Dear Reader,

Newsletter for Square Books Constant Readers

A generous selection of the proven, prevailing and promising literary offerings available at your favorite local bookstore, provided by its dedicated staff.

Fall 2010

Pat Conroy returns to Oxford

Events with

Tom Franklin
Mona Simpson
Antonya Nelson
Curtis Wilkie
& More

New books by

John Grisham
Rick Bass
Tom McGuane
Sara Gruen
& More
Upcoming Events at Square Books

All events are held at Off Square Books unless noted.

~ For an up-to-date list of events please go to www.squarebooks.com or call (662) 236-2262 ~

*September 9 at 6 p.m. ................................. Susan Gregg Gilmore signs THE IMPROPER LIFE OF BEZELIA GROVE

and Edwin Bearss signs RECEDING TIDE: Vicksburg and Gettysburg: The Campaigns That Changed the Civil War

September 11 at 2 p.m. .............................. Grace Pundyk signs THE HONEY TRAIL
September 14 at 5 p.m. ......................... Eugene Marten signs FIREWORK
September 15 at 5 p.m. ................. Scott McKenzie signs THE MAN BEHIND THE NOSE
*September 16 at 6 p.m. ......................... Mona Simpson signs MY HOLLYWOOD
September 21 at 5 p.m. ................... Matt Dellinger signs INTERSTATE 69
September 28 at 5 p.m. ........ Bruce Machart signs THE WAKE OF FORGIVENESS
*September 30 at 6 p.m. ...................... Joshua Ferris signs THE UNNAMED

October 4 at 5 p.m. ............................... Jay Jennings signs CARRY THE ROCK
October 6 at 5 p.m. ............................... Tom Franklin & Laura Lippman
*October 7 at 6 p.m. .......................... Antonya Nelson signs BOUND
October 12 at 5 p.m. ......................... Christy Jordan signs SOUTHERN PLATE COOKBOOK
*October 14 at 6 p.m. ................................. T.R. Pearson & Langdon Clay sign THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

October 15 at 5 p.m. .............................. Barry Gifford signs SAD STORIES OF THE DEATH OF KINGS
October 18 at 5 p.m. ......................... Darlin’ Neal signs RATTLESNAKES & THE MOON
October 19 at 5 p.m. ........ Curtis Wilkie signs THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF ZEUS
October 25 at 5 p.m. .............................. Mary Carol Miller signs LOST MANSIONS OF MISSISSIPPI VOL. II

October 26 at TBA ............................. Chris Gillebeau signs THE ART OF NONCONFORMITY
*October 28 at 6 p.m. ..................... Gordon A. Martin signs COUNT THEM ONE BY ONE
October 29 at 5 p.m. ............................... Chad Gibbs signs GOD & FOOTBALL
November 1 at 5:30 p.m. ........ Claudia Dreifus signs HIGHER EDUCATION
November 2 at 5 p.m. ..................... Neil White & others signs MISSISSIPPANS
November 3 at 5 p.m. ..................... Pat Conroy signs MY READING LIFE
*November 4 at 6 p.m. .................... Marshall Chapman signs THEY CAME TO NASHVILLE
November 5 at 5 p.m. ..................... Ken Murphy & Scott Barretta sign MISSISSIPPI: STATE OF BLUES

November 6 at TBA ................................. Wayne Simmons signs STORY OF JULES VERNE, A WATCH POCKET DOG

November 10 at 5 p.m. ..................... Lee Sandlin signs WICKED RIVER
*November 11 at 6 p.m. ................ Lee Gutkind signs FOREVER FAT
November 12 at 5 p.m. .................... Shirley Perry signs AFTER MAY DAYS
November 13 at 6 p.m. ................... Robert Goolrich signs RELIABLE WIFE
November 16 at 5 p.m. .................... Rob Magnuson Smith signs GRAVEDIGGER
November 26 at 5 p.m. ...................... Joseph Ellis signs FIRST FAMILY: ABIGAIL & JOHN ADAMS
December 2 at 5 p.m. ..................... James Cobb signs THE SOUTH & AMERICA SINCE WWII
December 8 at 5 p.m. ..................... Robert Dalby signs A PIGGLY WIGGLY CHRISTMAS

*THACKER MOUNTAIN RADIO

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Those of us who grew up in Mississippi know where the book is set or what it’s about, the title being a part of the jingle we were taught as a way to learn how to spell Mississippi. Silas Jones and Larry Ott grow up as boyhood friends but are pulled apart by the rigidity of community judgment, the strictures of small town social order, especially as it is determined by race, and the maze of secrecy that is the past. Silas is black and Larry is white. Silas’s ambitions as an athlete fade as he matures and becomes a county constable, while Larry drifts into social isolation, a mechanic whose garage has no business because he is associated, though never charged, with a long-ago crime. When an Ole Miss coed, home on break, disappears, Silas’s skills as a lawyer are put to test and Larry is under suspicion. Tom Franklin has layered masterfully a number of criminal and moral mysteries throughout the riveting plot, in which the tension lies in whether a combination of coincidences and the flimsy edifice of society will destroy Silas and Larry both morally and physically. As innocent children who learn the spelling of Mississippi by a sing-song riddle, might there also be a code, at least one for Larry and Silas, that unlocks the complex and often dangerous nature of man? RH

Charles Elton has borrowed from his experiences as a publisher, editor, television producer, and agent to create a first novel that dwells on the ridiculous and annoying aspects of celebrity. Luke Hayman is the character whose person is used by his father to create the Hayseed Chronicles, which becomes a famous English series of children’s books—think Chronicles of Narnia, Harry Potter, and, most specifically, Winnie the Pooh. Christopher Robin Milne could never escape the fame that A. A. Milne made for him as a teddy-bear toting six year-old; in his adult life he wrote three memoirs about his oppressive celebrity, reluctantly agreeing to autograph his father’s Pooh books as long as the autograph-seeker coughed up a 10-pound note for a designated children’s charity. Mr. Toppit is a Hayseed Chronicles character who, at the end of the final book in the series, “out of the Darkwood comes, and he comes not for you, or for me, but for all of us.” Fans pursue Luke Hayman with their endless questions and theories about Mr. Toppit. The novel often and accurately has been compared to The Royal Tenenbaums for its dysfunctional absurdity and wit, and was hailed by the London Times as “an extraordinary debut, not only for its confident storytelling but for its nerdish familiarity with such an eclectic range of subjects.” TM

As we meet Berl Pickett in the opening scenes of Tom McGuane’s spectacularly good new novel, we understand something’s not quite right in his life, but can’t imagine what. He’s living in the small, pretty Montana town where he grew up, feels rewarded by the effectiveness with which he practices medicine, and is comfortable among his medical associates and fellow citizens. At one point he even thinks, “On days like this, I always dreamt about running for mayor so that I could look after my constituents like an adoring father.” (Dangerous thinking.) Life is never that simple, nor blissful. Raised by a Pentecostal mother, Berl observes that “Religion had surrounded my mother with an impenetrable reality, and war had done something quite similar to my father. I had the sense that I had been alone since birth.” Berl suddenly becomes a suspect in a murder, and feels the town and the people he thought he knew turning strange on him—he then thinks perhaps he did not know them, after all. He is very confused about, masculinely dense about, the woman he loves. “It’s no damn use finding deficiencies in human nature,” Berl thinks, “because sooner or later you spot them in yourself.” His take on his personal problems grows external: “In the news today, placentas were being found in urban sewage. I don’t know if the Trade Center bombing just pushed this sort of thing to the surface, but since then we seem to have lost a layer of skin.” Driving on the Rim is just that, and who better, wiser, funnier, or more companionable as your guide than Tom McGuane? RH

Bruce Machart’s debut novel, The Wake of Forgiveness, begins at the turn of the last century in Texas, a place of horses and men—hard, bitter men and the violence that erupts from their struggles. Karel is the youngest son of such a man. A Czech farmer whose tenuous tie to humanity is severed when his wife dies in childbirth, devolves into a brutal machine who lives to work and harnesses his sons like mules. Karel, who has never known a mother’s love, sees the blame in his father’s eyes as the cause of his mother’s death, but he is also a gifted rider, a talent that his father uses to add to his landholdings. When Villasenor, a wealthy Spanish rancher, challenges his father, Karel becomes the instrument of release for his brothers, who marry the Villasenor sisters, and the sacrificial lamb who must stay behind. As a man with a family of his own, Karel will be forced to confront the past and his estranged brothers. It is inevitable that this debut novel will be compared to Cormac McCarthy’s Border Trilogy with its horses and violent men, but this is also about women whose seeming softness belies their strength. Comparisons to Kent Haruf for evocative setting and family and even William Faulkner in his ability to expose the naked and brutal hearts of men are appropriate. Ultimately however, Bruce Machart is his own writer, a gifted one who has created this passionate and compassionate story that stands apart. We are anticipating meeting this talented contributor to American letters and honored that Square Books will be the first stop on his bookstore tour Sept 28th. CFR

