

Information, Answers & Reviews

Dog Songs



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Who can resist a good dog book? OK so there are a few cat people out there (right here beside me in fact), and bird people, snake people, even for Heaven's sake, skunk lovers and gerbil-groomers. But what makes this book special is that it's a book of poems that gives tribute to the special dogs in renowned nature poet Mary Oliver's life.

There's Luke, the junkyard dog, Benjamin, the canine that is always dragging a chewed-through rope, Bear the small curly-haired who hates to stay overnight at boarding, Bazougey "that dark little dog/ who used to come down the road barking and shining," Ricky, the talker, and Percy named after the famous poet Shelley. Oliver penned a tribute to this hound mischievously patterned after Christopher Smart's "For I will Consider My Cat Geoffrey."

Luke was "born in a junkyard, / not even on a bundle of rags/ or the seat of an old wrecked car/ but the dust below." This beautiful German Shepherd loved flowers: "her dark head// and her wet nose/ touching/ the face/ of everyone." In the poem's closing Oliver expresses one thing dogs show us about the world: "we long to be--/ that happy/ in the heaven of earth--/ that wild, that loving." [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on December 16, 2013

[Dog Songs: Thirty-five Dog Songs and One Essay](#)

[Dog](#)

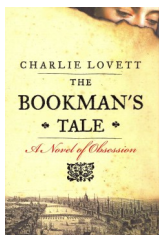
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Recommended Reads from Library Staff



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It's that time of year again when lots of publications and websites publish their recommended books of the year. This year I polled library staff to see what some savvy readers had discovered

in 2013. MCPL folks had lots of nifty recommendations. So whether you are looking for books to help you through the long dark nights of winter or searching for that perfect gift for a loved one or friend, here are some suggestions from some local book people. We do have paper copies of this list and other 2013 favorite book lists available at the Information Desk at the main ILibrary.

FICTION

And Everyday Was Overcast by Paul Kwiatkowski FICTIO**N** Kwiatkow

Described on the cover as an illustrated novel, this work is more a scrapbook interspersed with stories detailing the author's coming of age in southern Florida. The photos don't match the stories exactly and are stronger as a result. They cover drug use, adolescent violence, and teenage sexuality.

The Bookman's Tale: a novel of obsession by Charles C. Lovett FICTIO**N** Lovett

Anyone who loves the hunting, buying and selling of rare and old books should read this. Filled with emotion, intrigue, mystery, suspense, and tragedy, it also covers love lost and gained as well as the quest for Shakespeare and his writings. Very well written and hard to put down! [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on December 10, 2013

[Recommended Reads from Library Staff](#)

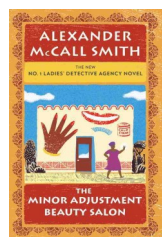
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The Minor Adjustment Beauty Salon



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In the bustle and tensions of the holiday season, it was great to take a couple of nights off and travel to Botswana in Alexander McCall Smith's latest book in the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency Series. As usual the mysteries--there are two of them here--are interwoven with descriptions and a philosophy of living a moral life in Africa. Grace Makutsi, who scored an amazing 97% on her secretarial school final exam, is married now and expecting a baby yet she has not yet talked to Precious Ramotswe about taking any leave. Before she does, her little son arrives along with a pesky aunt, the matriarch of the family who swoops in to take charge of Grace's household.

While Grace is gone, giving birth and settling into motherhood, Mma Ramotswe faces two problems: an acquaintance has opened a new beauty salon, the one of the title, but she is receiving daily threats from an anonymous source. Whoever is doing it is scaring away all her customers and this threatens the business. Also, a female lawyer has contacted the ?traditionally built? detective about an inheritance issue: a nephew is supposed to inherit a farm from a famous politician, but is Liso the actual nephew or someone posing as him? Precious discovers that if Liso is not who he claims to be, the lawyer will inherit the bulk of the estate. Coincidentally--or maybe not--this lawyer was having an affair with the politician Mma Ramotswe discovers. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on December 9, 2013

[The Minor Adjustment Beauty Salon](#)

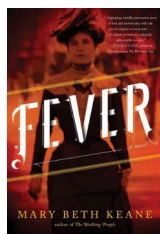
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Dispelling Dark Myths



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Did you ever hear the story of ?Typhoid Mary? as a child? I remember a gaggle of us neighborhoods kids scaring each other with stories of the woman whose myth lived long after she died. It?s not a person we learned about in school, yet just the mention of her name culled up disease, darkness and death. That?s one reason I was happy to come across this sympathetic portrait of an Irish-American woman who was much maligned by the press.

Not a biography, this fictional account relies on many true-to-life details to make its story highly believable. Young Mary Mallon emigrated from Ireland at age fifteen to stay with an aunt. She soon went to work and started as a laundress--hot dirty work that offered no hope of advancement. Being smart and clever, Mary noticed that the cooks were paid much more and had more freedom. She also liked the creative aspect of crafting fine meals for the wealthy of early 1900s New York City.

Mary got her big break as a substitute cook, and she turned one success into a career. By the time she was 17, she received an excellent summer gig in Oyster Bay, but unfortunately fever swept through the summer place leaving the baby she loved and several other members of the household dead. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on December 3, 2013

[Fever](#)

[Fiction](#)

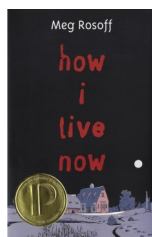
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how i live now



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If you are looking for an antidote to the Hunger Games mania, as I was this past week, this less-action-oriented Young Adult dystopia might be worth a read. A 2004 Printz Award and British Guardian Children's Fiction Prize winner, the story is written from the perspective of Daisy, a 15 year-old girl from a not-too-distant future set New York City, who is sent to live with her cousins in the English countryside to get away from her father, her unliked stepmother, and their newborn child. Almost as soon as she is there, the country is invaded and war breaks out, leaving Daisy and her cousins to fend for themselves in what can only be said, without spoiling the plot, to be a truly harrowing experience. [Read more](#)

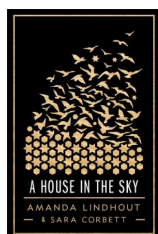
Posted by Brandon R. on December 2, 2013

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A House in the Sky



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This memoir is as compelling as any thriller, and much better written than most. In it a young Canadian describes how she escaped her family's poverty and dysfunction in a small town in Alberta by reading *National Geographic* mags cover to cover. The family was so poor that she had to earn money to buy the used magazines herself, but while reading them she not only discovered the world, but was able to dream of a better, more interesting life.

Amanda didn't have the money for college, so instead she became a waitress at high-end clubs and restaurants in Calgary when the money from oil and gas was flowing. She soon began to travel internationally to South America, India, Pakistan, and Nepal. Edgy, dangerous places appealed to her and those far off the tourist track. She went to [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on November 21, 2013

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