. ISBN 978-0-670-02089-8, \$27.95.

Ross, veteran peace negotiator for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict under George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, and Makovsky, senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, argue that U.S. Middle East policy has been based on faulty ideological assumptions. As a result, there have been numerous past mistakes, and the United States risks basing future actions in the Middle East arena on misguided policies.

The authors take issue with both the neoconservative belief in the capacity of the United States to impose its form of democracy and its image of what the region should be, and an opposing viewpoint, the realist mythology that the United States cannot impose peace on the Israelis and Palestinians and thus transform the Middle East. Both views have led to missed opportunities for peace, and neither represents the reality in the region. The failed Clinton peace talks led by Ross met with considerable criticism, and it appears that in part this work is a response to some of these critics. The authors support a close U.S.-Israeli alliance as a way to inhibit aggression by Islamist extremists and Iran, and to promote stability in the region. Their approach for dealing with Iran deserves special note, given Ross's position as President Obama's advisor on Iran.

Elka R. Frankel
Princeton, N.J.

19-2-0202

Sam, Canyon. *Sky Train: Tibetan Women on the Edge of History*. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2009. 278 pp. ISBN 978-0-295-98953-2, \$24.95 (pb).

Sky Train is a combination personal memoir and oral history. The narrative includes the author's journeys to gather oral histories of Tibetan women, in Tibet and in exile, and the often-harrowing oral histories themselves. Both are equally gripping.

Sam is a pro-Tibet activist, and she makes that clear up-front, but she is not uncritical of the nation and culture she clearly loves. Indeed in the analysis of her interviews she is often as scathingly critical of the treatment of these women by their husbands and religious leaders as she is of the Chinese treatment of Tibet and Tibetans in general. Even the women themselves are shown with warts and all.

One of Sam's major revelations in preparation for this book was that literally every history of Tibet was written by and about men—and that the history of Tibetan women was very different from that of the men, and unrecorded. Her book is a step toward addressing that hole in the historical record, and as such, it is an important book for anyone looking for a more thorough understanding of Tibet. This book is suitable for both academic study and for the general reader with an interest in Tibetan history, culture, and religion.

Elizabeth Redkey
Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

19-2-0203

Shlaim, Avi. *Israel and Palestine*. New York: Verso, 2009. 320 pp. ISBN 978-1-84467-366-7, \$34.95.

Shlaim puts forth the argument that roughly since the Six Day War in 1967, Israel has been the unjustified aggressor in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A dual British and Israeli citizen, teaching at Oxford, he is one of the foremost scholars of the conflict, and this book is a collection of articles he has written over the years, with an introduction and new article on the Balfour Declaration tying them all together.

Shlaim begins by establishing his position that the State of Israel is an unquestionably legitimate state, but only within its pre-1967 borders. He firmly believes that the foundation of the Jewish state brought about an incredible injustice to the Palestinian people, but that the Jewish people experienced even greater injustice. Nevertheless, the establishment of Israel was legal as a function of the United Nations' sanction and the signing of the treaties at the end of the independence war. This is the foundation on which he builds his arguments about what he considers the illegitimate actions of Israel since then—and his position that Israel, with special blame going to Ariel Sharon and the Likud Party, has been the primary roadblock in the peace process.

This book is a must read for anyone studying Israeli, Palestinian, or Middle Eastern history and politics, as it gives a unique and strongly argued position on an issue that has become clouded in emotion and partisanship. Few other scholars have enough

perspective, or are brave enough, to attempt a fresh understanding of it.

Elizabeth Redkey
Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

Reference

19-2-0204

DeMello, Margo. *Feet & Footwear: A Cultural Encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood, 2009. 360 pp. ISBN 978-0-313-35714-5, \$95.00.

This encyclopedia is the first to provide comprehensive coverage of the natural and cultural history of feet and footwear, including shoes, sandals, boots, socks, and hosiery. It deals with topics from the perspectives of anatomy, evolution, and medical science and addresses cultural and religious implications across regions and time periods from the classical world to modern societies. It also covers the construction of shoes, the industry, fashion, trends, and the major people and groups associated with shoes. It deals with the cross-cultural beliefs and practices associated with feet and footwear relative to art, literature, belief, folklore, and history. Finally, this encyclopedia focuses on the major theoretical questions regarding feet and their enhancement.

Entries (165) are arranged alphabetically, from "Achilles" through "The Wizard of Oz." Each entry includes cross-referenced items in bold type, a list of related subjects, and a short bibliography of further reading. When a subject has multiple names, such as "Pumps," the entry provides a See also reference to "High Heels" and "Platform Shoes."

The "Guide to Related Topics" organizes related entries, such as "Acupuncture" and "Podiatry," under the broader classification HEALTH AND MEDICAL ISSUES, or "Birkenstocks" and "Clogs" under TYPES OF SHOES. The encyclopedia includes a resource guide of organizations, web sites, and museums, a bibliography, and an index.

Whether searching for the relevance of Jimmy Choo and Manolo Blahnik to *Sex and the City*, or the botanical name of the henna plant (*lawsonia inermis*), this encyclopedia provides one-stop shopping for all inquiries related to feet and footwear, from the sophisticated researcher to the curious amateur.

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

19-2-0205

Lomotey, Kofi, ed. *Encyclopedia of African American Education*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Reference, 2009. 2 vols., 1,152 pp. ISBN 978-1-4129-4050-4, \$325.00.

In a word these two volumes are excellent. They are chock-full

of invaluable information that is normally hard to come by even in our computer age. The editor has suggested that these volumes would be useful to teachers, students, and librarians at all levels of education. After going through the books, I would certainly have to agree.

Old practices die hard. Though we're well into the twenty-first century, sadly the practice of institutional racism on the part of textbook publishers continues to haunt us. One would hope now that we finally have elected our first African-American president we'll see many such barriers come down and arcane practices stopped. Currently however, as the journalist Earl Ofari Hutchinson wrote in *The Daily Voice* in 2009, "black history has been jammed into a tiny cubicle labeled for blacks only." He further comments that academics and textbook writers have treated the contribution of African Americans to the history of this nation as "little more than a sidelight to the 'real' history of America."

For example, traditionally mentioned in these "tiny cubicles" as it were, is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Nobody can and ever will take away from the greatness of this man. However, there was much more to Dr. King than his "I Have a Dream" speech, which is normally the most prominent thing mentioned. If publishers aren't going to give students a greater variety of African Americans and their contributions, it would behoove them to at least give a more complete picture of those they choose to highlight. As Rose Casement writes, "few students, Black or White, leave school with an understanding of the depth and breadth of historical Black experiences in America."

With their concise, information-packed entries, extensive cross-references, and suggested further readings, this reference source is perfect for both students and adults to be exposed to the rich history of Blacks in this country. Lomotey's encyclopedia has gone down the path where text books hopefully will follow.

Henry C. Griffith, Sr.
Powell, Ohio

19-2-0206

Phibbs, Cheryl. *The Montgomery Bus Boycott: A History and Reference Guide*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2009. 160 pp. ISBN 978-0-313-35887-6, \$85.00.

Williams, Horace Randall, and Beard, Ben. *This Day in Civil Rights History*. Montgomery, Ala.: NewSouth Books, 2009, c2005. 400 pp. ISBN 978-1-58838-241-2, \$19.95 (pb).

This Day in Civil Rights History offers a one-page description of a significant event that happened on each day of the year. Entries cover four centuries of American history from 1664 (Maryland Passes First Miscegenation Law) to 2027 (Mississippi Sovereignty Commission Files to Be Opened). Some events are obvious choices: the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (May 17), the Greensboro sit-in (February 1), the 1963 March on Washington (August 28), "Bloody Sunday" in Selma (March 7), and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. (April 4). The problem with this format, however, is that on some days nothing much happened, which led to the inclusion of events with no obvious connection to the civil

rights movement, such as Bob Dylan's birthday (May 24) and the assassination of John F. Kennedy (November 22). Other achievements cannot be linked to a single day so approximations are substituted. The authors also limit selections to African-American history; their scope does not include the struggle for equal rights of other ethnic groups, women, or lesbians and gays. The lack of references for those seeking additional information is another drawback.

The volume by Phibbs contains materials related to the Montgomery bus boycott. The first half is a retelling of the story of the boycott, the events triggering this protest, and its lasting legacy. Appendices include biographies of eight key actors, nine primary documents, a chronology, a glossary, and an annotated bibliography of books and web sites devoted to the boycott and the civil rights movement.

Is either of these works needed? Neither one opens new ground or offers new perspectives on the civil rights movement.

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

19-2-0207

Sreenivasan, Jyotsna. *Poverty and the Government in America: A Historical Encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2009. 2 vols., 632 pp. ISBN 978-1-59884-168-8, \$195.00.

The lives and struggles of the poor "ain't been no crystal stairway." In clarifying the plight of the poor, Sreenivasan has written a historical encyclopedia that focuses on poverty, one of the most complex and controversial issues of our time. Change to eliminate the hardship of poverty has clearly been a part of history from Colonial times to the New Deal era and on through the "War on Poverty. Advocates for the poor have worked to alleviate poverty by way of legislation.

This one of a kind two-volume reference tool is well documented, with 170 entries that give explanations as they focus on the legislative efforts of our country on the federal, state, and local levels of government as well as Native Tribal levels. Each entry is augmented with essays and a wide variety of primary sources for additional information and a starting point for further research. The reader will be able to connect the dots with the aid of a comprehensive index that expands and broadens understanding of how legislation on poverty has changed through different political contexts and presidential administrations. As a library works to build an inclusive collection, this encyclopedia will serve as an invaluable resource.

Johnnie Love
Library, Univ. of Maryland, College Park

19-2-0208

Utter, Glenn H. *Culture Wars in America: A Documentary and Reference Guide*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood, 2009. 424 pp. ISBN 978-0-313-35038-2, \$95.00.

The phrase “culture war” has become popular shorthand to depict the divisions in contemporary U.S. politics that fall on either end of a religious/moral/social value spectrum, from conservative to progressive. This book provides a historical, political, and legal overview of the issues that have sometimes caused us to ultimately take up arms against each other (the Dred Scott Decision and its political consequences) or to have tempted large numbers of us to engage in illegal behavior (the Volstead Act a/k/a Prohibition).

The broad issues covered range from different religious understandings: abortion, embryonic stem cell research, and the right to die to gun control and gun rights, immigration, sex education, homosexuality and gay marriage, and science and education. All these are put into historical and global perspective.