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BOUND
by Antonya Nelson
(Bloomsbury Press, hd. 25.00)
Release Date: October 2010

This is the tenth book of fiction by Nelson, an acclaimed and award-winning writer whose stories are regularly published in The New Yorker, Esquire, Harper’s and Redbook. In Bound, with a meticulous hand, she sketches a small domestic story that grows larger, more complex, and more intimate with each page and as each new twist is exposed. Catherine, the seemingly complacent younger wife of Oliver, a love-junky thrilled by his newest affair, is distracted from her marital disillusionment by the death of a nearly-forgotten, but once-close high school friend who has bequeathed her an enormous gift. Or is it a terrible burden? As Catherine and Oliver orbit around one another and Catherine tries to deal with her past and her legacy, a serial killer lurks in the town, adding suspense and heightening the emotions of all the characters in this absorbing, deftly crafted novel. LH

SAFE FROM THE SEA
by Peter Geye
(Unbridled Books, hd. 24.95)
Release Date: September 28, 2010

Olf, a cold, hard-drinking old seaman who spent a lifetime plying the Great Lakes on barges loaded with taconite, is dying. His only son, Noah, from whom he’s been estranged for years, travels unwillingly to the Minnesota north shore to care for his father. Their reunion is awkward and tense but unavoidable, and they come to terms with their differences. Eventually, Olaf reveals his regrets about his family life, and why the event changed his life. Surprising Noah with his sensitivity, Olaf also divines what the two men learn about each other bonds them when there had been no bonds before, and affords them both a certain amount of comfort before they are separated forever. A taut novel, Geye’s descriptions of the north country, seafaring, and Norwegian-American life are properly spare but rich and convincing. LH

RATTLE SNAKES & THE MOON
by Darlin’ Neal
(Press 53, pb. 14.00)

“These are haunting stories of people bearing the burdens of ordinary life a lot more completely than most of us ever do. Wives and mothers of inmates, sisters of sisters killed in motorcycle accidents, that wonderful-but-dreary Louisiana swamplishness pervasive in these eloquent and exquisitely rendered tales of hardship. These are dark stories lit by headlights and lightning, fluorescent signs and tall highway lights, tough stories so real that they have the scent of the lived-through about them, which is testament to Darlin’ Neal’s extraordinary gift for prose and story.” – Frederick Barthelme, editor of Mississippi Review and author of Waveland.

LUKA AND THE FIRE OF LIFE
by Salman Rushdie
(Random House, hd. 25.00)
Release Date: November 16, 2010

Haroun and the Sea of Stories is a previous novel written by Salman Rushdie for his first son. It remains one of my favorite works by this excellent fiction writer. Now we have Luka and the Fire of Life, the story of Haroun’s little brother, written for Rushdie’s second son on his twelfth birthday. On a beautiful starry night in the city of Kahani in the land of Alifbay, a terrible thing happened—twelve year old Luka’s father, the storyteller Rashid, fell suddenly and inexplicably into a sleep so deep that nothing and no one can rouse him. To save him from slipping away entirely, Luka must embark on a journey through the Magic World to steal the Fire of Life. So begins an enchanting fable that will fill readers of all ages with a sense of wonder. CM

THE LADY MATADOR’S HOTEL
by Cristina Garcia
(Simon & Schuster, hd.24.00)
Release Date: September 7

Elegant, complex and darkly witty, Cristina Garcia’s sharply imagined new novel is one of finess told through the heart’s voices of complicated characters in a complicated society. The Lady Matador’s Hotel delves into the intensely diverse psyches of a six people, exposing dramatic story lines through lyricism and humor. Garcia (Dreaming in Cuban) crafts a gloomy portrait of modern life through exquisite prose, featuring a cast of waitresses, ex-guerrillas, pregnant teenagers, businessmen, poets and, of course, a lady matador. DBC
APE HOUSE
by Sara Gruen
(Random House, hd. 26.00)
Release Date: September 7, 2010

In Ape House, Sara Gruen (Water for Elephants) tells the story of a group of extraordinary bonobo apes who are capable of reason and carrying on deep relationships. An explosion at the Great Ape Language Lab where the apes are housed “liberates” them, and a reality TV show featuring the missing apes debuts under mysterious circumstances, immediately becoming the biggest phenomenon in modern media. Isabel Duncan, a scientist at the lab, might have trouble understanding people but she gets animals, especially the bonobos. To save her ape family from this parody of human life, she must connect with her own kind. Ape House opens the animal world to us—“Very, very few novels can change the way you look at the world around you. This one does.”—Robert Goolrick, author of A Reliable Wife.

A NOVEL BOOKSTORE
by Laurence Cosse
(Europa, pb. 15.00)

The title of Laurence Cosse’s novel, A Novel Bookstore, does not betray its subject. It is a story about a bookstore founded by a couple of literary idealists, Ivan and Francesca, who locate their store in (where else?) Paris, with an aim to stock only novels, and only the best novels. They select a secret panel of writers and intellectuals who will determine what the best novels are, and, rebelling against conventional business wisdom, book bestsellerdom, and mainstream literary media, open the store of their dreams to passionate praise and instant success. Before long, people want to know, and begin to find out, who the secret judges are, as threats and physical attacks ensue. Europa Editions, the publisher who gave American readers The Elegance of the Hedgehog (residing for months now on the Square Books paperback bestseller list), has given us in Cosse’s novel a merging of mystery and literary fiction genres, and, according to Le Figaro, “a thriller, a historic romance, and a fairytale...about hate, envy, and humankind’s fragility.” TM

SAD STORIES OF THE DEATH OF KINGS
by Barry Gifford
(Seven Stories Press, hd. 16.95)

Roy is a lover of adventure movies, a budding writer, and a young man slowly coming of age without a father. Surrounding him is the adult world of postwar Chicago, a city haunted by violence and poverty. Charlatans, operators, alien abductees, schoolyard nudists, and fast girls with only months to live people the streets. At the center of it all is a boy learning to navigate the compromises of living. Mixing memoir and invention, the forty-one short stories in Barry Gifford’s Sad Stories of the Death of Kings brings a boy’s growing consciousness to vivid, unflinching life. MJ

SUNSET PARK
by Paul Auster
(Henry Holt & Co., hd. 25.00)
Release Date: November 9, 2010

In Sunset Park, Auster is in classic form. Adam Walker, a poetry student at Columbia in the spring of 1967, is Auster’s latest everyman, revealed in four parts through the diary entries of a onetime admirer. With tight prose, Auster pushes the tension and his characters’ peculiar self-awareness to their limits. The best moments from Walker’s disparate, disturbing coming-of-age come in lush passages detailing Walker’s conflicted, incestuous love life—as the plot moves toward a journey into madness. Auster’s study of a young poet doomed to life as a manifestation of poetry carries startling weight. MJ

FIREWORK
by Eugene Marten
(Tyrant Books, pb. 14.95)

Firework is a rich, tough read. The utterly sympathetic protagonist in Eugene Marten’s third novel doesn’t stray far from those of his prior works, Waste and In the Blind. Jelonnek, the state-employee antihero of Firework, is a shiftless man whose routine is shaken by a series of twisted circumstances and terrible decisions. Marten masters a world of blue-collar minutiae with spare, striking prose and meticulous detail, a breakout achievement that also tackles issues of gender, class, race, identity and family. MJ

NEMESIS
by Philip Roth
(Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, hd. 26.00)
Release Date: October 5, 2010

Although Philip Roth fans appreciate the esteemed writer’s recent departure into the fictions dealing with dying and post-mature libido that came with The Dying Animal, Everyman, and Exit Ghost, many are glad to have the chance to read more recent work such as Indignation, and, now, Nemesis, a venture back to Bucky Cantor’s Newark summer of 1944. A visual impairment exempts Bucky from the overseas military service that most of his schoolmates are performing. Bucky is left behind as a physical education instructor for younger school children, struggling with his relative uselessness, when an outbreak of polio invades the community. Roth, ever the master, reveals to us the contrast of war with domestic disaster and that of love with fate in Nemesis, his thirty-first book and one that contributes muscullarly to the oeuvre of this great American writer. RH

