



BiblioFiles

By Ruth Freeman

Readers' Advisor @ the Rowayton Library

June 2011

'The Snowman' is the latest installment in the addictive Detective Harry Hole series by the Norwegian author Jo Nesbo. The author is an excellent writer who is broadening the Scandinavian noir tradition. Set principally in Oslo and Bergen, the eerie tale is punctuated by brutal murders with a characteristic snowman left at the scene of the crime. Harry is an alcoholic beset by demons that he can only partially control. His personal struggles make him human and give the book a more nuanced feel than your basic serial killer tome. The other detectives and forensic specialists round out an interesting group of characters. It's a very atmospheric and suspenseful mystery.

'Eyes of the Innocent' by Brad Parks is a laugh out loud hoot. Featuring Carter Ross, a fearless and funny reporter for the Newark Star Ledger, the book is a rollicking, topical expose of nefarious city councilmen, mortgage shenanigans and murder. Aided by other hilarious habitués of the news room, Carter is drawn into an arson case that quickly becomes more complicated than it first appears. There is a lot of funny dialogue and wry observations of the current newspaper world that keep the pace lively.

'The Devil She Knows' is by Bill Loehfelm. Set in Staten Island, it introduces an edgy heroine named Maureen Coughlin. Maureen is barely keeping the wolf from the door by waitressing. She has been drifting, half thinking of getting a college education, unsure of herself and frustrated by the narrow life she inhabits. This world turns upside down when she witnesses something she shouldn't after hours in the bar where she works, starting a cascade of truly frightening events that have her on the run. Excellent writing and images, well drawn characters round out an exciting, tense plot. She is a unique main character you really root for.

'The Feast Nearby' by Robin Mather is about a year spent eating locally on a shoestring budget. After a devastating divorce that left the author basically destitute, she retreated to a small lakeside house in northern Michigan and began living on \$40 a week. With the help of a flock of chickens, kindly neighbors with whom she bartered, local food purveyors and a skilled hand at preserving, she manages to sustain herself in style. By taking advantage of seasonal produce she creates a bountiful table; there are a number of recipes throughout the book that are mouthwatering. I



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liked her commitment to supporting her local food growers even if it meant not eating exclusively organic produce. This is an inspirational read and also a lot of fun.

'The Year We Left Home' by Jean Thompson is the story of roughly three decades in the lives of the Erikson clan, beginning with the Vietnam War. Told from the point of view of a number of the family members, the book charts the course of their lives in rural Iowa. The arc of the plot development is realistic and heartfelt, with characters that face real challenges and sometimes come up with imperfect solutions to their problems. The overall action is believable, with the small triumphs and burdens of family life chronicled in a touching novel.

'The Heart Specialist' by Claire Rothman is the story of Agnes White, a misunderstood orphan fascinated by anatomy and medicine from a very early age due to the influence of her doctor father. Although he disappeared from her life at the age of 5 he remains her muse as she struggles to buck the tide of history and attend medical school. This book is based on the story of the first female doctor in Canada.

We have a copy of the Roton Point History Committee's book of postcards. It catalogues the Point's years as a destination for day trippers coming on steamboats from New York who wanted to spend a day riding the roller coaster, swimming, dancing to big bands, enjoying meals in the grove and playing games in the midway. The committee has collected and preserved postcards documenting the era from the 1870's to 1941. Anyone interested in the history of South Norwalk and Rowayton will enjoy this book and the memories it has preserved. My favorite bit of historical trivia was the revelation that Bell Island was known as a bootlegger's paradise during prohibition. The 1938 hurricane hastened the end of Roton Point by wrecking the pier, although happily enough of it has survived to make a nesting spot for a pair of ospreys.

Happy Summer Reading Everyone!

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