



# BiblioFiles

By Ruth Freeman

Readers' Advisor @ the Rowayton Library

## January 2011

We have a number of great books to recommend – come in and browse!

‘Sunset Park’ by Paul Auster is a very well written novel about a group of young adults tied together by the address in Brooklyn where they are squatting. The themes of the search for home, the impact of past transgressions and the ability to start over are all sympathetically portrayed. The movie ‘The Best Years of Our Lives’ is threaded through the book; watch it when you’re finished for a new perspective on the acting and storyline.

‘As Always, Julia’ by Joan Reardon collects the letters between Julia Child and Avis DeVoto spanning decades beginning in the 1950’s. Many of the letters were written during the writing and shepherding to publication of ‘Mastering the Art of French Cooking’, providing a wonderful view of that process. Julia and Avis correspond on food, writing, politics, Europe, recipes etc. in a very honest and charming collection.

‘The Warmth of Other Suns’ by Natalie Wilkerson is the story of the epic migration of African Americans from the American South to the North and West, beginning during WWI and continuing through the 1960’s. Wilkerson has built this history around the compelling stories of three individuals who left the South for Harlem, Los Angeles and Chicago. Highly readable and compelling; she certainly deserved the National Book Award for the prodigious amount of research and the clarity with which she presents this critical event in our history.

‘The Sherlockian’, by Graham Moore is quite clever. There are two detective stories in one. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is on the trail of a possible serial killer in early 20<sup>th</sup> century London, assisted by his friend and ‘Dracula’ author Bram Stoker. Harold White is the intrepid present day sleuth and amateur “Sherlockian” on the trail of a murderer in present day London. The book is full of arcane references to the Holmes character and stories but it’s not necessary to know all about Sherlock to enjoy this well written mystery. Merrily bouncing back and forth between the centuries, this is an enjoyable romp.

‘The Still Point’ by Amy Sackville is an almost poetic evocation of two marriages separated by a century. Emily and Edward Malackey are a Victorian couple. He’s an Arctic explorer, she is home waiting for his return from his voyage to the Pole. Julia, a descendant of the Malackey family, and her husband Simon are living in the ancestral home trying to make a go



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of a marriage which is clearly under stress. The present day narrative takes place over a one day period, interspersed with the longer term story of Edward's voyage and the consequences of its failure. The writing is beautiful and the historical background fascinating.

'Gourmet Cookie Book: The Single Best Recipe From Each Year' has a unique arrangement – there is one cookie for every year of the fifty years covered. It's historical as far as which ingredients were readily available and fun to see the changes over time. If you make the mocha cookies the recipients will kiss your feet!

'Rescue' is Anita Shreve's latest novel. This is the tale of Peter Webster, an EMT in his VT hometown who meets the woman who will change his life when he pulls her drunk out of a car wreck. All the warning signs for a tempestuous road ahead if he pursues a relationship with Sheila are noted by Webster and promptly set aside. Shreve writes with clarity about the challenges of single parenting and has done her research on the life of an EMT.

'An Object of Beauty' by Steve Martin is an enlightening and well written tour of the contemporary art scene of the last 20 years. Centered in NYC and revolving around the life and times of Lacey Yeager, a brainy, beautiful and madly ambitious young woman, the book comes complete with reproductions of much of the art that is part of the storyline. I was fascinated by the details of the high end auction process and the collectors' mania that drove the prices in the heyday of the modern art market

Happily for those of us who love British police procedurals, author Peter Helton introduces DI Liam McLusky in 'Falling More Slowly'. Newly transferred from Southampton to Bristol CID, he and his DS "Jane" Austin are immediately thrown into investigating a bomber with seemingly random targets. This book is great fun to read, full of amusing observations about the people who populate police headquarters and the city of Bristol.

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