We Don’t Have It?
We will get it for you. Most titles available in 2 to 3 days, and you don’t pay shipping. Can Amazon.com do that?
GETTING TO HAPPY
by Terry McMillan
(Penguin, hd. 27.95)
Release Date: September 7

Terry McMillan wrote the sassy novel, Waiting to Exhale, a vibrant story about the bond of friendship between four women as they struggle to heal after break-ups and broken hearts. Now we revisit these women fifteen years later in Getting to Happy, where they are still dealing with life’s disappointments, looking for ways to be happy and content with their lives. McMillan writes, “They’ve exhaled; now they are learning to breathe.” MAH

SNAKEWOMAN OF LITTLE EGYPT
by Robert Hellenga
(Bloomsbury Press, hd. 25.00)
Release Date: September 2010

I didn’t expect to actually learn anything about snake-handling from reading this book, but, yep, learned about snakes and even a bit about pygmies of the Congo. Other than an anthropological surprise, Snakewoman of Little Egypt is also a novel of love and redemption. When Willa Fern Cochrane, former member of the Church of the Burning Bush with Signs Following, is released from prison, where she spent six years for shooting her snake-handling preacher husband, she changes her name to Sunny and sets about reinventing herself. She goes to college and becomes an A-student in herpetology (but, alas, remains a mediocre student in relationships). She goes shopping. She becomes involved with anthropology professor Jackson Jones—and this should have been the love story, but it’s complicated. Or rather, Sunny is complicated. But true to her name, Sunny is determined to live with “joie de vivre” (joie de vivre). Her experience in self-discovery is the surprising, warm and humorous core of this story. The snakes are extra. SLM

THE INSTRUCTIONS
by Adam Levin
(McSweeney’s, hd. 24.00)
Release Date: November 2010

Adam Levin’s debut novel is huge. Not just in the sense that it’s a big book (around 900 pages) but it’s also huge in the same aspect that Infinite Jest is huge—the story merits the amount of pages, and luckily it doesn’t seem like that many when you finish. David Foster Wallace had an encyclopedic knowledge of language and how to use it in a sentence. So does Adam Levin. Levin’s novel traces the young life of Gurion Maccabee. Maccabee is a talkative boy with a troubled childhood who is constantly kicked out of schools before becoming the leader in an intense revolutionary movement of a large scale. Levin, similar to the style of Philip Roth, has written a novel full of muscle, slapstick comedy, rage, confusion, and moral fervor. Trust me, this is a story you won’t forget. DS

EXLEY
by Brock Clarke
(Algonguin, hd. 24.95)
Release Date: October 5, 2010

Following the literary sizzler, An Arsonist’s Guide to Writers’ Homes in New England, Brock Clarke whips out another highly imaginative book with Exley, a wild excursion through the murkiness of truth and lies. Miller, a 9-year old boy genius, is searching for the author of his father’s favorite book (“his anodyne”) in hopes that it will revive the father who lies comatose in a V.A. hospital. At least the boy believes it’s his father. His mother doesn’t believe him, nor does his therapist, and Miller has such fanciful and outlandish ways of twisting the truth that I didn’t believe him either. Told through the voices of both Miller and his bizarre (and somewhat unethic) therapist, Exley is fascinating, unpredictable, sometimes baffling, but always compelling and certainly unique—and is a testament to the great lengths people will go to protect their fragile lives. SLM

HONEY, IT’S ME
by Dana Stabenow
(Algonquin, hd. 27.00)
Release Date: September 2010

I’ve had a crush on Dana Stabenow’s work for a long time. I’ve read the large bulk of her Alaskan mystery series and have been charmed by her writing. I wasn’t expecting much from her new book, Honey, It’s Me, which is the story of a middle-aged woman who returns to Alaska to reconnect with her past and with her daughter. But the book, much like the main character, has more depth than I expected. The book is moving and funny. Stabenow’s writing is as good as ever. DS

THE WATCH, WHY I CAME WEST
by Adam Gordon
(Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, hd. 24.00)
Release Date: September 7

Adam Gordon’s first novel, The Watch, is a harrowing story about a refugee from a war-torn country who is forced to flee to the United States. The novel is a powerful and poignant exploration of the human experience of displacement and the struggle to find a place in a new land. Gordon’s writing is vivid and engaging, and his characters are richly drawn. The novel is a must-read for anyone interested in issues of immigration and the human experience of flight. DS
We knew Steve Martin could write—after reading his novella, Shopgirl, and his latest novel cements our theory. In An Object of Beauty young Lacey Yeager—with experience at Sotheby’s and a hunger needed to make it in the New York City art world—does whatever she can to make the scene and climb the social ladder. Both dramatic and, obviously, funny, Steve Martin has written another great book that fans of Jonathan Ames, Wes Anderson, and Gary Shteyngart will enjoy.

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GREAT HOUSE
by Nicole Krauss
(W. W. Norton, hd. 22.95)
Release Date: October 12, 2010

Nicole Krauss’s second novel, The History of Love, was widely praised especially by us. Her next offering, The Great House, is a complex narrative, with several points of view and interweaving stories. The four main stories are of a writer in New York who writes at a large desk given to her by an Argentine poet twenty-five years ago, the husband of another writer in London who has just died and used to write at that desk earlier in their marriage, a man in Israel who has just buried his wife and struggling with reuniting with his estranged son, now a judge, and the fourth, an antiques dealer. The Great House, like The History of Love, is difficult to enclose in a tidy synopsis. The reader does not know what connects these stories, other than sometimes the desk. All of the narrators are overly familiar with profound loss, and like the drawer in the desk that remains locked, each has a secret. Elegant in its interwoven grace, The Great House is a novel that will stay with the reader for a long time. CFR

HALF A LIFE
by Darin Strauss
(McSweeney’s, hd. 22.00)
Release Date: September 2010

Author of Chang and Eng and The Real McCoy, Darin Strauss, brings us a riveting memoir of the very sad story of a fatal car wreck that changed his life forever. Half a Life begins, “Half my life ago, I killed a girl,” which refers to the wreck Darin Strauss survived but one of his classmates didn’t. The horrible accident scars Darin’s life forever and this is his account on how to live with a very hard fact. It’s not all sadness and gloom. The book is a positive outlook on a tragic situation full of guilt, doubt, and ultimately hope and how to cope with it all. This type of book is something different from McSweeney’s and I think their readers will enjoy it. DS

FALL OF GIANTS
by Ken Follett
(Penguin, hd. 36.00)
Release Date: September 28, 2010

The popular British suspense writer Ken Follett shifted from the spy/thriller genre when he wrote Pillars of the Earth, his epic about the building of a cathedral in the Middle Ages (and its sequel, World Without End), so it’s no surprise that he has taken on the entire 20th century in a trilogy of historical novels. Fall of Giants, the first installment of The Century Trilogy, follows five families—American, German, Russian, English, and Welsh—as their lives become entwined in a saga of drama and intrigue, from coal mines to glittering palaces, through the turmoil of the World War I, the Russian Revolution, and the struggle for women’s suffrage. The destinies of the families are featured in the second and third books of the trilogy (due out in 2012 and 2014) as they move through the Depression, World War II and the Cold War.

SPECIAL EXITS
by Joyce Farmer
(Fantagraphics Books, hd. 26.99)
Release Date: September 8, 2010

Nope, not the autobiography of a porn star, though it is graphic because it is told in wonderful drawings and words, but also in the sense that is the detailed, vividly told truth about Farmer’s experiences with her declining parents. Unsparring frank, maddening, tender, depressing, frightening, and hilarious, Farmer lays it all out there: what it was like to become shepherd to the shepherds. The story is wholly hers but she makes us understand so much about aging and death by pointing out situations that we all should be prepared for, from loss of memory and mobility, dealing with doctors and hospitals, finances, hygiene and nutrition, injury, and how children and other family members and friends are affected. It’s not just a tear-jerker: the book is studded with gems of nostalgia, revealed secrets, profound insights, and deep kindnesses--a useful manual for illuminating what’s in store as we Boomers take on parental care while on the cusp of geezerdom ourselves. The highest praise comes from the quintessential Boomer geezer himself, R. Crumb: “One of the best long-narrative comics I’ve ever read, right up there with Maus. It had a powerful affect on me...I actually found myself moved to tears.” Along with Atul Gawande’s article in the July 26, 2010 New Yorker, everyone should read this book. A great idea for book clubs, caregivers, healthcare professionals, students and teachers, lawyers, you, your older kids and parents... LH
CLEOPATRA: A Life by Stacy Schiff
(Little, Brown, hd. 29.99)
Release Date: November 2010