As indicated by the subtitle, this is a documentary history. Sources or excerpts of original sources are presented, with analysis and explanatory sidebars. A reader’s guide section brings together the various sources under such related headings as “intelligent design,” “public health,” “Rick Warren,” and “Osama bin Laden.” A “Selected Resources” section includes web sites as well as print resources. There is a comprehensive index.

The author is professor and chair of the Political Science Department at Lamar University. Utter specializes in modern political theory and American political thought.

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

Juvenile

Primary (Gr. P–3)

19-2-0209

Akbarpour, Ahmad. *Good Night, Commander*. Toronto: Groundwood, 2010. 24 pp. Illus. by Morteza Zahedi. Trans. from Farsi by Shadi Eskandani and Helen Mixer. ISBN 978-0-88899-989-4, \$17.95.

One of the most horrific wars of the twentieth century—hardly noticed in the West—was the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-1988. Through the mind of a young boy who has lost his leg and his mother, we see the senselessness of the slaughter. Anyway, life goes on. The boy has a prosthetic leg that permits him to run, relatives come to dinner, and his father plans to remarry. Yet he is obsessed with war, retreating to his room to act out fierce battles and avenge the death of his mother. Then he meets, in these imaginary battles, an enemy commander—even smaller than he is—who has also lost a leg and a mother. How can you go on fighting an enemy who has only crutches and wants to borrow your prosthesis?

This story, which grows more powerful with each reading, could inspire discussion even in high school. Why did the Iranian author decide to reinforce the war image by calling the boy “Commander”? Why do children, with war all around them, persist in playing war? What do the repeated elements of the illustrations, drawn in

a pseudo-childish idiom, symbolize? How can we stand against the drive to war that has come to be such a frequent phenomenon in our lives? Or should we?

Elsa Marston
Bloomington, Ind.

19-2-0210

Birtha, Becky. *Lucky Beans*. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2010. 32 pp. Illus. by Nicole Tadgell. ISBN 978-0-8075-4782-3, \$16.99.

Morrison, Toni, and Morrison, Slade. *Peeny Butter Fudge*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Joe Cepeda. ISBN 978-1-4169-8332-3, \$16.99.

Morrison’s *Peeny Butter Fudge* and Birtha’s *Lucky Beans* are charming stories of close-knit families and cherished memories with food the centerpiece, told during different time periods. In *Lucky Beans*, young Marshall and his family try to weather challenging times during the Great Depression. That means hand-me-down clothes, a nightly meal of beans, and a father who has just lost his job. Marshall’s aunt, uncle, and cousin with another one on the way come to live with him and his parents and brother and sister. Marshall complains about having beans for dinner every night until he sees an opportunity to make the best of the situation. A local department store is featuring a contest and the prize is a brand new sewing machine worth \$23.95. In order to win the machine the contestants have to guess the correct number of beans in a large jar. Marshall uses an arithmetic homework assignment in an attempt to guess the number. This heartwarming story provides young readers a lesson in addition and multiplication and reveals a family’s perseverance to make the best of life’s circumstances. *Lucky Beans* is based on stories about the author’s grandmother during the Depression. Tadgell’s pastel-like illustrations bring genuine warmth to this story.

In *Peeny Butter Fudge*, a young mother leaves specific instructions for whileher three children who are being cared for by their Nana. Nana takes every opportunity to make it a special and adventurous day for them, and they are pleased with everything she does—from sack races where they imagine they’re driving through town to a special treat of biscuits, ham, and lemonade. They pretend there are fairies and dragons everywhere and they put together a puzzle. The story, told in sing-song rhymes, culminates in Nana’s preparation of a secret family recipe with the children’s help. This endearing story by Toni Morrison and her son Slade includes a recipe for the peeny butter fudge along with instructions for young readers on preparing this dish with an adult’s help. Cepeda’s whimsical illustrations are a nice complement.

Valerie A. Canady
Mental Health Weekly

19-2-0211

Bootman, Colin. *The Steel Pan Man of Harlem*. Minneapolis: Lerner/Carolrhoda, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by the author. ISBN 978-0-8225-9026-2, \$16.95.

In this retelling of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, rats have overtaken the Harlem of the early twentieth century. They are everywhere! People attempt to exterminate them, but there are far too many of them. Finally they complain to the mayor. In the meanwhile, reminiscent of Harry Potter, a strange man arrives at the 125¹/₂ Street train station on the #1¹/₂ subway train. He plays the steel pan (drum) and entrances the bystanders—people and rats—who dance with abandon to the music. Later the man contracts with the mayor to rid Harlem of the rats for one million dollars, which he does. As with the original tale, the mayor refuses to pay the stranger, who then plays for the people until they dance themselves to exhaustion. Finally the mayor pays the stranger and everyone stops dancing, except for the mayor who dances right out of town.

Bootman's illustrations are engaging for young readers. For example, the rats have wonderful personalities and are captured in postures that denote their brazenness. Some rats are languishing in a bathtub while others are sitting on a couch listening to the radio.

Laretta Henderson
Univ. of Wisconsin–Milwaukee

19-2-0212

Greenfield, Eloise. *Brothers & Sisters: Family Poems*. New York: HarperCollins, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Jan Spivey Gilchrist. ISBN 978-0-06-056284-7, \$17.99.

Once again Greenfield and Gilchrist join creative energies to create another picture book of poetry. This one focuses on the relationships of siblings of various age combinations and familial constructions in three chapters—brothers, sisters, and brothers and sisters. These chapters are framed by a poem, “Brothers and Sisters,” that sets the tone for the range of emotions one may experience in relation to their siblings. They “can be dear, can bring cheer, can start arguments, can make noise, can cause tears,” but through it all, the narrator would “rather have them than not.”

Gilchrist's illustrations remain a perfect complement to Greenfield's work. This collection is a good addition to any book collection or classroom.

Laretta Henderson
Univ. of Wisconsin–Milwaukee

19-2-0213

Hopkinson, Deborah. *Michelle*. New York: HarperCollins, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by A. G. Ford. ISBN 978-0-06-182739-6, \$17.99.

Obama, Barack. *Our Enduring Spirit: President Barack Obama's*

First Words to America. New York: HarperCollins, 2009. 48 pp. Illus. by Greg Ruth. ISBN 978-0-06-183455-4, \$17.99.

This pair of picture books about President and First Lady Obama takes different approaches. *Michelle* is a biography that begins with President Obama's inauguration, then flashes back to Mrs. Obama's childhood on the South Side of Chicago. It discusses her parents' work ethic and their impact on her life as seen in her determination and academic successes. The biography comes full circle by ending with President and Mrs. Obama's first dance at the inauguration gala. The focus is on presenting Mrs. Obama as a paragon of hard work and virtue.

Our Enduring Spirit is an illustrated rendition of President Obama's inauguration speech. Ruth selected key points in the speech and illustrated them in an effort to contextualize and expand on the references of the speech. The afterword includes the speech in its entirety and Ruth's discussion of how the idea and illustrations for the book were created.

Both books are useful in elementary, middle school, and possibly high school classrooms and important additions to a library collection.

Laretta Henderson
Univ. of Wisconsin–Milwaukee

19-2-0214

Lehman-Wilzig, Tami. *Hanukkah Around the World*. Minneapolis: Lerner/Kar-Ben, 2009. 48 pp. Illus. by the author. ISBN 978-0-8225-8761-3, \$16.95.

Wouldn't it be great if one could travel the world in a week and a day? Just imagine, celebrating the festival of lights in Uzbekistan one night, in Australia the next! Eight different Jewish families, eight countries, eight ways to mark and honor Hanukkah. Now the children and their families can travel through the pages of this beautiful illustrated book.

A New York City family plans a fun activity for every night of Hanukkah. An Italian boy and his *padre* commemorate the destruction of the Temple on *Tisha B'Av* and count down the days to the Temple's rededication—the holiday of Hanukkah. On a cold Paris night a *grand-mere* who had grown up in Tunisia holds a girls-only party, honoring the Hanukkah heroines. Meanwhile in Sydney a Hanukkah party is held on the beach! Some of the stories could use a bit more excitement, and the Tunisian narrative about the Hanukkah heroines provided virtually no information on the heroines' great deeds. But overall, the book offers an excellent historical perspective on the Jewish world in general, and the holiday of Hanukkah in particular. Great explanations, recipes, and holiday ideas are found throughout. A must have for every library, and for every Jewish family.

Katia Rania
Manahawkin, N.J.

19-2-0215

Malaspina, Ann. *Finding Lincoln*. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Colin Bootman. ISBN 978-0-8075-2435-0, \$16.99.

Having a research assignment when you don't have ready access to books can be problematic, especially if you are a boy living in 1950s Alabama. Louis walked past the public library every day on his way home from school. This reminded him that he had an assignment due about Abraham Lincoln's early life. The public library, however, was for Whites only, and the book given to him by his teacher only covered Abraham Lincoln's life as an adult. Malaspina successfully captures the voice of the questioning child as well as the voice of the times. When Louis asks, "Did President Lincoln shake things up when he was a boy?" we are onto his plan to attempt to use the "Whites Only" public library. Just walking into the library proved to be a humiliating experience. However, the kind-hearted librarian who ushered him to the door provided a ray of hope. "Come back tomorrow after five," she whispered. Malaspina narrates a compelling story about life under Jim Crow and the impact it had on the education of African-American children.

Bootman's realistic illustrations provide the visual dynamism needed to convey what words alone cannot. The look of longing on Louis's face as he stands just outside the window while Whites sit at a lunch counter enjoying their strawberry milkshakes is a heart-breaker. The anger on White faces is palpable as they glare at young Louis in the public library. Bootman adds visual texture to Malaspina's meaningful story.

A note at the end helps place this story within the historic context of the civil rights movement. Also included is additional information about President Lincoln and a suggested reading list.

Adelaide M. Poniatowski-Phelps
Oakland Univ.

19-2-0216

Myers, Walter Dean. *Muhammad Ali: The People's Champion*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010. 32 pp. Illus. by Alex Delinois. ISBN 978-0-06-029131-0, \$16.99.

