



# BiblioFiles

By Ruth Freeman

Readers' Advisor @ the Rowayton Library

## December 2009

It's hard to read during the holidays when there is so much else going on, but try and give yourself a break and explore one of these great new titles.

Reginald Hill's latest Dalziel and Pascoe mystery is called 'Midnight Fugue'. The clever characterizations are impeccably drawn. The dialogue crackles and makes you chuckle even among the mayhem. All the action takes place over the course of a single very eventful day. This is a rollicking read about one of our favorite coppers.

'The Price of Love and Other Stories' by Peter Robinson is a welcome addition for fans of Inspector Alan Banks. The stories begin with his visit home for his parents' 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, where uneasy feelings about the state of things in his childhood estate immediately trouble him. Robinson has devoted many books to the development of the Banks persona and these stories fill in some interesting gaps. Just in time for the holidays you can read 'Blue Christmas'. There are also good stories that do not feature Banks; I especially liked the title story.

Just when you could not imagine anyone would say something new to say about Italian food Barbara Lynch writes 'Stir: Mixing it Up in the Italian Tradition'. Unlike many chefs' ideas which are difficult to execute in a nonprofessional kitchen, these flavorful and original recipes are user friendly. This could be because she is a self taught cook who grew up in the South Boston projects and never went to culinary school. The ones I've tested are delicious. Her style is lovely; she makes it all seem like such fun, and it is! The gorgeous photographs are an appreciated bonus.

'The Ghosts of Belfast' is an excellent thriller by Stuart Neville. Gerry Fegan is the main character and he is haunted, quite literally, by his past as an enforcer for the IRA. He is a murderer, but a complicated man in search of redemption for his sins. It looks like the only way he will find some sort of grace or forgiveness is to kill some more. Anyone who likes the Irish author John Connolly will enjoy this book. Gerry's struggles with his ghosts are realistically rendered and you sympathize with his efforts to bring peace to the afterlives of his victims. There are nefarious characters bent on further blood shed and a love interest that complicates Gerry's planning. This is a very well plotted page turner.

'The Coral Thief' by Deborah Stott is superb historical fiction that takes place in 1815 in post Napoleonic Paris. Daniel Connor, a Scottish medical student, is on his way there to study anatomy and meets a mysterious, beautiful woman on his carriage journey into the city. She



# BiblioFiles

By Ruth Freeman

Readers' Advisor @ the Rowayton Library

ensnares him in an underworld of thieves and philosophers that operates in the catacombs beneath the streets. The strength of this book is in the atmosphere Stott creates, sometimes the plot mechanisms are a bit forced. You feel as though you are living in Paris in an exciting time of intellectual ferment. Interspersed throughout the book are well drawn vignettes of Napoleon's journey to exile in St. Helena. You will learn a lot as you follow the capering thieves on their escapades.

Kay Redfield Jamison's memoir 'Nothing Was the Same' is beautiful and heartbreaking. She writes thoughtfully and knowingly about her grief after the loss of her beloved husband to cancer. The author, a psychiatrist, is well known for her book 'An Unquiet Mind' about her battle with severe bipolar disease. Her husband was also a well known doctor specializing in schizophrenia. A second marriage for both, their 20 years together was clearly a very special interlude in her life. Highly recommended despite the sad topic.

'Battlescapes: A Photographic Testament to 2000 Years of Conflict' is a photographic essay by Alfred Buellbach and Marcus Cowper. Covering a selection of the great battlefields of Europe, it's a fascinating look at the present day, often bucolic settings for some of these deadly contests. The book is beautiful, as odd as that may sound, because the settings of many of these conflicts were in beaches, valleys and forests that provided cover and/or access for troops. There is a lot to learn from this book's perspective even if you are a well read history buff. If nothing else it shows the ability of land to recover from total destruction and eventually stand as a memorial to the blood that was shed there.

We have a large selection of children and adult holiday books on display so come in and browse!

###