Early Gift Alert! This stunning biography by the same author who won the Pulitzer Prize for her life of Vera Nabokov, was shortlisted for Saint-Exupery, and won multiple awards for her history of Ben Franklin’s relationship with France, (and all three were NY Times Notable Books) has created the biography of the most influential, powerful woman ever. (Except maybe for that other lady who also had bad luck with a snake.) Shrewd strategist, brilliant negotiator, married to two of her brothers, lover of Julius Caesar and Mark Anthony and mother to sons by both men, the wealthiest ruler in the Mediterranean, dead before she was forty, Cleopatra has been the ultimate Bitch Goddess and inspiration for the ages in western culture. Separating fact from fiction, Schiff presents a life so dazzling that even Tut heads and fans of I, Claudius and Rome will be impressed. It’s not out until November—but remember it—a great gift for mama and daddy and them. LH

FOREVER FAT: Essays by the Godfather by Lee Gutkind
(Bison Books, pb. 17.95)

Dubbed the “godfather behind creative nonfiction” by Vanity Fair, Lee Gutkind takes the rich material of his own life to define, defend, and further expand the genre he has done so much to shape. The result is a hilarious memoir of Gutkind’s colorful life as a motorcyclist, a medical insider, a sailor, a college professor, an overaged insecure father, and a literary whipping boy. In Forever Fat Gutkind battles his weight, his ex-wives, his father, his rabbi, his psychiatrist, and his critics in a lifelong cross-country, cross-cultural search for stability and identity. The reader benefits from Gutkind’s battles, being treated to a story of the awakening of a man and his mission.

YOU HAVE GIVEN ME A COUNTRY by Neela Vaswani
(Sarabande Press, pb. 15.95)

“In my family, difference was a way of life.” This beautifully written memoir unravels the colorful, complicated American family that is Vaswani’s. She writes about growing up with an Irish-Catholic mother from New York and a Sindhi-Indian father, an immigrant with roots in Pakistan and India, and her huge extended family on both sides. Taking readers back into each family’s past by combining history and imagination, Viswani constructs an intriguing saga that is moving and amusing—a perfect and hopeful book for our xenophobic times. Maybe happy families are all alike, even when they come together with so many differences. Charming family snapshots throughout. LH

MY READING LIFE by Pat Conroy
(Random House, hd. 25.00)
Release Date: November 2, 2010

The quality of passion is a defining and well-known trait of Pat Conroy. His writing is built upon passion, and to meet Pat Conroy or see him is to encounter instantly his fierce blue eyes and enthusiastic, exalatory ideas and opinions. His greatest passion is for reading, and My Reading Life is built upon his personal influences, inseparable from his literary influences: people—his mother, who led him to an appreciation for art; a librarian; his English teacher, Eugene Norris (who accompanied Mr. Conroy in an unforgettable Book Conference appearance in 1995); Norman Berg, a book sales rep for whom “the world of books was a sacred grove”; books— Gone With the Wind, an “Iliad with a Southern accent”, writers—Thomas Wolfe, Tolstoy and James Dickey, the latter for his “utter mastery of the English language as well as a literary gift as far-reaching and as prodigal as has ever appeared on the American scene”; and places—Atlanta’s Old New York Bookshop, Paris. My Reading Life is a memoir in the style of Eudora Welty’s One Writer’s Beginnings, an account that does not claim or seem to intend to be a memoir, but is a personal narrative that focuses upon the important elements of its author’s life. Like Miss Welty’s book, My Reading Life arrives after a successful career as a writer has been achieved and does not seek to claim itself as an important part of the writer’s work—more like lagniappe. In spite of its brevity and seemingly modest intent, however, this simple, honest book about the pure joy of books and reading realizes a fine importance and gives its fellow reader delight. Don’t miss the opportunity to encounter the passion of Pat Conroy when he comes to Square Books. RH

CONVERSATIONS WITH MYSELF by Nelson Mandela
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, hd. 28.00)
Release Date: October 11, 2010

Widely considered to be one of the most inspiring and iconic figures of our age, Nelson Mandela draws on his personal archives in Conversations With Myself. Journals kept on the run during the anti-apartheid struggle of the early 1960s, diaries and draft letters written in Robben Island and other South African prisons during his twenty-seven years of incarceration, notebooks from the post-apartheid transition, private recorded conversations, speeches and correspondence written during his presidency—are brought together into a narrative and unhindered insight into the human side of the icon.

Are You a Speed Reader?

Sign up for Speed Reader, our weekly e-mail of events and books at www.squarebooks.com. Each week you’ll get updates on new books, bestsellers, author events, and more.
For every innocent man sent to prison, there is a guilty one left on the outside. In 1998, in a small East Texas city, Travis Boyette abducted, raped, and strangled a popular high school cheerleader. He buried her body so that it would never be found, then watched in amazement as police and prosecutors arrested and convicted Don'te Drumm, a local football star, and sent him to death row. Travis doesn’t understand how the police and prosecutors got the wrong man, and he doesn’t care. He just can’t believe his good luck. Then, nine years pass; Travis suffers from an inoperable brain tumor and Don’te is four days away from his execution. For the first time in Travis’s life, he decides to do what’s right and confess. But how can a guilty man convince lawyers, judges, and politicians that they’re about to execute an innocent man? Eliza is torn between confronting memories of that horrible summer and accepting the possibility that a reunion with her kidnapper might gain information about other girls who weren’t as fortunate as she. It’s all about psychological manipulation, both from behind bars and from the cocoon of a Baltimore suburb. SLM

At the grand age of 85, Elmore Leonard continues to crank out a book a year. Dibouti is his latest effort and demonstrates that the crime fiction master is still in top form. This time out, Leonard takes on a bit of an unusual subject—Somalian pirates. Dara Barr is an award-winning documentary filmmaker recently arrived in the African country of Dibouti to film modern-day pirates in action. She and her right hand man, a six-foot-six 72-year-old African American seafarer named Xavier, rent a boat and begin shooting footage only to realize that they are in for way more than they bargained. As in any Leonard novel, there’s a superb cast of characters (a Mercedes driving pirate chief, a Saudi diplomat, an American billionaire, and a black al-Qaeda terrorist from Miami, to name a few), plenty of clever dialogue and a tricky plot. Readers get ready, you’re in for some fun. CM

In Gone, Baby, Gone, Dennis Lehane’s P.I. team of Patrick Kenzie and Angie Gennaro took the case of a kidnapped 4-year-old, only to return her to an unfit mother. Twelve years later, Patrick and Angie are still a team, married and with a child, when Amanda McCready goes missing again. There’s a resignation about Patrick in Moonlight Mile. He’s older, of course, but less edgy and he’s taking serious stock of his life. After all, he’s a father now. But he wants, needs, to make amends for placing Amanda back with her drug-addicted mother. So once again he plumbs the depths of Boston’s criminal element, asking for trouble and getting it (with some help from the irrepressible Bubba Rogowski). But this case may be too much for Patrick, the cost may be too high. Lehane leaves us wondering if this is the last of the Patrick/Angie/Bubba adventures. Surely not. SLM

Laura Lippman is the bestselling author of 17 suspense novels and she’s the winner of a host of crime fiction awards, so she knows her way around a mystery. I’d Know You Anywhere is the tale of a young mother whose past holds a dark secret, a secret that comes barging into her present when the man who kidnapped her when she was a teenager and held her hostage for six weeks contacts her from Death Row. He wants her forgiveness, and he also thinks she can save him from being put to death. Eliza is torn between confronting memories of that horrible summer and accepting the possibility that a reunion with her kidnapper might gain information about other girls who weren’t as fortunate as she. It’s all about psychological manipulation, both from behind bars and from the cocoon of a Baltimore suburb. SLM

Longtime defense attorney Mickey Haller is recruited to change stripes and prosecute the high-profile retrial of Jason Jessup, who has been exonerated by new DNA evidence after 24 years in prison. Haller is convinced Jessup is guilty, and he takes the case on the condition that he gets LAPD Detective Harry Bosch as his investigator. Together, Bosch and Haller set off on a case fraught with political and personal danger. Opposing them is Jessup, now out on bail, a defense attorney who excels at manipulating the media, and a runaway eyewitness reluctant to testify after so many years. With the odds and the evidence against them, Bosch and Haller must nail a sadistic killer once and for all.
The books we have seen on great highways have always been about who and what is on the road. *Interstate 69* is one of a kind—the highway isn’t yet built, and the story is about the building of it, or the possibility it will not be built. As most around here know, the road is to be a 1,400 mile extension south from Indianapolis that will connect Canada to Mexico—the “NAFTA” highway—with a portion of it running through the Mississippi Delta. Written by a young but veteran *New Yorker* reporter, Matt Dellinger, Ken Auletta said that the author, “From the first page…draws a compellingly written narrative that is not only hard to put down but is sweeping in its context.” On this trip, the reader discovers much about what has gone into the planning—and fussing, fighting and deal-making—of Interstate-69, and the great book that Ian Frazier called “an affectionate, hard-won, and skillfully-made book, filled with the pleasures of original discovery.” RH