In this picture book biography of Muhammad Ali, Myers (*Dope Sick* and *The Greatest: The Life of Muhammad Ali*) chronologically, though sporadically, presents the life and times of the man who would describe himself in poetry as "the greatest fighter in the world! The greatest!" He would later in life retract that statement and consciously replace it with credit to God as the greatest, "who gave me this physical impairment," an obvious reference to the his more recent battle with Parkinson's disease. Often throughout the book, Myers shares tidbits on Ali not easily found in similar books, information like a young Cassius Clay's nickname ("the Louisville Lip" due to his boisterous personality in and outside of the ring); that throughout his career, including when he was already recognized as "the People's Champion," the fighter "especially liked talking to children"; and on a more serious note, references to his childhood in Kentucky where he and other Blacks were not allowed to sit anywhere but in the back of the bus, where

he was not allowed to drink from the same fountains as White folks, and where he personally witnessed members of his community beaten and jailed simply for demanding justice and equality for African Americans. The presentation of such major events in this larger than life athlete and activist, though, seems a bit rushed and pieced together. A reader, who wants to linger, to delve more deeply into these experiences is hurried from one to the next, never feeling quite satisfied that he or she got the story that could have been.

Delinois's artwork is a mix of simplicity and complexity, in both form and content. Where he could have gone for a more realistic representation of Ali, other personalities, and settings, he opts for a more impressionistic portrayal. This seeming visual dissonance is the very aspect of the work that allows a reader to stop and look, to study more carefully the scenes he chooses to depict.

Though it is a picture book, this work will appeal more to the Ali fan and to adolescents because of its text-heavy nature and more serious subject matter.

René Saldaña, Jr.
Texas Tech Univ.

19-2-0217

Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux. *Bad News for Outlaws: The Remarkable Life of Bass Reeves, Deputy U.S. Marshal*. Minneapolis: Lerner/Carolrhoda, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by R. Gregory Christie. ISBN 978-0-8225-6764-6, \$17.95.

This is a rare and wonderful biography of Bass Reeves, an African-American Deputy U.S. Marshal in the late nineteenth century West. In vivid, action-packed prose, Nelson tells Reeves's story from his birth in 1838 to his death in 1910. What appears to be a tall tale is an accurate account of Reeves's life, full of lessons on honesty and bravery, as well as a history of the settlement of the West during that era. Many African Americans, like Reeves, found new lives and opportunities on the frontier in law enforcement and the military. In pursuit of law and order in these wild lands, Reeves captured more than 3,000 criminals, the most notorious of whom are detailed here.

The story is told as a Western using the language of the era and is arranged in vignettes that cover 15-20 year periods. This is an excellent book for a read aloud and for reluctant readers. The author has included extensive endnotes that include a photograph of Bass, a glossary of terms that might be unfamiliar to young readers, and a timeline.

Laretta Henderson
Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

19-2-0218

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up By Sitting Down*. New York: Little, Brown, 2010. unpaginated. Illus. by Brianna Pinkney. ISBN 978-0-316-07016-4, \$16.99.

On February 1, 1960, four Black college students ordered coffee at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. When management did not serve them, the young men refused to leave and the sit-in movement was born. Within weeks, segregation was under attack in cities across the South. The sit-ins brought youthful enthusiasm and new direct action tactics to the civil rights movement.

Sitting down for a cup of coffee is not ordinarily a revolutionary gesture. How to convey the significance of this innocuous act to young people with no knowledge of segregation? Using clean, spare prose Andrea Davis Pinkney tells the story of the Greensboro sit-in. The protestors' request for "a doughnut and coffee, with cream on the side" is a frequent refrain. Inspirational quotations from Martin Luther King, Jr., are interspersed throughout the text. The graceful energy of Brian Pinkney's watercolors captures the winds of change that were beginning to sweep the nation in 1960. His figures exude warmth, dignity, restlessness, and determination.

Oversimplification is a danger in any ambitious project, and the Pinkneys do not escape this problem. They suggest that John F. Kennedy's 1963 address on civil rights and the 1964 Civil Rights Act were responses to the sit-ins when the Birmingham demonstrations were more directly responsible. But this is a minor flaw in an otherwise praiseworthy book.

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

19-2-0219

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Sojourner Truth's Step-Stomp Stride*. New York: Hyperion/Jump at the Sun, 2010. 32 pp. Illus. by Brian Pinkney. ISBN 978-0-7868-0767-3, \$16.99.

The husband and wife illustrator and author team give readers a realistic and powerful view of Sojourner Truth's journey in America. She was born into slavery and named Belle by her master. While others sought freedom by escaping, Belle used her strength and wit to work hard for her freedom, which she requested from her master John Dumont, who initially agreed. Master Dumont, however, did not honor his promise, so Belle struck out for freedom on her own. Master Dumont found her, and two kind Quakers paid him for her freedom.

Belle was now free, and the first place she ventured to was New York City. Not long after, she found a job as a maid and discovered what freedom was really like. Freedom included helping others and changing her name from Belle to Sojourner Truth. This name suited the woman who would travel near and far to speak the unwavering truth about slavery. Although Sojourner could not read or write, with the help of a kind abolitionist who read the Bible to her, she memorized the entire 66 books, from "the begats to the beatitudes." It was the very same abolitionist—Olive Gilbert—who wrote down Sojourner's story and published *Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave*.

As a free woman, Sojourner was determined and committed to speaking out against the unfair treatment of Black people and women. There was nothing timid about this woman who carried a book and wore a white shawl and bonnet. The illustrations on

each page enhance this well-written and compelling story of Sojourner's life. This book is a must read.

Shiela Martina Keaise
www.shielamartina.com

19-2-0220

Robinson, Anthony. *Hamzat's Journey: A Refugee Diary*. London, U.K.: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by June Allan. ISBN 978-1-84780-030-5, \$17.95.

Hamzat's Journey tells the true-life tale of a young refugee from Chechnya and his family. Readers may be familiar with the Chechnya conflict. News networks have reported the events. Author Robinson reminds the readers that war is not just the number of casualties. War has many faces. One face is Hamzat's.

Hamzat and his family tried to live a normal life among the bombed-out buildings, roadblocks, and lack of basic utilities. They hid in the basement at night during the bombings. Sometimes the boy would get up extra early in the morning so he could retrieve fresh water from a spring. In his early days he endured this hard life. The family was alive and together, and he had good friends.

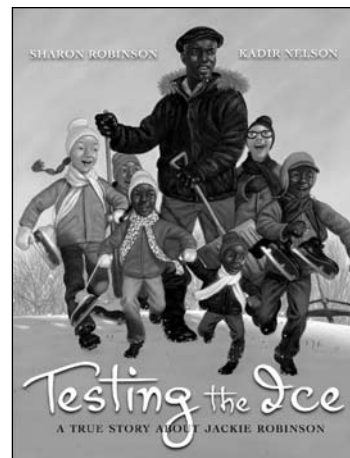
This changed on Friday April 20, 2001. As is narrated "On a normal day, walking to school ... I stepped on a landmine." From that day to this, "his life and that of his family changed forever." Robinson chronicles Hamzat's struggle to rebuild his life as an amputee, one who lost his best friends in the landmine's explosion. Why not begin your reading travels with this resilient young refugee's diary? The moving text, pastel pictures, and family photographs produce a potent picture book.

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

19-2-0221

Robinson, Sharon. *Testing the Ice: A True Story About Jackie Robinson*. New York: Scholastic, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Kadir Nelson. ISBN 978-0-545-05251-1, \$16.99.

Jackie Robinson was the first African American to play for a national professional baseball league. In *Testing the Ice*, Sharon Robinson, daughter of the famous baseball player, portrays her father as much more than a big league ballplayer. His bravery in breaking the color barrier was a metaphor for his life. Ms. Robinson provides a personal glimpse into the dynamics of the Robinson family and tells one episode



that epitomizes her father's bravery as a big league player in life.

With breathtaking skill she keeps readers on the edge of their seats as she describes her father's reluctance to get too close to water. Then, she tells of how ever so slowly he inches his way out onto the now frozen lake, tapping the ice every few steps, making sure it is safe for skating. She peppers the telling with exclamations: "Dad, be careful! ... Don't fall in!" and a stunning "BOOOOOM!" to heighten the drama. When Jackie Robinson proclaims, "It's safe! Put on your skates!" we breathe a sigh of relief.

Kadir Nelson enhances the telling with his exquisite illustrations: an expanse of lawn sprinkled with sunlight, children mesmerized by the telling of Jackie Robinson's amazing story, and ice so thick you can almost feel the cold of it.

This is a story of friendship, family, and what it takes to be a hero in your children's eyes. It is not about hitting a home run or stealing bases, but the way life is lived every day, and how testing the ice when you can't swim may be the most heroic thing of all.

Adelaide Poniatowski-Phelps
Oakland Univ.

19-2-0222

Rose, Naomi C. *Tibetan Tales from the Top of the World*. Santa Fe, N.M.: Clear Light Publishers, 2009. 64 pp. Illus. by the author. Bilingual (English-Tibetan) ed. Foreword by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. ISBN 978-1-57416-089-5, \$19.95.

This is a picture book of just three Tibetan folk tales, but they are enough for the Dalai Lama himself to write a reflective foreword. He recalls his own childhood without children's picture books and how news magazines were his way to learn about the world beyond Tibet. Those memories make this picture book rather poignant, because it helps fill that void in his childhood—the text is bilingual in English and Tibetan calligraphy—and it offers children a chance to find out about Tibet in a way he would have enjoyed himself at their age.

The stories are preceded by a couple of informative paragraphs about Tibetan culture, and the page is filled out with a small glossary of Tibetan vocabulary. Phonetic pronunciations are also included.

Each tale gently demonstrates a value—to seek truth rather than rely on hearsay, to share rather than be greedy, and to be honest—even when someone hasn't always been that way. Each page of bilingual text is accompanied by a full-page illustration depicting Tibetan clothing, foods, or landscape.

For older readers who enjoyed Mordicai Gerstein's *Mountains of Tibet* (HarperCollins, 1987), this book is a nice follow-up with its additional details of Tibetan culture.

Suzanne D. Li
Queens College, City Univ. of New York

19-2-0223

Shange, Ntozake. *We Troubled the Waters*. New York: Harper-

Collins/Amistad, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Rod Brown. ISBN 978-0-06-133735-2, \$16.99.

A picture of a dead body washed up on the shore opens this picture book, a stark warning that this is not for young children. *We Troubled the Waters* provides a brief history, in poetic form, of the civil rights struggle from 1941 through the 1960s with graphic depictions of the violence of the era. In the poem, "Crying Trees," Shange asks, "how can our boys be some decorations in the forest/ never to kiss good night again/never to hold other sons in their arms again?" On the opposing page she writes:

out there in the night
alone
we aint nothin
we aint people
we animals
roadkill

Men hang by golden ropes in a lavish verdant forest in the illustration between these two poems. One man is slumped against a tree with a sign that reads, "You vote you die!" Shange captures the voice of the times with language that cuts to the heart of the evils of racism. Rod Brown's illustrations are stark reminders of the treacherous roads traveled, and that the journey is not yet over. Informational notes accompany only two of the poems. Additional notes would have provided greater historic perspective. *We Troubled the Waters*, however, offers an opportunity to begin a dialogue with older children about the most troubling times in United States history.

