

For the Love of Reading

February's Books Plus Discussion



As the temperature switches almost daily between winter and spring, it's almost time to draw together to discuss an interesting book. In honor of Black History Month, February's discussion will be on Bebe Moore Campbell's *Your Blues Ain't Like Mine*.

This novel is set in rural Mississippi in the 1950s and also in Chicago during more contemporary times. It's a novel about family, community, and civil rights.

Books Plus meets the first Sunday of each month. All are welcome. Join the discussion or simply come to listen.

No registration necessary. **Drop in.**

2 p.m., First Sundays

See the full winter and spring schedule below.

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Posted by Sarah B. on Jan 31, 2012 Sarah B.'s blog Add new comment



New Poetry Books for the New Year



Here are a couple more poetry books that I've been enjoying lately.

Jane Hirshfield's *Come, Thief* is an inviting and intriguing book by one of our best poets. Her poems are on the small side with lots of white space but they are packed with so much insight and punch, that they more than satisfy. To her poems Hirshfield brings an eye for nature, wisdom for relationships and a Zen philosophy. Here's the beginning of "Fourth World."

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Posted by Dory L. on Jan 25, 2012 Dory L.'s blog Add new comment



Winter Reading Program 2012!



Adult, high school and middle school readers are encouraged to participate in our annual Winter Reading Program. It's easy to enter - read a book, submit an entry. Every week, winning names will be drawn to receive prizes. At the end of the Winter Reading Program, we'll choose three lucky names from all the entries submitted to receive the grand prizes - new e-readers! The more books you read, the more chances you'll have to win.

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Posted by Sarah B. on Jan 24, 2012 Sarah B.'s blog Add new comment



Night Circus Readalikes



Erin Morgenstern's *The Night Circus* tells the story of two competing magicians trying to outdo each other in the creation of an enchanted circus. Whether you've read it and want more of the gothic atmosphere, period charm, and dazzling detail, are on the holds list for it, or just enjoy a bit of whimsy and dark Victorianism, these books should be of interest.

Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell, a tale of the resurgence of English magic in the early 19th century, is just as dense and immersive as the equally thick *Night Circus*, and like that novel features a period writing style and a fully realized magical world-within-a-world.

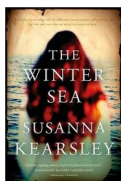
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Posted by Meg K. on Jan 22, 2012 Meg K.'s blog Add new comment



The Winter Sea by Susanne Kearsley



The Winter Sea by Susanne Kearsley.

Is genetic memory just a theory or does it actually occur, or maybe the protagonist in this novel just has a really good imagination?

American historical novelist, Carrie McClelland journeys to Scotland to research her new book concerning an early planned Jacobite invasion in 1708. Her story and her research focus on

Slain's Castle, now open to tourists, which was the center of much of the plotting in 1707 and 08. Carrie is soon dreaming of her ancestors who were involved in the intrigue. Is she channeling her long ago many times over great grandmother, is her new romantic interest also a descendant or is it her writer's imagination at work.

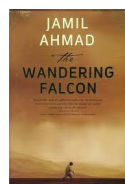
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Posted by Sarah B. on Jan 19, 2012 [Sarah B.'s blog](#) [Add new comment](#)



The Wandering Falcon



Afghanistan and Pakistan are areas that are in the news...a lot. The Middle East has its problems, but what about its culture and traditions? In Jamil Ahmad's book, The Wandering Falcon, the reader gets a short glimpse into the Tribal areas of the border lands between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Through a weaving train of stories, the reader gets to know the culture of wandering tribal families and individuals. The story starts after WWII, by my calculations, with the birth of Tor Baz and the tragic story that accompanies his earliest years. From this point the story wanders along with different individuals who work for the government in these lands and people looking out for their family, themselves, and their tribes. It's about outcasts and people trying to make it through life in the mountains and plains, finding happiness in those around them or disappointment in the lot life hands them. Ahmad loosely ties these stories together through a "Where's Waldo" with the character Tor Baz. He shows up in almost every story playing minimal roles or just sticking his head in.

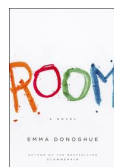
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Posted by Kristin M. on Jan 18, 2012 [Kristin M.'s blog](#) [Add new comment](#)



One Book One Bloomington 2012



Last night, the 2012 One Book, One Bloomington Community Read title was announced on WFHB's Interchange radio program.

This year, the community voted for Room by Emma Donoghue

Jack is a typical five-year-old who enjoys watching TV, reading, and playing games with his Ma. But he has lived all of his life in a single room. The room is his world, shared with his Ma, and

occasionally with Old Nick, a mysterious and unnerving nighttime visitor. Told from the perspective of Jack, the novel explores not only survival in captivity but also what happens when captivity ends and the world expands beyond the four walls of Room.

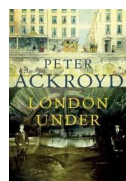
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Posted by Sarah B. on Jan 18, 2012 [Sarah B.'s blog](#) [Add new comment](#)



London Under



As someone who has explored sewers as a kid--they were in a new subdivision; it was on a dare--I totally understand the appeal of life underground. Who hasn't dug in their yard and hoped to find arrowheads or pottery from thousands of years ago?

Ackroyd, who wrote a book about the above-ground city several years ago, now dives underneath to recount the other world under busy streets, cathedrals, government buildings, and flats.

It's fascinating stuff. In the 19th century workmen excavating before constructing new buildings discovered huge chunks of the Roman wall that surrounded the city about two millenia ago. Other builders during that same time period found a stairway down to a brick-walled room with a spurting spring that they believed was used as a baptismal font during medieval times.

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Downton Abbey Reads



The Times had a good [article](#) the other day about publishers trying to ride the Downton Abbey wave. In that spirit, here are some books at MCPL that share some of the period charm and dramatic power of this fantastic show. If you're like me, you can't get enough of it.

Rose: My Life in Service: The memoir of a humble girl entering service in the 1920s, serving as Lady Astor's maid, and glimpsing a world of great glamor.

Below Stairs: the Classic Kitchen Maid's Memoir: For a bit of Daisy-inspiring perspective, this memoir of an ambitious kitchen maid is a sizzling look at the underside of great houses.

A Bitter Truth: A mystery set in WWI, in which battlefield nurse Bess finds herself entangled in a foul plot in a Sussex mansion.

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Posted by Meg K. on Jan 14, 2012 [Meg K.'s blog](#) [1 comment](#)



Recent New Poetry



Over New Year's I found a few interesting new poetry collections. What better way to start the new year then by sampling and diving deep into new poems? I'll introduce two of these now and more later as I slowly read through them.

Things to Say to a Dead Man: Poems at the End of a Marriage and After

I had no idea that [Jane Yolen](#), who is primarily a juvenile fiction and young adult author, wrote poetry. And what a wonderful collection this is. Because of the topic, it's a sad collection; in it she records her experiences taking care of her sick husband and then the months of her new widowhood. To round out the book, she added several memorial poems about her husband who was an expert on avian song. Birds also figure in some of these poems.

Despite the main topic the poems are uplifting. All are good; some are absolutely stellar. Here's a few lines from "Sorry for Your Loss."

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