**HERE**

by Wislawa Szymborska

(HMH, hd. 22.00)

Release Date: October 26, 2010

Great art is often given birth by people of oppressed societies. In the case of Wislawa Szymborska, now 87, it was Poland, first under Nazi rule, then Communism. Szymborska has published fewer than 300 poems in her life. Through her poetry “we are led,” as Billy Collins said, “almost unaware, into the intriguing and untranslatable realism that lie just beyond the boundaries of speech.” She said in her 1996 Nobel Prize acceptance speech that “Whatever inspiration is, it’s born from a continuous ‘I don’t know.’” In *Here*, her first book in many years, a slender volume of twenty seven poems, you will find her trademark wit, irony, skepticism, and the deep human understanding that this great poet, at this mature juncture of her life, offers to those of us who follow her. RH

**SWAN**

by Mary Oliver

(Random House, hd. 23.00)

Release Date: September 14, 2010

“Joy is not made to be a crumb,” writes Mary Oliver, and certainly joy abounds in her new book of poetry and prose poems. *Swan*, her twentieth volume, shows us that, though we may be “made out of the dust of stars,” we are of the world she captures so vividly: the acorn that hides within it an entire tree; the wings of the swan like the stretching light of the river; the frogs singing in the shallows; the mockingbird dancing in air. Swan is Oliver’s tribute to “the mortal way” of desiring and living in the world, to which the poet is renowned for having always been loyal.

**TRAVELS IN SIBERIA**

by Ian Frazier

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, hd. 28.00)

Release Date: October 2010

Frazier, author of *Great Plains*, *On the Rez*, and other widely appreciated non-fiction books and many *New Yorker* pieces (one of my favorites was the study of plastic bags caught in Manhattan trees) has written a wonderful travelogue chronicling two treks through one of the world’s most infamous, gargantuan, and weird terrains, and we can go with, even while sitting in our comfortably climate controlled living rooms. We won’t be taking the comfty Trans-Siberian railroad, though, but instead, a hop-on van, and we’ll be camping out in the vast taiga, home to tigers, wolves, and the unhappy ghosts of millions of people unfortunate enough to be exited there, or slaughtered by Genghis Khan or Stalin. Our guides are Sergei and Volodya, who screw things up nearly as often as they facilitate them. Frazier is a brilliant observer of the landscape, the people, the system, and a well-informed interpreter of the history of Siberia, whether he’s pondering the discarded blister pack at his feet, the Decembrists, the glass beach at Vladivostok, sable fur, or ice roads where traffic proceeds for miles on frozen rivers. In his casual and personal style, Frazier rambles on, eventually pulling all his anecdotes and factoids and literary asides together to complete a fascinating, dynamic tableau of the evolution of Siberia from a wilderness crossed only by nomadic hordes to a kingdom of exile to a land of decrepit industry with enormously rich natural resources, to what? The world is going to need to know more about Siberia, and this is an excellent place to start. A truly amazing, great book, with meaty endnotes, nice little pen drawings by the author, and a beautiful bibliography. LH

**MASTER OF DISGUISES**

by Charles Simic

(HMH, hd. 22.00)

Release Date: October 6, 2010

This is the 20th and possibly the best collection of poetry from former U.S. poet laureate, Charles Simic. The poems in *Masters in Disguise* are true to Simic’s style—short and sad with a touch of mystery and a deeper meaning of violence. These poems are why we started reading Simic’s poetry in the first place. If you’ve never sat down with one of his collections I highly recommend starting with this one. And if you have—these poems will thrill like no other. DS

**AT HOME**

by Bill Bryson

(Random House, hd. 28.95)

Release Date: October 5, 2010

In his new book, Bill Bryson chooses a seemingly simple setting for a rather complicated look at people's private lives. He wanders through each room of his home and uncovers a story there—some rooms tell stories of sleep and sex, others of how important bathing and hygiene have been in human history. Bryson’s quest to find pieces of history within the rooms of a home is brilliant and well-written. Guaranteed to teach you something. SJ
BOB DYLAN IN AMERICA
by Sean Wilentz
(Doubleday, hd. 28.95)
Release Date: October 5, 2010

Sean Wilentz, Professor in the American Revolutionary Era at Princeton, combines the early context of Dylan’s rise to prominence in Greenwich Village with his present day material. Wilentz himself grew up in the village and provides an intimate and critical portrait of Dylan’s songs, delving into the songs he has a particular attachment with and understanding him in the cultural and political history of the country. This book provides a strong historical and musical appreciation of Bob Dylan’s prominence in American music and history from an aesthetical standpoint of a fan and critic. PD

LIFE by Keith Richards
(Little Brown & Co., hd. 29.99)
Release Date: October 26, 2010

The man himself tells his story of life in the crossfire hurricane—listening obsessively to Chuck Berry and Muddy Waters records, learning guitar and forming a band with Mick Jagger and Brian Jones, the Stones’ first fame and the notorious drug busts, the death of Brian Jones, tax exile in France, wildfire tours of the US, isolation and addiction, estrangement from Jagger and subsequent reconciliation, marriage, family, solo albums—and the road that goes on forever.

HAIL, HAIL, EUPHORIA!: Presenting the Marx Brothers in Duck Soup, the Greatest War Film Ever Made
by Roy Blount Jr.
(It Books, hd. 19.99)
Release Date: October 2010

Hard to believe that the movie voted the 37th greatest film of all time, called by Woody Allen among the “best comedies ever made and the only one that doesn’t have a dead spot” and was an inspiration for Samuel Beckett, Gene Kelly, and Bugs Bunny failed to do well at the box office when it was released in 1933. Taking us back through the making of Duck Soup, the personal histories of the Marx brothers and others in the production, and looking at the political and economic climate of the time, Square Books pal Roy Blount explains it all in his characteristically charming, nerdily erudite way. He thinks that Duck Soup was hugely successful in ways other than dollars made, and is one of the world’s greatest political satires—humor about ridiculous leaders and insane wars that people can always embrace in the grimmest of times. There’s no point in arguing with Roy, just go rent Duck Soup and watch it (again) and read this little Duck Soup book. Or vice versa. Whatever—just the combo of Roy Blount and the Marx brothers should be enough to convince you that you’ll be LOL. So go on, euphoria, and all the rest of ya, too—check it out. LH

THE MAKERS OF THE SACRED HARP
by David Warren Steel and Richard H. Hulan
(Vanderbilt Univ. Press, hd. 25.00)
Release Date: October 15, 2010

The Makers of the Sacred Harp is a comprehensive guide to the texts and tunes of the deeply influential and long-lived southern tradition of shape-note singing. University of Mississippi associate professor David Warren Steel and Richard H. Hulan, a scholar of American hymnody, concentrate on the regional culture that produced the Sacred Harp in the nineteenth century and delve into history of its authors and composers. Drawing on census reports, local histories, family Bibles and other records, rich oral interviews with descendants, and Sacred Harp Publishing Company records, this volume reveals new details and insights about the history of this enduring, beautiful American musical tradition.

FRANK: The Voice
by James Kaplan
(Random House, hd. 29.95)
Release Date: November 2, 2010

From the low and filthy of Hoboken, New Jersey to the high and clean of New York, New York, the story of one of America’s most iconic musicians is shared in a graphic depth. Though ‘Old Blue Eyes’ is anything but undocumented, this expansive biography covers ground with detail that leaves one feeling like Frankie lived right next door. A Tri-State native himself, James Kaplan puts the pieces together and illuminates the life of a popular culture giant: the roots, the rise, and the inevitable falls inherent. Including insights and excerpts from friends and family, the truth of this great man is told in its entirety and the reader sees, through his contemporaries and from his legacy, just how Frank fits into the bigger picture of music as a culture and ambition as a lifestyle. Here is a classic story of what those from the melting pot all have in them, the American dream. MJH
When the Southern Foodways Alliance began curating a cookbook, it was the old, spiral-or plastic-tooth-bound sauce-splattered-paged cookbooks that they turned for their model. With more than 170 tested recipes, this cookbook is a true reflection of southern foodways and the people who claim this food as their own. The recipes and the stories that accompany them came from academics, writers, catfish farmers, ham curers, attorneys, toqued chefs, and people who just like to cook—spiritual Southerners of myriad ethnicalities, origins, and culinary skill levels. Edited by Sara Roahen and John T. Edge, the book is divided into chapters that represent the region’s iconic foods: Gravy, Garden Goods, Roots, Greens, Rice, Grist, Yardbird, Pig, The Hook, The Hunt, Put Up, and Cane. Mmm-mmm.