Adelaide Poniatowski-Phelps
Oakland Univ.

19-2-0224

Tafolla, Carmen. *Fiesta Babies*. Berkeley, Calif.: Tricycle Press, 2010. 24 pp. Illus. by Amy Córdova. ISBN 978-1-58246-319-3, \$12.99.

Fiesta Babies is an adorable picture book focusing on a few Mexican-American traditions while using some Spanish words. Young readers learn that a *beso* is a kiss and *abrazos* are hugs. For anyone not knowing the translation of the few Spanish words utilized, there is a glossary in the back with the English meaning of the words.

Another fun component of this book is the rhyming. Some of the rhymes are in English, such as "town" and "down," while others are in Spanish, like "fiesta" and "siesta." The illustrations are rich and vivid as well as eye-catching. Any young child looking at this book will be enthralled with the beautiful colors in the illustrations, one page more colorful than the next. The quick read that this title offers makes it wonderfully appropriate for our early childhood classrooms and library story times. If someone is looking for a multicultural read, *Fiesta Babies* meets that need.

Miriam Guttman
Mt. Mary College, Milwaukee, Wis.

19-2-0225

Tokunbo, Dimitrea. *The Sound of Kwanzaa*. New York: Scholastic, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Lisa Cohen. ISBN 978-0-545-01865-4, \$16.99.

Tokunbo offers an enjoyable read about the popular American holiday inspired by African traditions. In the book, a family of six celebrates each of the seven Kwanzaa principles with sounds from “loving words,” laughter, songs, and prayer. Each of the seven Kwanzaa principles (Nguzo Saba), written in lively verse, is accompanied by vivid illustrations depicting images of special gatherings and joyous celebrations. For example, during the fifth Kwanzaa night the family celebrates “Nia,” which means purpose. The verse is accompanied by a young woman graduating and proudly holding up her diploma.

In the author’s note, Tokunbo mentions that as a child her father took her to Harlem where she met the creator of Kwanzaa, Dr. Maulana Karenga. The note is also accompanied by the seven guiding principles and a pronunciation key. Tokunbo notes that when she and her daughters were invited to their first Karamu (feast or party), they wanted to prepare something special for the celebration. One of their family’s favorite recipes, “No-Cook Kwanzaa Brownie Bites,” which they prepared as individual gifts with one of the principles written on it, was the solution. The recipe, accompanied by directions for how young readers can help prepare this special dish, are included. Cohen’s vibrant paintings are full of character.

Valerie A. Canady
Mental Health Weekly

19-2-0226

Valentín, Karen. *What Did Abuela Say?* East Orange, N.J.: Just Us Books/Marimba Books, 2010. 32 pp. Illus. by Michele Dorenkamp. ISBN 978-1-60349-016-0, \$8.95 (pb).

What Did Abuela Say? is a book that needed to be written because it is reality for many children in 2010. In this case, our main character has not been taught Spanish even though it is the language of many of her family members from Puerto Rico. At dinner, she is missing the jokes that they so enjoy, and she feels left out.

Today, many second-generation children are left out when they are not taught their family’s language. They lose touch with pieces of their culture and heritage that are very valuable. Many parents

worry that learning their native language means their children will not learn English, which is simply not true. Their children grow up to wish they had learned both languages, since being bilingual in today’s world has so many benefits, one of the most important being to stay well-connected to their families.

Abuela sympathizes with her granddaughter because she had to learn English when she first arrived and felt left out when she didn’t understand. She agrees to teach her granddaughter Spanish, strengthening their bond and even turning their situation into its own inside joke that only the two of them shared.

Take this book and its message home.

Kena Sosa
Dallas, Tex.

19-2-0227

Weatherford, Carole Boston. *The Beatitudes: From Slavery to Civil Rights*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2010. 32 pp. Illus. by Tim Ladwig. ISBN 978-0-8028-5352-3, \$16.99.

The African-American church played an important role in keeping hope alive during African Americans’ struggle for freedom. In light of such a history, Weatherford brings to light the strong faith that has been demonstrated from the start of slavery to current efforts to secure civil rights. Using first person in this powerful free verse poem, Weatherford’s decision to use God as the narrator gives credence to the power of religion and faith and hope.

Not only are the Africans accompanied by God on the slave ships to the Americas, they have the ear of the man who controls life and death. The people who helped to raise the bar in the African-American community received the help of the most powerful person who ever lived and who preached the famous Sermon on the Mount—Jesus Christ. The Beatitudes included being humbled, mourning, being meek, hungering and thirsting, being pure in heart, acting as peacemakers, and being persecuted for the sake of righteousness—all of which would be rewarded. These rewards have consisted of hearing bells and drums of freedom, being led by a star and lamp to freedom, using a microphone and shoes to take them higher, having shoulders to lean on and companionship as support, being nursed and brought to wellness of mind and body, receiving energy from the tambourine and hope from the Bible that represents a changing future for the first African-American president of the United States of America.

The beautiful watercolor paintings by Tim Ladwig add to the readers’ enjoyment of this powerful comparison of the Beatitudes and the African-American experience. It is a must read for all ages and a testimony to the heroes of the struggle for freedom and justice in America.

Shiela Martina Keaise
www.shielamartina.com



19-2-0228

Williams, Laura E. *The Can Man*. New York: Lee & Low, 2010. 32 pp. Illus. by Craig Orback. ISBN 978-1-60060-266-5, \$18.95.

Never judge a “can” by its cover. Never judge a book by its cover. At first glance, the reader may think this will be a story about how to deal with the homeless. Aside from the “go green” stance, this picture book is much more. The author provides an age-appropriate tale encompassing compassion and respect for your fellow man.

In the spirit of Mother Teresa who once said, “We cannot do great things on earth. We can only do small things with great love,” the main character, young Tim, and the Can Man do small things with great love—one can at a time. At first young Tim is trying to raise money for his birthday gift by recycling the neighborhood soda cans. His family doesn’t have the extra money. Meanwhile there is the former neighbor, Mr. Peters, who is now homeless. His nickname is the Can Man. He relies on recycling cans for income. What will the collected coins be used for? You will be surprised by the heartwarming ending.

With a contemporary setting, Orback illustrates and Williams tells not only a tale of today’s economic hardships, but also a lesson that helping your neighbor helps us all.

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

19-2-0229

Winter, Jeanette. *Nasreen’s Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Beach Lane, 2009. 40 pp. Illus. by the author. ISBN 978-1-4169-9437-4, \$16.99.

At what age can children deal with a story in which a little girl’s father is dragged off from his home, her distraught mother goes out to search for him—and neither ever returns? This is not meant as criticism but rather as a commentary on the ever-broadening scope of subject matter deemed acceptable for picture books and as a caveat for teachers to consider well the content before reading to first- and second-graders.

But Nasreen’s story, told in her grandmother’s voice, must be read—and remembered. Under Taliban rule in the 1990s and early 2000s, some remarkable Afghan women defied the prohibition against educating girls by secretly teaching them in their own homes. Parents managed to get their daughters to these makeshift schools—and all knew the punishment they would face if caught. This is a story of courage, of the liberating effects of education, and of the three short words that start to rouse Nasreen from her traumatized silence.

Winter’s art work, in beautiful but muted colors, skewed perspective, and a naïf style both subtle and elegant, softens the harshness of the background story. The tiny changes in Nasreen’s expression speak volumes. An uplifting and important addition to youth literature about children’s lives in the world’s most desperate situations, the book was commissioned by the Global Fund for Children, which helps support community-based organizations working with vulnerable children and youth.

Elsa Marston
Bloomington, Ind.

Intermediate (Gr. 4–6)

19-2-0230

Alcorn, Stephen. *A Gift of Days: The Greatest Words to Live By*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, 2009. 116 pp. Illus. by the author. ISBN 978-1-4169-6776-7, \$21.99.

As young people struggle to carve out their own space in this world, they are constantly reminded of those who came before them. In *A Gift of Days*, author/illustrator Alcorn presents the valuable insight of inventors, artists, activists, explorers, writers, and athletes in a calendar of quotations. A portrait of a different famous person, along with a well-known quote from that person, appears on each two-page spread.

A broad spectrum of visionaries are showcased in a way that inspires not just those who are looking for inspiration, but also those who don’t expect it. With quotes from Shakespeare, Beethoven, Martin Luther King, Jr., Oprah, and many other famous figures, there is a hero for everyone. The common boundaries of race, religion, economic status, and educational background are irrelevant to the message of hope that is communicated.

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

19-2-0231

Brown, Linda Beatrice. *Black Angels*. New York: Putnam, 2009. 262 pp. ISBN 978-0-399-25030-9, \$16.99.

As the end of the Civil War approaches, eleven-year-old Luke, nine-year-old Daylily, and seven-year-old Caswell are wandering separately throughout the woods when they eventually come together in this heartwarming and engrossing story. Although Luke and Daylily are African American and Caswell is White, the trio forms a friendship and bond that is unshakeable. Luke, the self-appointed leader, engages them in preparing a fire, finding and cooking their own food, and using pine needles as a bed. At one point on their journey, Luke says, “he’d give up his two arms for a cabin with some colored folks in it, a fire, a blanket and a hot biscuit with some molasses on it.”

Luke gathers shoes for himself and Daylily—because Caswell already has a solid pair on his feet—and jackets belonging to dead soldiers for all of them to wear. The dangers and challenges are plentiful: they escape a deadly lion, Daylily is struck with a life-threatening illness, and Luke finds himself right in the middle of the fighting, with soldiers dying all around him. They eventually meet Betty Strong Foot, part Indian, part Black, whose cabin offers them a temporary safe retreat. *Black Angels* embraces courage, loyalty, and survival during some particularly harrowing times. This must-read historical novel by Brown is captivating.

19-2-0232

Cervantes, Jennifer. *Tortilla Sun*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2010. 224 pp. ISBN 978-0-8118-7015-3, \$16.99.