BOOZE HOUND: On the Trail of the Rare, the Obscure, and the Overrated in Spirits
By Jason Wilson
(Ten Speed Press, hd. 22.99)
Release Date: September 21, 2010

Because I was designing a new cocktail (ask Dave at City Grocery) in honor of Dr. T. Starkey, Boozehound caught my attention, and I was delighted by this irreverent, funny, and informative little book. The author takes us to bars and distilleries worldwide, giving us the backstories on exotic and popular spirits and recipes for the cocktails they inspire like aquavit (Nordic Snapper), creme de violette (Aviation), tuaca (Livorno), pisco (the classic Pisco Sour) and falernum (the scarcely potent Zombie), just to name a few. At the German plant where Jagermeister—the disgusting emetic that is spewed all over our Square every Thursday night—is concocted, Wilson, who actually likes the stuff, weasels into a secret lab and discovers that it’s made with 56 herbs (is ipecac an herb?) not just the 5 that are disclosed. Reading about a pilgrimage to Torino, birthplace of vermouth, I felt less ashamed about liking my martinis very wet—there the delicious vermouth is meant to be drunk alone, and each historic cafe is proud of its own vermouth formula. Wilson visits the monastery at Chartreuse, and Cape Bjare on Sweden’s coast, where he talks to farmers who grow the special potatoes that make Karlsson’s monastery at Chartreuse, and Cape Bjare on Sweden’s coast, where he talks to farmers who grow the special potatoes that make Karlsson’s Gold, a vodka described as “lovely” because it actually has a taste.

SOUTHERN FOODWAYS ALLIANCE COMMUNITY COOKBOOK
edited by John T. Edge & Sara Roahen
(Univ. of Georgia Press, hd. 24.95)

JAMES BEARD’S AMERICAN COOKERY
By James Beard
(Little Brown & Co., hd. 35.00)
Release Date: October 25, 2010

James Beard was the “dean of American cookery” (New York Times), and he put practically everything he learned about cooking into this single magnificent, now classic, cookbook that includes more than 1500 of his favorite and most successful recipes, as well as advice on dozens of cooking questions, from choosing meats and vegetables to preserving fruit and making “real” cheeseburgers. A celebration of the roots of cooking in the American style, this repackaged edition features the original text and color illustrations, and a new foreword by Tom Colicchio.

THE VERTICAL FARM: Feeding Ourselves and the World in the 21st Century
By Dr. Dickson Despommier
(St. Martin’s Press, hd. 25.99)
Release Date: October 12, 2010

By the year 2050, nearly 80% of the earth’s population will reside in urban centers. Applying the most conservative estimates to current demographic trends, the human population will increase by about 3 billion people during the interim. Since over 80% of the land that is suitable for growing crops in already is use, more land will be needed to grow enough food to feed this growing population. A potential solution is to grow food in vertical farms, many stories high, situated in the heart of the world’s urban centers. If successfully implemented, vertical farms offer the promise of urban renewal, sustainable production of a safe and varied food supply (year-round crop production), and the eventual repair of ecosystems that have been sacrificed for horizontal farming. “Despommier’s ingenious idea... could ultimately ease the world’s food, water, and energy crises.” -The Huffington Post
**WICKED RIVER:**
The Mississippi When it Last Ran Wild
by Lee Sandlin
(Random House, hd. 26.95)
Release Date: October 19, 2010

Wicked River is a look at one of the most colorful, dangerous, and peculiar places in America’s historical landscape: the Mississippi River of the 19th century. Beginning in the early 1800s and climaxing with the siege of Vicksburg, Wicked River takes us back to a time before the Mississippi was dredged into a shipping channel, and before Mark Twain romanticized it into myth. Drawing on an array of first-hand accounts, this is an account of Natchez being flattened by a tornado; the harbor in St. Louis crushed by a massive ice floe; hidden, nefarious celebrations of Mardi Gras; the sinking of the Sultana, the worst naval disaster in American history. And here is the Mississippi itself, perilous, unpredictable and unstoppable, lifeblood to the communities that rose and fell along its banks.

**COUNT THEM ONE BY ONE:**
Black Mississippian Fighting for the Right to Vote
by Gordon A. Martin, Jr.
(Unc Press of MS, hd. 40.00)
Release Date: November 2010

United States v. Lynd was the first trial that resulted in the conviction of a southern registrar and served as a model for other challenges to voter discrimination in the South. As a new lawyer, Gordon Martin traveled to Hattiesburg from Washington to help shape the federal case, met with and prepared the government’s sixteen black witnesses who had been refused registration, found white witnesses, and was one of the lawyers during the trial. Decades later, Martin returned to Mississippi to interview the still-living witnesses and their children and friends, and connect these current reflections with commentary about the case itself.

**FIRST FAMILY:**
Abigail and John Adams
by Joseph J. Ellis
(Random House, hd. 27.95)
Release Date: October 26, 2010

The author of Founding Brothers and American Sphinx brings America’s preeminent first couple to life in an illuminating narrative that sweeps through the American Revolution and the Republic’s tenuous early years. Joseph J. Ellis gives us a story that is equal parts biography, political history, and love story. John and Abigail strategized over civic and foreign affairs as often as they discussed their children and Abigail’s loneliness during John’s extended absences required by his work. Their remarkable connection is epitomized in words he wrote to her after his election to the presidency: “I can do nothing without you.”

**MISSISSIPPIANS edited by Neil White**
(Nautilus Publishing, hd. 45.00)
Release Date: October 2010

What do these people have in common: the greatest novelist of the 20th century, the most prolific quarterback in NFL history, the king of rock and roll, the king of the blues, the most powerful woman in entertainment, the most revered NFL player, the founder of MTV and the man behind the Teddy Bear? MISSISSIPP! This limited edition coffee-table book features hundreds of famous, notable, extraordinary and little-known Mississippians.

**THE SOUTH & AMERICA SINCE WWII**
by James C. Cobb
(Oxford Univ. Press, hd. 24.95)
Release Date: November 17, 2010

The list of books we sometimes recommend to those seeking to purchase from us one book, and only one book, that explains the South, includes The Sound and the Fury, All God’s Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw, To Kill a Mockingbird, The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, The Mind of the South, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, and Black Boy. Now we have another to choose from, The South and America Since World War II, by James C. Cobb, Spalding Distinguished Professor at the University of Georgia and former Ole Miss and Southern Studies history professor. With his acclaimed Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity, The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta, and The Selling of the South, on industrial development in the South, Cobb has examined aspects of Southern History that have led him to this subject of the modern South for which he is so well-suited. Covering the broad themes of politics, the economy, agriculture, urbanism, feminism, and civil rights, Cobb uses particular events and stories, written in a straightforward and entertaining style, to give us—Southerners and Americans—a history that is captivating and illuminating. RH

**JEWISH ROOTS IN SOUTHERN SOIL**
by Marcie Cohen Ferris & Mark I. Greenberg
(brandeis Univ. Press, pb. 29.95)

“This anthology of original essays is the most recent addition to the widening body of work on the history of the Jewish South, a neglected area of research until about 30 years ago. This collection covers an extensive chronology, from the first Jewish settlers in the South in the 1730s up to the present day, and debates what it means to be both Southern and Jewish. The book serves the dual purpose of offering an introduction to the field and furthering discussion of the Southern Jewish experience in the United States.” -Library Journal
MISSISSIPPI: State of Blues
photos by Ken Murphy; essay by Scott Barretta
foreword by John Evans
(Ken Murphy South, hd. 59.95) Release Date: October 2010

“This book’s subtitle is intentionally, in blues fashion, a double entendre. On the one hand, it offers an assessment of the contemporary Mississippi blues scene—its musicians, festivals, venues, fans, and holy sites—in both image and prose. And on the other hand, it alludes to the fact that over one hundred years after its emergence, the blues remains inextricably connected in the public mind with Mississippi.” -from Scott Barretta’s essay

HIGHER EDUCATION?: How Colleges are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids—And What We Can Do About It by Claudia Dreifus & Andrew Hacker (Times Books, hd. 26.00)

As American universities have blossomed into major research facilities and dominant economic engines of their regions, developed from once faculty-dominated institutions into bureaucratic corporations with enormous staffs, paying six-figure salaries to attract name figures who have little to no contact with the undergraduate students that these schools were created to serve, the system rightly has come under criticism. In Higher Education? How Our Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids—And What We Can Do About It, Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus launch a bold indictment and lay out compelling arguments for reform. It is their closing chapter, however, that has created the most attention here in Oxford. The authors, one a New York Times science writer and the other a regular contributor to the New York Review of Books, point out “Schools We Like—Our Top Ten List,” and who is number one? The University of Mississippi—for good reasons. RH

DRUNK STONED BRILLIANT DEAD: The Writers and Artists Who Made the National Lampoon Insanely Great by Rick Meyerowitz (Abrams, hd. 40.00)

From its first issue in April, 1970, National Lampoon blazed like a comet, defining comedy as we know it today. Former Lampoon illustrator Rick Meyerowitz selected the funniest material from the magazine and sought out the survivors of its first electrifying decade to gather their most revealing and outrageous stories for Drunk Stoned Brilliant Dead. The result is a mind-boggling tour through the early days of an institution whose alumni left their fingerprints all over popular culture: Animal House, Caddyshack, Saturday Night Live, Ghostbusters, SCTV, Spinal Tap, In Living Color, Ren & Stimpy, The Simpsons—even Sesame Street counts a few Lampooners among its ranks. Long before there was The Onion and Comedy Central news shows, there was the National Lampoon, setting the bar in comedy insanely high.


What an amazing, and, thank you, Jesus, different kind of book about the Delta. But not surprising—if you know the work of either Pearson or Clay you would be expecting something special. Tom Pearson has written 11 novels, including the acclaimed A Short History of a Small Place, and Seaworthy, a true account of a 70-year-old man crossing the Pacific Ocean by raft. Clay has been a photographer for House and Garden and his work was featured in Jefferson’s Monticello. Just as extraordinary as those accomplishments is the true story of Lucas McCarty, a young white man in Indiana, afflicted with cerebral palsy, who can only communicate with Minspeak, an icon-based language delivered with a device known as the Delta Talker. How Lucas falls in with John Woods, the oxygen man on a catfish farm and an admitted, but redeemed killer, and how he leaves St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church to become a member of the Trinity House of Prayer, a black holiness church where he feels more accepted and encouraged as a choir member (“I am white on the outside but black on the inside.”) is a story that is, as Pearson says, “the most remarkable thing I know.” A striking, important, and unsentimental book that in all its colorful narrative and 39 photographs goes a long way toward trying to explain the inexplicable place that is the Delta. LH

SQUIRREL SEEKS CHIPMUNK by David Sedaris
(Little Brown & Co.,hd. 21.99) Release Date: September 28, 2010

Though the characters may not be human, the situations in these stories bear a resemblance to the insanity of everyday life. In “The Toad, the Turtle, and the Duck,” three strangers commiserate about animal bureaucracy while waiting in a complaint line. In “Hello Kitty,” a cynical feline struggles to sit through his prison-mandated AA meetings. In “The Squirrel and the Chipmunk,” a pair of star-crossed lovers is separated by prejudiced family members. Once again David Sedaris shows us the most outrageous, tender, absurd sides of ourselves in his “profoundly funny, well-crafted stories that somehow, magically, bring home a major point about fidelity or guilt or love.” (Christian Science Monitor)
Ecco Press is publishing a thirtieth anniversary edition of The Tree, by the great English novelist John Fowles, who died in 2005. The Tree is a short and deeply meditative essay on nature and man, with an introduction by Barry Lopez, who says that “Fowles sets down what he believes is the most dangerous of all our contemporary forms of alienations, ‘our growing emotional and intellectual detachment from nature.’ “Fowles sees trees “as the best analogue of prose fiction. All novels are also, in some way, exercises in attaining freedom—even when, at an extreme, they deny the possibility of its existence.” Reading this little book may be what we need as, today, we see our green dreams browning at the edges. TM

THE TREE
by John Fowles
(Ecco, pb. 13.99)
Release Date: October 2010

Ecco Press is publishing a thirtieth anniversary edition of The Tree, by the great English novelist John Fowles, who died in 2005. The Tree is a short and deeply meditative essay on nature and man, with an introduction by Barry Lopez, who says that “Fowles sets down what he believes is the most dangerous of all our contemporary forms of alienations, ‘our growing emotional and intellectual detachment from nature.’ “Fowles sees trees “as the best analogue of prose fiction. All novels are also, in some way, exercises in attaining freedom—even when, at an extreme, they deny the possibility of its existence.” Reading this little book may be what we need as, today, we see our green dreams browning at the edges. TM

SOME WE LOVE, SOME WE HATE, SOME WE EAT
by Hal Herzog
(Harper, hd. 25.99)

Have you ever wondered why vegetarians, vegans, flexitarians, etc. choose restrictive diets? How do you feel about animal research, cock-fighting, and hunting? Hal Herzog addresses every question one may ever ask regarding the study of human-animal relationships, now termed “Anthrozoology.” This book is both informative and ethically-challenging; sociologists, anthropologists, zoologists, and psychologists will enjoy. And if you’re simply an animal-lover, you will love it, too. SJ

GOD AND FOOTBALL: Faith and Fanaticism in the SEC
by Chad Gibbs
(Zondervan, pb. 12.99)

What happens when Chad Gibbs, a renowned comedy editor and die-hard football fan, travels to the twelve Southeastern conference schools during game-day weekend in order to discover if football fanaticism in the South qualifies as idol worship? You get God & Football, an illuminating, laugh-out-loud look at the place where fanaticism, faith, and football meet.

THE HONEY TRAIL
by Grace Pundyk
(St. Martin’s Press, hd. 27.99)

A unique look at the history, culture, tradition, and environmental impact of honey. The Honey Trail not only questions the state of our environment and the impact it is having on bees and honey, it also takes readers across Yemeni deserts and Borneo jungles, through the Mississippi Delta and Tasmania’s rainforests, over frozen Siberian snowscapes and ancient Turkish villages, all in search of the liquid gold known as honey.

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Each month we will send a first edition signed or personally inscribed book by one of the many outstanding authors who come to Square Books, plus a bonus book at the end of the year.
DAVE THE POTTER  
by Laban Carrick Hill  
illus. by Bryan Collier  
(Little Brown & Co., hd. 16.99)

The moment I met Bryan Collier, the moment I perused the beautiful picture book he illustrated, written by Laban Hill, I knew that the story of Dave was much bigger than this particular picture book, and bigger than all the pots Dave ever threw. Dave, a 19th century South Carolinian slave, secretly taught to read and write, created some of the most beautiful pottery of his time. Most stunning of all, and not discovered until nearly a century later, are the one and two line poems secretly inscribed upon each pot by Dave, words etched in sorrow and, somehow, full of hope. JM

LULU AND THE BRONTOSAURUS  
by Judith Viorst, illus. by Lane Smith  
(Antheneum, hd. 15.99)

Not impossible to imagine that from two celebrated picture book authors comes another perfect picture book. Lulu has decided she wants a pet brontosaurus for her birthday present. Though seemingly impossible to others, Lulu sets her mind to it. As she frolics along she meets lots of great potential pets, but isn’t satisfied until she happens upon a real brontosaurus. It seems as if Lulu’s wish has come true, and it couldn’t be a more perfect match, except Bronto wants Lulu for a pet. Lane Smith delivers warm, colorful illustrations alongside Judith Viorst’s delightful, standard-issue plot twists. JM

ART AND MAX  
by David Wiesner  
(Clarion Books, hd. 17.99)

Three-time Caldecott Medal Winner David Wiesner gives us a fresh glimpse at artistic creativity through the eyes of two beautiful lizards. Arthur is the professional artist—confident, important. Max is enthusiastic and excited to begin the adventure his friend has already mastered. Through Wiesner’s remarkable illustrations, we discover that Max’s canvas is Art himself. Arthur’s rage is so great that as he shakes the colors away, he is nothing more than a line drawing. Max’s recreation of his friend is a brave attempt. The lizard who emerges is changed, and so, perhaps, are we. LP

check out the new blog at www.squarebooksjunior.blogspot.com

www.squarebooks.com/junior
BINK AND GOLLIE
by Kate DiCamillo
illus. by Tony Fucile
(Candlewick Press, hd. 15.99)
Kate DiCamillo and Alison McGhee, two of my favorite storytellers, team up to give us the new and exciting tales of frolic and friendship, Bink & Gollie. Move over Gulliver and Junie B., Bink and Gollie will solve every mystery, champion every challenge and make constant and necessary changes to each other’s sense of style, as real friends do. Tony Fucile’s comical and illustrations bring the duo to life, with each characters’ unique attitude and charm, roller-skates and all. JM

NINTH WARD
by Jewell Parker Rhodes
(Little, Brown, hd. 15.99)
Twelve-year-old Lanesha lives in a tight-knit community in New Orleans’ Ninth Ward. She doesn’t have a fancy house like her uptown family or lots of friends like the other kids on her street. But what she does have is Mama Ya-Ya, her fiercely loving caretaker, wise in the ways of the world and able to predict the future. So when Mama Ya-Ya’s visions show a powerful hurricane—Katrina—fast approaching, it’s up to Lanesha to call upon the hope and strength Mama Ya-Ya has given her to help them both survive the storm.