Twelve-year-old Izzy's life changes forever when she discovers an old baseball hidden inside one of her mother's boxes. The baseball has a mysterious inscription on it: "Because... magic." Izzy is instantly intrigued by the missing word or words, and even more so when she learns that the ball used to belong to her father, who died before she was born. When her mother must make a trip to South America, Izzy is sent to spend the summer with her grandmother in a remote village in New Mexico. Whispering winds, tortilla making, and enchanted landscapes are just some of the things Izzy encounters as she tries to solve the mystery of the baseball and discover the truth about her father's tragic death.

Cervantes's debut middle-grade novel combines magic with the Latino flavor of the Southwest. Young readers will sympathize with our sensitive, feisty protagonist as she finds herself in this sweet coming-of-age story. Cervantes's prose flows simply and beautifully, and her well-crafted, uncomplicated plot reaches an exciting, satisfying crescendo towards the end. There's a good mix of happy and sad moments, and along with them, the reader is provided with a fair balance of fantasy and reality.

Mayra Calvani
Latino Books Examiner

19-2-0233

Cheng, Andrea. *Only One Year*. New York: Lee & Low, 2010. 104 pp. Illus. by Nicole Wong. ISBN 978-1-60060-252-8, \$16.95.

Sharon and Mary are sad to learn that their two-year-old brother Di Di is going to spend a year in China with their grandparents. At first they miss him and eagerly await pictures from their grandparents, but as time goes by, they get caught up in school, projects, and playing with friends. When Nai Nai, their grandmother, brings Di Di back home, it takes the whole family a while to adjust to one another again. Di Di will not go to anyone but Nai Nai, and he cries all the time. Although Sharon and Mary get frustrated with Di Di and even with each other, they learn how to live together once again.

This story is well written and well paced; Di Di leaves for China almost immediately after the story begins and his absence is long enough to allow the girls to find a new daily pattern, but the author also devotes sufficient time to the adjustment period following Di Di's return. The author's note helps readers understand that immigrant families sending young children abroad is not uncommon, and it may actually serve to bring families closer together and help immigrant children retain some of their cultural heritage.

Sarah Park
St. Catherine Univ.

19-2-0234

Cooper, Afua. *My Name Is Henry Bibb*. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2009. 160 pp. ISBN 978-1-55337-813-6, \$16.95.

Cooper, Afua. *My Name Is Phillis Wheatley*. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2009. 160 pp. ISBN 978-1-55337-812-9, \$16.95.

These historical biographies are similar in that they both begin with prologues that encapsulate the protagonist's life, are written in the first person, and end with an epilogue that summarizes the remainder of the protagonist's life. They also begin with the protagonist at approximately eight or nine years old.

My Name is Phillis Wheatley explores Wheatley's poetic "genius," cultivated by her slaveholders within the context of her Senegalese childhood. It is her formal education and training as a griot (storyteller) that set the stage for Wheatley's literary aptitude. To demonstrate this, Cooper begins Wheatley's saga with the public reading of her first book of poetry, then flashes back to her childhood in Senegal before tracing her capture and middle passage. Wheatley's life as an enslaved person and student of poetry consumes the majority of the book. The ending is symbolized by freedom: Wheatley signs manumission papers, her book is released, the American Revolution begins, and she marries John Peters.

My Name is Henry Bibb is a child's version of *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave, Written by Himself* except that it focuses more on Bibb's life as a child than as an adult. While Wheatley's biography focuses on her and her literary accomplishments, Bibb's biography highlights the impact that slavery had on him as a member of a community. His mother, wife, and child's enslavement, as much as his own, is a miserable plight. Instead of the lived memories of Africa that Wheatley had, Bibb's understanding of his African heritage takes the form of folktales about flying Africans that connect him to his family's roots and the idea of personal freedom. As such, it is more aligned with most slave narratives taught in schools.

Both books are marketed for nine- to twelve-year-olds and would make useful additions to one's collection or classroom.

Laretta Henderson
Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

19-2-0235

Draper, Sharon. *Out of My Mind*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, 2010. 290 pp. ISBN 978-1-4169-7170-2, \$16.99.

Inside a body paralyzed by cerebral palsy, eleven-year-old Melody has a brilliant mind, one that can memorize a page and connect all kinds of ideas—like her hero Stephen Hawking. But since she cannot speak, no one knows what is going on inside her head, until she gets a typing pad and is sent to a mainstream fifth grade class. There, she competes for the school's Whiz Kid trivia competition and, to the surprise of her teacher and classmates, gets the highest score in the class—at which point she is forced to retake the test because everyone thinks she cheated. On the team, she leads

it to victory, but the resentments of the other children and their unwillingness to be slowed down by a teammate with a disability lead to a crushing betrayal. Melody, a keen observer of the petty jealousies and entitlements of those around her, gains a new appreciation of the other disabled children in her separate class as a result of this experience.

Award-winning author Draper offers readers a compelling but bleak portrait of a severely disabled youngster. Along with the cruelty of her peers, Melody sees her little sister Penny (although the family's ethnicity is not revealed, the baby sister is described as "perfect and copper-bright") do things by six months that she will never be able to do. The ending takes the reader back to the beginning; while Melody has gained understanding, very little has changed. What one hopes is that those who read this novel—youngsters and the people who work with them—are changed by the experience of being inside Melody's mind.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

19-2-0236

Hoose, Phillip. *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2009. 128 pp. Illus. with photos. ISBN 978-0-374-31322-7, \$19.95.

Hoose profiles the working-class Montgomery, Alabama, teenager who refused to give up her seat nine months before Rosa Parks's act of civil disobedience initiated the historic bus boycott. Though only 15 years old, Colvin had long been outraged by the unequal treatment she and her fellow Black Southerners suffered under Jim Crow, and she questioned why the adults in her community accepted the discrimination, degradation, and fear that circumscribed their lives. Although Colvin was considered and then rejected as the symbol of resistance in the bus boycott (as well as another Montgomery teenager who followed her lead), her actions helped convince Parks, the local NAACP secretary, to resist, as the adults in the community felt they could no longer remain on the sidelines while teenagers were risking their lives. But, as Hoose points out, Colvin's civil rights activism was not finished. She and three other women joined the federal lawsuit that in December 1956 ended segregation in public transportation.

Hoose weaves Colvin's own words into his narrative of her life. Readers see her courageous acts, but they also learn about her tragedies, including the death of her beloved younger sister from polio; her isolation from her peers, many of whom tormented her out of their own impotence and self-hatred; and the unplanned pregnancy that led to her expulsion from high school in her senior year. She had an uneasy relationship with the leadership of the civil rights movement in Montgomery, mainly because of class differences and the stereotypes of working-class Blacks that her out-of-wedlock pregnancy seemed to reinforce. Hoose conveys Colvin's passion and intelligence and the significant contribution she made to the civil rights struggle. Black-and-white photos, archival documents, annotated resource lists, and an author's note enhance this impressive volume, winner of the 2009 National Book Award.

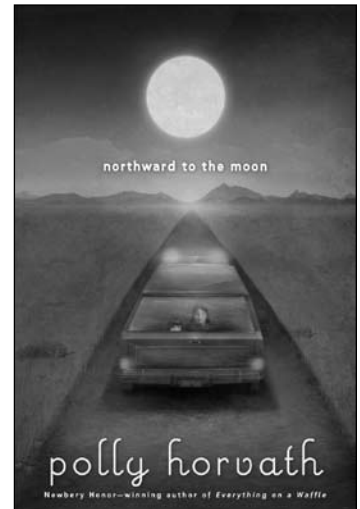
19-2-0237

Horvath, Polly. *Northward to the Moon*. New York: Random House Children's Books, 2010. 244 pp. ISBN 978-0-375-86110-9, \$17.99 (cl); 978-0-375-96110-6, \$20.99 (rlb).

This is a story of a blended family and its travels from Canada, where the father just lost his teaching job, to New England—via geographical, familial, and emotional detours. As the travels progress, we find out more details of the family involved, and more relatives are added to the mix.

Ned is the stepfather of this motley collection of children and is a special favorite of the oldest girl. There are three other children in the family. As the story evolves, it is hinted that they have various fathers. On the trip we are introduced to Ned's family, including the First Nations woman who cared for him when he was a child. He has been out of contact with her, his mother, and his sisters for years.

The family—mother, father, and others—are an odd collection of outsiders, hippies, and misfits. There seems to be little sense of responsibility in any of the adults. Besides the meandering plot, the vocabulary is uneven for the age group who are the intended readers. What is the author's purpose? Does she wish to glamorize the "me first" attitude which seems to flow through all the characters in the story—both adult and child? This reviewer is confused as to the novel's central theme and wonders if middle grade readers will be confused as well.



Ruth Becker
Fresh Meadows, N.Y.

19-2-0238

Keat, Nawuth, with Martha E. Kendall. *Alive in the Killing Fields*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Books, 2009. 128 pp. ISBN 978-1-4263-0515-3, \$15.95.

The years of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia were a truly gut-turning, heart-wrenching, blood-chilling time that needs to be told to the world. Kendall has her heart in exactly the right place. She has written the story of Nawuth Keat who, as a small boy, survived the onslaught of the Khmer Rouge, witnessing the murder of his family and friends. After ten years of enslavement by the Khmer Rouge and hiding in the jungle, he finally managed to escape to Thailand and then to America.

As an editor, this reviewer would have replied to Kendall: "This

is an incredible story. We have no doubt that it is all too true. You have provided a heart-felt service in helping this young man to write the horrors of his ten years of torture, slavery, hunger, terror, and loss at the hands of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia.”

However, for a story like this, I should be a puddle of emotion by the end, and my righteous indignation on behalf of the boy should make my hair stand on end.

It didn't happen. The writing offers us only the bare facts. The reader does not get involved with either the characters or the situation. It reads like a newspaper report. The writing does not evoke the passion felt by both the narrator and the writer. This reader read the whole book and was not inspired to shed a single tear.

This manuscript should be given into the hands of a competent journalist or novelist. It needs to become *Gone With the Wind* or *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Then the world would sit up and listen.

There is a time line in the back, for the history of Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge, but there also needs to be an extensive bibliography for further reading. This is not the first book to come out on this subject.

Ginny Lee
Syracuse, N.Y.

19-2-0239

Lajee Center, Aida Refugee Camp, and Wiles, Rich. *Dreams of Home*. Bethlehem, Palestine. Lajee Center, 2008. 48 pp. Illus. with photos.

Lajee Center, Aida Refugee Camp, and Wiles, Rich. *Flying Home*. Bethlehem, Palestine. Lajee Center, 2009. 30 pp. Illus. with photos.

Lajee Center, Aida Refugee Camp, and Wiles, Rich. *Our Eyes*. Bethlehem, Palestine: Lajee Center, 2008. 112 pp. Illus. with photos.

Four generations of children have grown up in the camps for Palestinians who had to leave their homes at the time of the founding of Israel in 1948. Tents on barren hillsides have long since become crowded, ugly concrete inner cities—yet the refugees' desire to “return home” is as alive as ever.

Today this dream—in the sense of a continuing, unquenchable hope—takes form in the preservation of traditional Palestinian culture through writing, theatre, dance, music, and art. Many creative and innovative programs, especially for children, encourage cultural awareness and pride. At the Lajee Center in the Aida Refugee Camp, Bethlehem, started in 2000, young people have helped produce books. These books embody the ever-present longing for “home,” visually document refugee's lives, and preserve evidence of a distinct, vibrant Palestinian culture—yet convey no message of hatred or desire for Israel or Israelis to “vanish.”

The first Lajee Center book, *The Boy and the Wall* (2006), written by Amahl Bishara and illustrated by children's art, was reviewed in this journal (Summer 2007) and has now been translated into several languages. In lyrical prose it describes a child's view of a world beyond the immense walls built to separate Arab from Jew.

Photography is the medium for the books that followed, thanks to volunteer Rich Wiles's three-year stay at the Aida Camp. A professional photographer in Britain, Wiles taught photographic skills to children and teenagers, helping them catch—with locally purchased, inexpensive cameras—everyday scenes and portraits of people in the camp, both realistic and aesthetically appealing. A variety of international organizations have helped fund the projects.

Our Eyes is based on three exhibitions of black-and-white photographs which were shown at the camp in Bethlehem and in the U.K., Italy, and the United States. All the photographs illustrate life in the camp, with little sign of greenery or hope; yet one young photographer recalls, “My favorite thing was that people liked me and let me take photos of them.” Another selection of photos is organized as “A Child's Rights in Palestine,” inspired by the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. The right to a name and nationality, survival and development, preservation of identity, non-discrimination—all are concepts of deep concern to a people whose identity and culture have been under assault for generations. The third part of the book focuses on “Our Dreams and Nightmares.” Each young photographer illustrates both: “With my culture and studies I will build a better future ... my nightmares are full of blood”; “I dream about freedom ... my nightmares are about the Wall which surrounds us.”

Flying Home, with photographs of striking quality taken by twelve-year-olds, tells about a boy and his grandfather who make a kite from the Palestinian flag. When the kite escapes, Grandfather explains that it has simply gone back to the homeland.

Likewise, *Dreams of Home* escapes from the camp, back to the ruins of the destroyed villages (now in Israel) that the Aida Camp refugees had to leave behind. First the young photographers interviewed elders with vivid memories of village life before 1948, and then made an organized trip to visit the sites and photograph the thistles and remaining stones. “I did not feel a stranger when I entered Beit Atab,” writes one boy. “I got sad because of the demolished houses, but I felt safe between the trees.” While revealing a rare picture of traditional village life, this book dramatizes the strength with which memories and hopes are being preserved in the young.

All are written in both English and Arabic. For information on availability and price, see www.middleeastbooks.com, or contact bookclub@wrmea.com, info@lajee.org, or Nidal Al-Azraq at nd_alazraq@yahoo.com; and in the U.K., www.richwiles.com and richimages02@hotmail.com.

Elsa Marston
Bloomington, Ind.

19-2-0240

Manivong, Laura. *Escaping the Tiger*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010. 216 pp. ISBN 978-0-06-166177-8, \$15.99.

A harrowing nighttime escape across the Mekong River leaves 12-year-old Vonlai Sirivong, his older sister, and his parents stranded in a desolate refugee camp in Thailand. Haunted by recollections of the brutal Pathet Lao Communist regime of their

native Laos, they face new challenges in Thailand—heat, mosquitoes, hunger, and “desperate people” who do “desperate things.” Worse yet is the waiting that drags on for years and that drives Vonlai’s mother and sister to depression. Vonlai finds strength in school, in a friendship with a former Royal Lao Army colonel, and in a slingshot that he must ultimately use to defend his sister.

Manivong creates a resilient protagonist and a memorable cast of secondary characters. Vonlai and his sister Dalah begin as complaining children, and while Vonlai grows into a skilled caretaker of his family, Dalah struggles against her twin misfortunes of age and gender. The novel, however, is marred by a tendency toward preaching, as the author, who is married to a Laotian refugee, interrupts the story frequently with pointed backstory and direct denunciations of the Pathet Lao. The four-year time spread makes it difficult to build a single story, but the novel’s episodic nature may make it more adaptable to the classroom, perhaps as a follow-up to Icy Smith’s excellent *Half Spoon of Rice* (East-West Discovery Press, 2010), a picture book for older readers set in neighboring Cambodia under the Communist Khmer Rouge.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

19-2-0241

Moss, Marissa. *The Pharaoh’s Secret*. New York: Amulet, 2009. 310 pp. ISBN 978-0-8109-8378-6, \$15.95.

The impulse to set right a past wrong has inspired many a good story. In this adventure, Egyptian-American teenager Talibah, visiting her archaeologist father’s native country, finds herself drawn into a web of mysterious happenings and personages. There’s her father’s nasty Egyptian colleague, a mysterious old woman, a newly discovered tomb, wall paintings that seem to come alive, mysterious voices with urgent messages, strange forces that whisk Talibah far back in time, and much more. Her younger brother Adom is as precocious as Talibah is intrepid; their withdrawn father grieves and their dead mother casts a mysterious lingering influence.

There’s also ancient Egypt’s famous female pharaoh, Hatshepsut; her daughter Neferure, a wicked vizier; and Hatshepsut’s brilliant architect and favorite, Senenmut—who suddenly, inexplicably, disappears from the historical record. *Why?* Will Talibah find out what happened to him?

A third-person narration might have worked better for this complicated plot. Talibah usually sounds more forty-ish than fourteen and needs a stronger sense, from the start, of her personal stake in the proceedings. Both she and her brother behave with devil-may-care courage that suggests stock adventure-story characters more than believable young people. Not a must read for the dis-



criminating fan of ancient Egypt fiction; but with its emphasis on both history and fantasy, *The Pharaoh’s Secret* will appeal to many middle school readers.

Elsa Marston
Bloomington, Ind.

19-2-0242

Partridge, Elizabeth. *Marching for Freedom: Walk Together, Children, and Don’t You Grow Weary*. New York: Viking, 2009. 72 pp. Illus. with photos. ISBN 978-0-670-01189-6, \$19.99.

The 1965 Selma to Montgomery march was one of the peak moments of the civil rights movement. It united people of all backgrounds and religious faiths from all regions of the United States to push for voting rights legislation. President Lyndon Johnson responded, and five months later Congress passed the historic act, greatly expanding federal protection for prospective voters.

Partridge describes this critical demonstration from the viewpoint of young people who joined the march. Ten-year-old Joanne Blackmon was arrested when her grandmother tried to register at the Dallas County Courthouse. Eight-year-old Sheyann Webb may have been the youngest marcher attacked by Alabama state troopers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge on March 7, 1965. High school student Charles Maudlin was in the front rank on “Bloody Sunday” and received a full dose of tear gas. Lynda Blackmon, Joanne’s thirteen-year-old sister, also was enveloped in the gas and clubbed by a trooper; she would be the youngest person to complete the five-day march.

Marching for Freedom is an original piece of research. Partridge’s gripping narrative is based largely on interviews with these young freedom fighters. It is richly illustrated with black-and-white photographs taken during the march, several of which show the young people quoted in the text. This is an exceptional book, one that vividly captures the feelings of fear, determination, exhilaration, and triumph that filled this pivotal event.

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

19-2-0243

Polacco, Patricia. *January’s Sparrow*. New York: Putnam/Philomel, 2009. 96 pp. Illus. by the author. ISBN 978-0-399-25077-4, \$22.99.

“Wake up, Sadie..wake up!” Sadie’s Momma whispers. The Crosswhites are an enslaved family living on the Giltner plantation in Kentucky. Earlier that day, the children and their parents, forced to stand on their rickety porch, watched in horror as January, an adopted family member, suffered a brutal beating for trying to escape. Now, in the middle of the night, the Crosswhite’s flight from this nightmare life is about to begin. Just as they set foot into the woods, Sadie realizes that she left the wooden sparrow, her only memento of January’s life, sitting on the sill. Too dangerous

to go back, the sparrow stays behind, only to show up later just as the family begins to feel safe from the horrors of the past. This story pulls no punches in telling of the brutality and terror experienced by enslaved people just a few states away from freedom. It also, however, captures the hope that brought the Crosswhites to Marshal, Michigan, after the Civil War.

Polacco successfully animates the faces of the Crosswhite family, and she captures the determination of their pursuers with terrifying accuracy. As the mood of the story moves from plantation life to community life in Marshal, Michigan, her color palette changes dramatically from the dark and foreboding to the crisp, bright colors of a bustling town. The horrified faces of the Crosswhite children, however, will haunt you long after this book is closed.

Adelaide Poniatowski-Phelps
Oakland Univ.

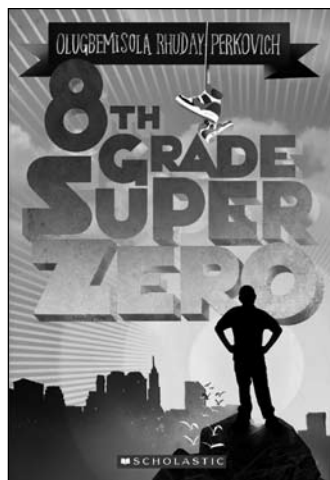
19-2-0244

Rhuday-Perkovich, Olugbemisola. *8th Grade Superzero*. New York: Scholastic, 2010. 326 pp. ISBN 978-0-545-09676-8, \$16.99.

Eighth grade was supposed to be Reggie McKnight's best year—until an unfortunate incident on the first day, in front of the entire K-8 school, destroyed his social standing and earned him the nickname “Pukey.” But since Reggie's Jamaican immigrant parents cannot afford to send him away to school—his father has just lost his job—Reggie must muddle along with the help of his good friends, fellow Jamaican-American Ruthie Robinson and Joe C., the proud Italian-American cartoonist for Reggie's superhero comic series, *Night Man*. At Ruthie's urging, Reggie becomes a buddy to a kindergartner, and his church group (where he is a leader in contrast to his low status at school) is working on a project at the local homeless shelter. Reggie soon learns that his buddy lives at the shelter, and his commitment to his service work there eventually leads him to do something he never thought he would do—return to the stage to make his case for president of the student council.