MATCHED
by Allyson Condie
(Penguin, hd. 17.99)
Think of a world way beyond Facebook, where techno-logic chooses everything for you. Job placement is based on your skills and demographic, not your hopes and dreams. In this not too distant future, even your spouse is chosen for you, for your own good and for the society. It’s a simpler, safer world, where even the day of your death does not loom over you because it too is decided. Is it possible to trust every decision made for you, especially when the choice of your mate is too good to be true? Creepily subtle and ominous. JM

MATCHED
by Kate DiCamillo
illus. by Tony Fucile
(Candlewick Press, hd. 15.99)

MUSEUM OF THIEVES
by Lian Tanner
(Putnam, hd. 16.99)
For Goldie Roth the strange and tyrannical rules of the city of Jewel are all she’s ever known. But Goldie was blessed with courage unlike Jewel has ever seen. She runs away, putting her life and the lives of her loved ones in danger. With no real plan of action, Goldie heads to the Museum of Dunt, a place that has always sparked her curiosity. It is there that she will meet a boy named Toadspit and learn that there is more to the Museum than meets the eye. And it is there that Goldie will discover a dangerous secret that puts everyone she knows at risk, and she will be forced to embrace her inner strength (and thief) in order to save them. This novel will take its rightful place alongside such great series as The Sisters Grimm, A Series of Unfortunate Events, and The Mysterious Benedict Society, novels that shape the people children will become. RW

THE WOLF TREE
by John Claude Bemis
(Random House, hd. 16.99)
Ray is back in the fast-paced sequel to The Nine Pound Hammer by John Claude Bemis. An experienced straggler, Ray inadvertently finds adventure at every turn. Warned by a stranger about a wild darkness spreading, Ray knows he will have to repair the Nine Pound Hammer in order to defeat the darkness once and for all. But first he must find the Wolf Tree, supposedly a gateway into the spirit world. JM

RASCAL: A Dog and His Boy
by Ken Wells, illus. by Christian Slade
(Knopf, hd. 16.99)
Here is a wonderful book about a dog and a boy, but also about the Cajun culture and life deep in the Louisiana bayous. Rascal is a beagle with his own boy, Meely. They hunt and fish and explore together, and Meely has a life-threatening adventure that requires not only Rascal’s expertise but also help from his farm friends as well. This is a coming-of-age story told from the point of view of a very astute beagle who quite naturally speaks with a Cajun accent. LP
**NEW TITLES BY OLD FAVORITES**

**BRIGHT YOUNG THINGS**
by Anna Godbersen  
(HarperCollins, hd. 17.99)

**THE CLOCKWORK ANGEL**
by Cassandra Clare  
(Margaret K. McElderry, hd. 19.99)

**THE HEROES OF OLYMPUS:**
Lost Hero
by Rick Riordan  
(Hyperion, hd. 18.99)

**BEAUTIFUL DARKNESS**
by Kami Garcia & Margaret Stohl  
(Little Brown & Co., hd. 17.99)

**THIS BOOK IS NOT GOOD FOR YOU**
by Pseudonymous Bosch  
(Little Brown & Co., hd. 6.99)

**PENNY DREADFUL**
by Abigail Halpin  
(Random House, hd. 16.99)

The perfect book for girls and boys who look to find adventure and magic in surprising places! Penny’s new life feels too magical to be real, too real to be magic. And it may be too good to last... unless she can find a way to make magic work just one more time—if it even was magic. Fans of Polly Horvat’s My One Hundred Adventures, Ingrid Law’s Savvy, and Jeanne Birdsall’s The Penderwicks will be enchanted by Laurel Snyder’s alternatively humorous and poignant look at small-town life and what it really takes to become a happy family.

**LOVE SUCKS** by Melissa Francis  
(HarperCollins, pb. 8.99)

AJ Ashe may have gotten rid of her vampire stalker and her evil ex-teacher, but things are hardly back to normal. For one thing, she still has to maintain a strict look-but-don’t-touch policy with Ryan, her hot ex-boyfriend-turned-stepbrother. For another, she has to learn to control her vampire superpowers—which means more than a few dates with Lex, mind-reading professional vampire trainer and too-sexy-for-his-own-good bad boy. And as if that’s not enough, she happens to be the key to her father’s plans to take over the world... and he’ll stop at nothing to get what he wants.

**NIGHTSHADE** by Andrea Cremer  
(Philomel Books, hd. 17.99)

Calla Tor has been groomed for her fate her entire life. She’s destined to be the alpha of her own pack, a responsibility she’ll share with resident ladies’ man (and future husband) Ren Laroche. All Guardians know they are not in control of their own fate, and Calla has never felt challenged by the rules that allow her to perform her duties, at least not until she breaks one. When a human boy saves her life, she is forced to challenge everything she knows about her future husband, her pack, and love. Warning: this is not your typical werewolf story. It’s better.

**REVOLUTION** by Jennifer Donnelly  
(Delacorte, hd. 18.99)

Historical teen fiction has taken a backseat lately; kids just aren’t interested in the real world at the moment. But if there was ever a novel to bring history back into the lime light, it’s Revolution. Andi is angry. Her world is crumbling and threatening to come crashing down. She needs something to cling to, something to pull her away from her deteriorating family. And that’s when she finds the diary of Alexandrine Paradis, a French girl who lived over two centuries ago. Though she finds comfort and solace in the diary, Andi is about to dive into the world of the diary in a way no one could predict and Alex’s life is about to be heartbreakingly real.
In nearly forty years as a newspaper reporter, I had covered the civil rights movement, eight presidential campaigns, and numerous overseas conflicts. Even though I had retired at the conclusion of the 2000 election and become a member of the faculty at the University of Mississippi, it occurred to me that this might be the story of my lifetime.

- Curtis Wilkie, from the preface to The Fall of the House of Zeus

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF ZEUS: The Rise and Ruin of America’s Most Powerful Trial Lawyer by Curtis Wilkie
(Random House, hd. 25.99) Release Date: October 19, 2010

Many have mentioned the resemblance of the Dickie Scruggs matter to Greek or Shakespearean drama: the story of the trial lawyer once portrayed as a modern-day Robin Hood, who took on the biggest and most powerful corporations and won the biggest settlements, making himself immensely wealthy in the process, only to become entirely undone by an utterly foolish crime and sent to prison; a story with twists, turns, and subplots generated by ambition, greed, and manipulation; and scores of characters multifariously connected and contaminated; a story that could not be made up. The one additional incredible feature of this tale is that, throughout the sixty years of its making, there lived a writer, Curtis Wilkie, who essentially knew the characters; who grew up in the same Mississippi that they had and went to Ole Miss with many of them; a seasoned reporter who had covered politics for years; a veteran Boston Globe writer; a character himself in one of the most famous books about political journalism, Timothy Crouse’s The Boys on the Bus; and a bigtime reporter who, like Dickie Scruggs, had moved to pleasant little Oxford to happily live out the twilight of his career. In The Fall of the House of Zeus we have a story that was made for a writer and vice versa. A fascinating but unwritten element of Wilkie’s book is what must have been his struggle as a longtime friend and public supporter of Scruggs to achieve this calm and honest narrative and to steer us over the roiling current of the conditions, circumstances, and characters in a way that moves us nearer to understanding what happened and why. By Wilkie’s telling, Zeus is like other significant stories that begin in Mississippi, such as tobacco litigation, and desegregation—their implications resonate nationally and even globally. RH