This novel for older elementary and middle school readers has staples of the genre—bullies, prima donnas, overbearing siblings, and goofy school officials—that add to the humor. Debut novelist Rhuday-Perkovich has a light touch that keeps this novel about social action from becoming dull or preachy. Reggie's voice is delightful, and through dialogue the author captures the unique voices of each of her other major characters. But as he is knocked down and gets up again to fight harder than ever, Reggie is the star, a role model for “the rest of us.”

Lyn Miller-Lachmann



19-2-0245

Rubel, David. *If I Had a Hammer: Building Homes and Hope with Habitat for Humanity*. Somerville, Mass.: Candlewick, 2009. 144 pp. Illus. with photos. Foreword by Jimmy Carter. ISBN 978-0-7636-4701-8, \$19.99.

During a very tumultuous time in history, a reminder of what is possible with our own two hands is just what is needed to breathe new life into dark days. In Rubel's book, with a foreword from Jimmy Carter, the beginnings of the Habitat for Humanity organization are examined. As today's generation of young people find that everything is at their fingertips with the help of technology, Rubel's book helps them realize that not everyone has been granted the same shelter in life and not for lack of trying.

Clear tracings of Habitat's history, coupled with descriptions of the screening process for prospective families in the United States, show young people that substandard housing need not exist in this day and age. Personal stories of volunteers as well as recipients allow readers to feel the sense of accomplishment that can come from building a home from the ground up, crossing the boundaries of age, race, and economic status. *If I Had a Hammer* truly captures the essence of people of all walks of life working together and couldn't have arrived at a better time.

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

19-2-0246

Sheth, Kashmira. *Boys Without Names*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010. 320 pp. ISBN 978-0-06-185760-7, \$15.99.

Sheth portrays the resilience of the human spirit through the story of 11-year-old Gopal and his family, as he is forced to work as a child laborer in a dangerous sweatshop. Indebted to creditors, Gopal and his family leave their rural home for Mumbai to earn money for survival. Gopal's father goes missing, and Gopal, his mother, and siblings wait for their baba's return. Gopal follows a stranger in pursuit of a day's work. He realizes that he is caught in a grim situation in which five boys are made to work against their will in a crowded, illegal sweatshop where names are not allowed to be used.

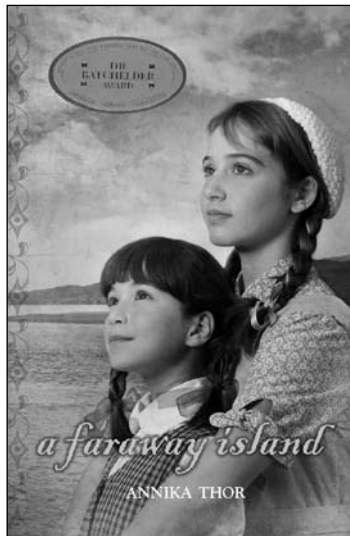
Gopal is different from the other boys because he has some education, compared to them. He builds connections with other boys to keep their spirits up. Sheth offers vivid details of forced child labor based on her extensive research, detailed in an informative author's note that includes a short list of resources for further reading. She uses Hindi, Marathi, and Sanskrit terms sprinkled throughout the text, with a glossary at the end. A happy ending shows Gopal rescued by the police and reunited with his family. Sheth's book offers important lessons for readers on how strong and united young boys and their families can be, and the resilience of the human spirit against any odds. It teaches them lessons of strength, hope, and courage even in dark and unhappy phases of life.

Parsa Choudhury
Evanston, Ill.

19-2-0247

Thor, Annika. *A Faraway Island*. New York: Random House Children's Books, 2009. 256 pp. Trans. from Swedish by Linda Schenck. ISBN 978-0-385-73617-6, \$16.99 (cl); 978-0-385-90590-9, \$19.99 (rlb).

World War II was one of the most difficult times in history for the world and especially for children. In *A Faraway Island* Stephanie Steiner and her younger sister Nellie were sent to foster families in Sweden to escape the Nazis who were about to invade Vienna. During this time, their parents fled to Amsterdam until it was safe for them to reunite with Nellie and Stephanie. The separation was only supposed to be for six months, but as Hitler plunged Europe into war, their time of separation was much longer.



Being away from their parents for the first time in their lives and having to make their way on their own challenged the two Jewish girls. Each embarked on her own journey toward womanhood. The struggles that Stephanie and Nellie faced are much the same as those many children today face: unforgiving foster parents, unpopularity, and issues at school with teachers and classmates.

This is an excellent book for young girls because the story teaches them about Sweden, Vienna, and the Second World War. Swedish author Thor's evocative writing creates an emotional attachment to the characters that truly brings history to life for the reader.

Leslie Owen
Neosho, Wis.

19-2-0248

Watts, Irene N., ret. *Clay Man: The Golem of Prague*. Toronto: Tundra Books, 2009. 96 pp. Illus. by Kathryn E. Shoemaker. ISBN 978-0-88776-880-4, \$19.95.

When the times get tough for the Jewish people, what can they do? Create a *golem*, of course—a soulless, mute, man-like creature made of the earth—to watch over them, to protect them from hatred and gossip. The red clay man of Prague is one of the most famous golems, fashioned by Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel to protect the Jewish ghetto of Prague against anti-Semitic attacks at the turn of the sixteenth century.

Watts, an acclaimed Canadian children's author, retells the tale from the point of view of the famous rabbi's fictional 12-year-old son. More than anything, the young Jacob dreams of stepping outside the ghetto walls, both literally and figuratively. He yearns to get free of his father's, and society's, expectations. He wants to learn of the bigger world; he dreams to see the stars. Watts paints a well thought-out portrait of the rabbi's younger son. Through Ja-

cob's eyes, we really get to see the cramped ghetto world of 1595. It is thrilling to watch Jacob creep after his father outside the ghetto during "the darkest part of the night," to watch the rabbi create the mysterious clay man. The stylish illustrations give a cool, slightly contemporary edge to the old-fashioned-style narrative. The story offers glimpses into the anti-Semitism of the times, without dwelling on it. Other than a scary climatic scene (entirely appropriate for young readers), this is a gentler version of a dark old tale, a softer look at harsh, violent times.

Katia Rania
Manahawkin, N.J.

19-2-0249

Williams-Garcia, Rita. *One Crazy Summer*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010. 218 pp. ISBN 978-0-06-076088-5, \$15.99.

In the summer of 1968, eleven-year-old Dephine, nine-year-old Vonetta, and seven-year-old Fern are sent by their father from Brooklyn, New York, to Oakland, California, to get to know the mother they haven't seen since Fern was a baby. Their mother Cecile shows up to the airport late, takes them to a green stucco house where they're not allowed to enter the kitchen, and refuses to cook, sending the girls for take-out Chinese food instead. Men in Afros hang around the house, calling Cecile Sister Nzila; Cecile, in turn, refuses to call Fern anything but "Little Girl."

Cecile has arranged for the three girls to attend a camp run by the Black Panthers; there they befriend three sisters from Oakland, the Anktons, and chase after free-spirited Hirohito Woods, whose father is a political prisoner. Intrigues among the children parallel betrayals among the grownups as the girls uncover family secrets and reach out to a mother who seems to have banished them from her life.

In contrast to Kekla Magoon's *The Rock and the River* (Simon & Schuster, 2009), the Black Panthers' activities and institutions here are secondary to the mother-daughter relationships. The three girls are unique and well drawn, but they are also close, and their dialogue reads like call-and-response poetry. Despite her complete lack of maternal feelings, Cecile/Nzila appears as a three-dimensional character—the horrors of her own childhood making the girls see how fortunate they are with their strict but loving father and grandmother in New York. Though published for middle graders, *One Crazy Summer* is full of wisdom, poetry, and love—a book that will touch teenage and adult readers as well.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

Young Adult (Gr. 7 and up)**19-2-0250**

Cart, Michael, ed. *How Beautiful the Ordinary: Twelve Stories of Identity*. New York: HarperCollins, 2009. 360 pp. ISBN 978-0-06-115498-0, \$16.99.

From award-winning authors, twelve nicely arranged nontraditional narratives, short stories, and brief graphics engage readers with memorable tales of identity. David Levithan's "A Word from the Nearly Distant Past" provides a creative, appropriate context acknowledging historical/social changes that have improved the quality of life for the U.S. GLBT population. This opening piece sets the collection's tone, one that resonates for every teenager: while life may be easier than it was for the previous generation, internal and external challenges abound. Brief graphic "Happily Ever After," by Eric Shanower, takes readers into the woods where best friends secretly make out in a cave and wish they weren't gay. Francesca Lia Block's "My Virtual World" reveals a sweet, progressing relationship that moves from the Internet's virtual space and time to the real world's space and time; through their friendship, transgender Garret and self-mutilating Rebecca teach one another forgiveness and self-acceptance. Sexually charged "First Time" by Julie Anne Peters narrates Jesi and Nicolle's erotic transition from friends to lovers.

Delightful and daring, the gay, lesbian, and transgender main characters range in age, ethnicity, and insecurities. With its sincere stories of pain, acceptance, and love, this collection will excite and uplift the young adult reader.

Holly Jean Richard
Univ. of South Dakota

19-2-0251

Flake, Sharon G. *You Don't Even Know Me: Stories and Poems About Boys*. New York: Hyperion/Jump at the Sun, 2010. 208 pp. ISBN 978-1-4231-0014-0, \$16.99.

Flake's insightful collection of 25 short stories and poems examines the trials and tribulations of being a Black boy on the cusp of manhood in urban America. As seen through the eyes of these young boys, this collection offers stories of love, revenge, friendship, and hope. In "Fat Man Walking" an 11-year-old is fiercely protective of his morbidly obese Dad while making their way one Saturday morning to purchase a new pair of sneakers before the new school year begins. Sixteen-year-old Tow-Kaye is "Scared to Death" about his impending marriage to his pregnant girlfriend whom he has loved since he was four years old.

The poem "Dying Before I'm Done" reveals the ambitions and dreams of a young boy who wants the world to know he's enjoying life and discusses a wish list that includes plans to spend a summer working at the Louvre. "Don't Read This" reveals the angst a young boy feels following the death of his twin brother and his own plans to join him. "A half a twin is never a whole person," he writes in his journal. Flake, a two-time Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book winner, has written compelling stories that stay with you long after you've finished reading. Highly recommended.

Valerie A. Canady
Mental Health Weekly

19-2-0252

Fukuda, Andrew Xia. *Crossing*. Charleston, S.C.: Amazon Encore, 2010. 217 pp. 978-1-935597-03-2, \$12.95 (pb).

The shadow of Virginia Tech shooter Seung-hui Cho hangs over this fine debut novel, winner of the Amazon Breakthrough contest and part of Amazon Encore's first list. Fourteen-year-old Xing (pronounced "shing") Xu is an outsider in his upstate New York suburb, one of only two Chinese-American students in his high school. Years earlier, he had welcomed the other Chinese American, Naomi, and helped her learn English, but she has adjusted far better than he has and his love for her will likely not be reciprocated. When another outsider appears, Xing, anxious to be in the "in" group for once, reacts with great cruelty.

Then classmates start disappearing and turn up dead in gruesome ways. Xing comes under suspicion. He has the same silent, detached personality as Seung-hui Cho, and even though the shooter was born in South Korea, people say they "look alike." Xing wants to clear his name, but his efforts place him in great danger and under even greater suspicion.

Fukuda establishes the mood early on and sucks the reader into the depths of Xing's multiple experiences of loss and betrayal that include the loss of his language and singing voice on immigration, his father's death in an unsolved hit-and-run accident, and his mother's workaholicism and depression. The conclusion has multiple interpretations that will leave readers thinking and debating long after the book is done. The juxtaposition of episodes from Xing's past and present add to the unsettling effect. This is a novel that will both entertain teen and adult fans of noir fiction and force them to think about big questions of identity, prejudice, revenge, and what it means to be part of a community.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

19-2-0253

Lake, Nick. *Blood Ninja*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009. 370 pp. ISBN 978-1-4169-8627-0, \$16.99.

Although a fantastic combination, I had never thought about combining the action of ninjas and vampires into one incredible adventure. *Blood Ninja* takes two well-explored genres and creates a new one that is sure to hold the attention of any reader. He is knowledgeable about his subjects and the Japanese culture.

Not a book for the faint at heart, *Blood Ninja* captures ideals long held in the history of Japan and the samurai and ninja codes, such as honor, filial dedication, and the belief that there is more in the world than meets the eye. This book would be ideal to motivate boys to read more. It is a truly exciting and fascinating read.

Kena Sosa
Dallas, Tex

19-2-0254

LeFlore, Lyah. *The World Is Mine*. New York: Simon & Schuster,

2009. 269 pp. Illus. by DL Warfield. Series: The Come Up. ISBN 978-1-4169-7963-0, \$8.99 (pb).

African-American high school junior Blue Reynolds dreams of becoming a major figure in the music business, though his parents are constantly nagging him to focus on his schoolwork and a more conservative business career. Along with his two White buddies, budding lawyer Collin Andrews and high school dropout and talented artist Whiteboy, Blue searches for a DJ, a rapper, and a hot girlfriend to make his name as a party promoter, the first step in his career plan. Meanwhile, love interest Jade has a best friend, Mamie, who is looking for her break as a DJ, but Blue has to get over his sexism in order to give Mamie a chance. Through a promoter with questionable ethics, he learns about a talented young rapper named Tre, but he and Collin know they have to get Tre's signature on a contract before the bigger fish snap him up.

This first volume in the music biz series *The Come Up* is told from the alternating points of view of all the principal teen characters, though Blue and Collin's perspectives dominate. Although the characters are not depicted with much depth, music journalist LeFlore captures well the teenagers' distinct voices in a novel that will appeal primarily to male readers with an interest in urban music. Giving the book additional appeal is Warfield's stylish artwork based on photos of attractive models who resemble the principal characters. The Washington, D.C., setting is well drawn, with a number of popular landmarks, such as the Busboys & Poets Café on 14th and V Streets, featured. The ending leaves readers hanging, anticipating the next volume.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

19-2-0255

Lottridge, Celia Barker. *Home Is Beyond the Mountains*. Toronto: Groundwood, 2010. 224 pp. ISBN 978-0-88899-932-0, \$18.95.

Some historical fiction opens a window to distant times and places; some reminds us of our human commonalities. This sympathetic book about the Assyrians (Christians) of Persia—another little known example of people who got shoved around in the twentieth century—does both.

Inspired by actual events and told from a young girl's viewpoint, the story follows a group of displaced children starting in the last years of World War I. As the fighting between Turkish and British armies gets closer to Samira's small village in western Persia, the people flee for safety. Samira loses both parents on the road, but with her older brother eventually reaches Baghdad. There they join other orphans, who migrate from one shelter to another in today's Iraq and Iran—long journeys, all on foot. Most remarkably, a large group of orphans, organized by a young American woman (the author's aunt), set out in late fall to walk all the way from Hamadan to Tabriz, and ultimately to their home villages—an epic journey over mountain and plain.

Although described as a novel, the book seems more like a memoir, lacking in dramatic tension and character development. Nonetheless, it's a valuable, satisfying read, written in a simple but flowing style, rich in detail that helps bring these courageous

children to life. The efforts of British and American individuals to help—and educate—uprooted people in the Middle East during this period is an intriguing subject, deserving of attention.

Elsa Marston
Bloomington, Ind.

19-2-0256

McKissack, Patricia C.; McKissack, Fredrick L.; and McKissack, John. *The Clone Codes*. New York: Scholastic, 2010. 174 pp. ISBN 978-0-439-92983-7, \$16.99.

"I keep running, wishing I could escape my own skin." (p. 62)

The Clone Codes gave me chills from the first lines. There is nothing ordinary about it.

Leanna is a 13-year-old girl whose life is turned upside down when her mother is arrested. She finds herself on the run, at the center of a scientific and political war, and she makes unexpected friends along the way. Her travel companions include Benjamin Franklin, Justice John Marshall Harlan, and Eleanor Roosevelt.

It is 2170, which means that, much to the delight of readers of all backgrounds, there is an array of *cool* words, an innovative water game, and mind-blowing technological features, such as computerized glasses that allow you to stock your memories, attend school virtually, and chat for hours with your best friend.

The authors, Newbery Honor winner Patricia C. McKissack, Frederick L. McKissack, and their son John McKissack, possibly invented a new genre: historical science-fiction. As oxymoronic as it sounds, the story does invite the young reader to analyze past and contemporary issues, such as human trafficking, while reflecting on the future implications of cloning and other forms of biotechnology.

The Clone Codes makes history and science fiction fun for the teen audience. Its topic is contemporary and thought provoking. I highly recommend it.

Nathalie Mvondo
Davis, Calif.

19-2-0257

Stratton, Allan. *Borderline*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010. 320 pp. ISBN 978-0-06-145112-6, \$16.99.

A likable protagonist, a really mean bully, snooty private school



administrators, a few sympathetic adults, loyal (and funny) buddies, an FBI raid, escape across boundary waters, intrigue—what more could a kid ask from a novel? But there is more. Sami, the narrator of this skillfully constructed thriller, is an Iranian-American boy living in upstate New York, and his father, research director at a bio-lab, has been arrested for attempted terrorism. Sami, who yearns for the affectionate relationship he formerly had with his dad, can't believe the charges are true. Immediately tarred by suspicion and persecution, he suffers at school, and his spunky mom loses her job. His determination to uncover the truth leads to a hair-raising chase and capture in Toronto, and a discovery that will change his life forever.

Sami's voice, spiced with raunchy adolescent humor but not larded with obscenities, rings true. Here we have a boy of Middle Eastern/Muslim background who seems like any other American kid—except for having to juggle his parents' "differentness," his religious observances, and cruel discrimination. Here, too, we have a glimpse of how forces of American law and order can treat "the Other." Not just an engrossing read, *Borderline* probably will be discussed loudly in classrooms and corridors. It's that good.

Elsa Marston
Bloomington, Ind.

19-2-0258

Volponi, Paul. *Homestretch*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Athenium, 2009. 150 pp. ISBN 978-1-4169-3987-0, \$16.99.

Homestretch is a great yarn, and despite a few annoyances with details, it's a burning page-turner and an important contribution to multicultural literature.

First, the annoyances: the book engages issues of undocumented Mexican workers, and though it gets the big picture correct about immigration patterns, the Mexican characters, who speak in Anglicized Spanish, provide a bit of embarrassment to an otherwise great story.

Annoyances aside, *Homestretch's* plot charges forward at an exhilarating pace much like the racehorses he narrates. The story of teen runaway Gaston—from the tragedy of his mother's death, the frustrated beatings and racism of his hateful and alcoholic father, and ultimately, his work at a race track outside of Hot Springs, Arkansas, alongside undocumented Mexican workers—makes for a gripping narrative.

The central irony of the novel, that Gaston's life as a runaway places him in direct contact with the undocumented Mexican workers his father taught him to despise, is instructive in what James Banks, professor emeritus of multicultural education, calls "prejudice reduction." Volponi's *Homestretch* adds an important anti-racist narrative to the young adult multicultural archive.

James C. Jupp
Central Arkansas Univ.

Audio

19-2-0259

Puerto Plata. *Casita de Campo*. New York: iASO Records, 2009. CD. 45 minutes. Includes 16-page booklet. \$16.98.

Now more than 85 years old, the Dominican *bachata* musician José Cobles, known as Puerto Plata, performs the love songs, carnival songs, and dance numbers that became popular during his childhood in the 1920s. In the 1930s, dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo banned *bachata* and other traditional musical styles, seeing them as a source of resistance to his regime. In the years before Castro's 1959 revolution, Trujillo encouraged the importation of popular music from Cuba, and the local Dominican musicians found themselves performing underground, unable to record their compositions until after the dictator's death in 1961.

Despite their clandestine origins, few of the songs on this retrospective recording are even covertly political. The Cuban classic "Guantanamera" with new lyrics takes a swipe at imported music while making subtle points about race and class in the Dominican Republic. The first songs on the disc, such as "Mujer perjura," "Brisa de la tarde" and the title cut are tuneful and poetic love songs. Other songs, such as "Lobatón" and "Porqué no ha de ser," pay tribute to noted Dominican *bachata* singers of the early twentieth century. Listeners will want to dance to the traditional countdown song "Los perros" and "De qué te vale," the latter of which comments on the values of the wealthy. The octogenarian musician's voice remains strong, and the CD, with its well-written accompanying bilingual booklet (which describes the songs' content and style but doesn't include lyrics) documents the creativity and perseverance of a bygone era.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann