



# Women's Literature Review

*A Book Should Be Chosen As Carefully As One's Friends*

March 1997

## Silences

by Tillie Olsen

Delta/Seymour Lawrence, 1965

Fiction/Women's Studies 283 pgs., \$12.95

*"SILENCES draws on the lives, letters, diaries, and testimonies of many writers, and on the author's own life, to examine the needs and work of creation, and those circumstances that obstruct or silence it. Circumstances - which include one's sex, economic class, color, and the times and generation into which one is born - crucially determine whether creative capacity is used and developed or impaired and lost."* (from the back cover)

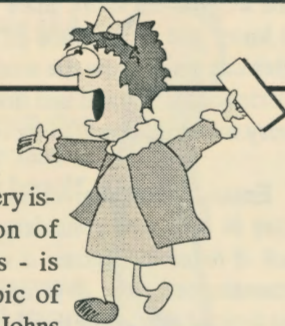
The premise of *Silences* is that many writers and potential writers have been "silenced" because they did not have the luxury of spending long periods of time without income and/or did not have the mental and physical space in which to focus. These factors, which contribute to writers being "silenced" by circumstance, are exacerbated for women, who, even today, are expected, at the end of a long day of work, to carry out domestic chores. Their time is rarely their own.

In her essay *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf speculates that woman will never be free (to create) until she has a room of her own in which to work and the financial means to support that work. This conclusion was reached based on her own experience. Tillie Olsen took a different path - that of research - to reach much the same conclusion in *Silences*. Olsen notes that the number of women authors who produced work, before the 20th century - including George Elliot, Jane Austin, Emily Bronte, Louisa Mae Alcott - was small indeed. None of them married or had children. All had servants. The circumstances that allowed the means to concentrate on that work, either family money or a husband with wealth, were not available to

most women. Even well into this century, in the 1940s and 1950s, women writers were far overshadowed by men. Children were still very much a burden, not only in the physical requirements of their care, but also in terms of the mental energy required by their caretakers. *"More than any other human relationship, overwhelmingly more, motherhood means being instantly interruptible, responsive, responsible. Children need one now. The very fact that these are real needs, that one feels them as one's own (love, not duty); that there is no one else responsible for these needs, gives them primacy. It is distraction, not meditation, that becomes habitual; interruption, not continuity; spasmodic, not constant toil."* (p. 19) As well, there were a number of writers who were only able to publish once - not necessarily because their books were not popular, but because they could not afford the luxury in their lives of producing another work of art.

Another topic which Olsen delves into is that of inclusion. Until the 1970s, and the rise of the Second Wave of feminists, few women authors were included in college literature courses and they were a select few. (George Eliot and Jane Austin, for example, were included time after time.) It appears that life, as experienced by women, was a topic apparently not worth noting. *"... appearance in twentieth-century literature courses, required reading lists, textbooks, quality anthologies, the year's best, ... consideration by critics or in current reviews - one woman writer for every twelve men (8 percent women, 92 percent men). Why are so many more women silenced than men? Why, when women do write (one out of four or five works published is by a woman), is so little of their writing known, taught, accorded recognition?"* (p. 25) Even among women authors chosen for inclusion, (there is) a preponderance of popular, genre, "fluff"

women writers." (footnote, pg. 188) This very issue - inclusion of women writers - is currently a topic of hot debate at St. Johns College, a small liberal arts college in Annapolis, and one of the last bastions of Dead White Men.



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Written & Published by  
Suzanne Shaw  
with help from many supporters  
4908 Crowson Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21212  
(410) 323-5782

## SILENCES CON'T

What harm then? Literature written by men has been portrayed as representing the universal human experience. In fact, it is "restrictively male," the female characters are portrayed as one dimensional and the attitude of the author is often hostile toward women. In short, male writers cannot know the experience of women. A writer can only know the world they have experienced first hand and that experience is very much determined by one's sex.

Encouragement given to the potential writer is a related consideration. "*How much it takes to become a writer. Bent, circumstances, time, development of craft - but beyond that: how much conviction as to the importance of what one has to say, one's right to say it. And the will, the measureless store of belief in oneself to be able to come to, cleave to, find the form for one's own life comprehensions. Difficult for any male not born into a class that breeds such confidence. Almost impossible for a girl, a woman.*" (p. 27) Elaine Showalter writes in her pioneering study, *Women and the Literary Curriculum: "Female (students*

*are estranged from their own experience and unable to perceive its shape and authenticity, in part because they do not see it mirrored and given resonance in literature . . . They are expected to identify with masculine experience, which is presented as the human one, and have no faith in the validity of their own perceptions and experiences, rarely seeing them confirmed in literature, or accepted in criticism . . . (p. 29)*

There is much in this book to convince the reader that what we have experienced as literature, until the very recent past, has been far from a representation of life, but rather the musings of a privileged few who had the means, access to free uninterrupted time and, belief in the importance of their words. Thus, our "literary tradition" resembles the history we learned as children; a history which included only those in power. Only through awareness can this change. Complaints to newspaper book sections about the lack of inclusion, demands by college students that their experience is not represented in what they, and others study are two ways in which to pro-

test. Other means of changing the status quo include a personal decision to read books by others who speak to our experience and then books which open up to us the experience of others who have been "silenced".

"*Tillie Olsen helps those of us condemned to silence . . . to find our voices.*" Maxine Hong-Kingston, author of *The Woman Warrior*

"*There are few writers who manage in their work and in the sharing of their understanding to actually help us to live, to work, to create, day by day. Tillie Olsen is one of those writers for me.*" Alice Walker

Tillie Olsen was born in Nebraska in 1912 or 1913. She has taught or been writer-in-residence at Amherst College, Stanford University, M.I.T. and Kenyon College. She is the recipient of five honorary degrees and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Guggenheim Foundation. She lives in California.

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## Meet The Advisory Group

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**Stephanie Shapiro** -Feature writer for The Baltimore Sun and Visiting Journalist at Loyola College. She has two children, Ben age 8 and Henry age 5. Her husband Tom Waldron also writes for The Baltimore Sun.

**Charlotte Taggart** - is the librarian at Gilman Middle School. She is in two book groups, one with older women and one with women in their thirties. She has two grown children.

**Debbie Helfeld** is a prodigious reader who is in two book groups in the Silver Spring area. Debbie thinks that books written for older children are some of the best literature there is. She was the first director of Baltimore's Sexual Assault Recovery Center. She has two children, Daniel, age 9, and Anna age 8.

**Linda Schwartz** is a Branch Manager at the Enoch Pratt Library - Waverly. She is in a book group in the Charles Village area. The patrons of Linda's branch successfully stopped their library from being closed an additional day by staging a sit-in.

**Lauren Dale** - also known as Canada Lauren - is on hiatus in the US for five years. She is in two book groups - one at Park School and the Feed and Read Bookgroup in the general Northeast Baltimore area. Mother of three children, Sebastian, age 14, Zoe, age 12 and Ariana age 8. She is a former free-lance photographer and has lived in Africa.

**Jan Westervelt** is the Branch Manager, Enoch Pratt Library - Northwood branch. She is in a book group in Takoma Park. She is an aspiring fiddler, birdwatcher and gardner.

*The purpose of the advisory group is to assist me with newsletter decision making, help with the production, and make suggestions for layout, design and contents. At our first meeting in January, the conversation flowed with article ideas, books read and their relative merit and different ways of looking at a book. Each member has agreed to help using her talents - book reviews, proofreading, contacts, resource access etc. Several members of the Advisory Group have contributed to this issue.*

# Plot and Personification in Narrative

Adapted from J. Hillis Miller, Aristotle, Peter Brooks and Freud

Telling stories is a universal human activity. The stories that we tell reveal our particular values or those of our culture. This is because desire is the motor that drives narrative, as it does life (see Freud on "unquenchable striving"). The writer desires to tell a story, the reader to learn and derive pleasure from it, while the characters' desires fuel the plot. Peter Brooks (Reading for the Plot: Knopf, 1984) calls characters "desiring machines."

The protagonist is (usually) a main character who desires something, and the antagonist is the force or person that prevents the protagonist from achieving that desire. For example, Isabel Archer is the protagonist of Henry James's Portrait of a Lady, a young woman who wants to do great things with her life, and her antagonists are variously herself, her suitors and husband, and the 19th century society that confines women to narrow roles.

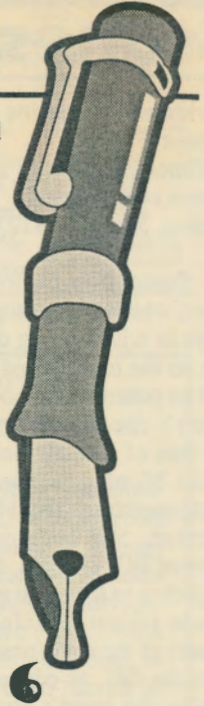
Every narrative also contains a "witness" who learns. In the most satisfying stories, that witness is the protagonist. In other stories only the reader learns. Occasionally protagonist, antagonist, and witness are rolled into one character. Moreover, complex stories can be read flexibly, by inserting different agents for the three slots. For example, in Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" one reading makes Emily the protagonist who wants to marry Homer and Homer her antagonist. But also: the town is the protagonist who wants to understand and thus discipline Emily, and Emily (and her class privilege) becomes their antagonist.

Another way to think about narrative is through plot. Every story begins with an initial situation and involves some change or reversal of that situation. The change can be subtle. Susan Minot's story "Lust," at first seems merely a catalog of lovers. However, because the narrator's attitude alters--in the very process of making the inventory--she herself changes, and her tone at the end of the story is very different from the beginning: the list has made her question her life.

Sometimes characters think they want one thing, but really want another. The change in the story is an increased understanding of themselves. Characters can be their own worst enemies, by preventing themselves from achieving their desires. Aristotle in the Poetics (1452 and 1453) argues that the "change in the hero's fortunes must be not from misery to happiness, but from happiness to misery; and the cause of it must lie not in any depravity, but in some great error on his part."

Asking "who is the protagonist and what does he or she want" gets to the core of the narrative. When stories don't satisfy us, there is either not enough change or not enough desire, and the story feels flat. And although certain human desires--love, power, self acceptance, etc.--seem universal, examining the particular way they are blocked in stories reveals history. For example, Maggie Tulliver in George Eliot's The Mill on the Floss wants love and learning, and Zenia in Margaret Atwood's The Robber Bride wants power. The differences in antagonists proclaims changes in the condition of women in the last 150 years.

Natasha Saje, Ph.D, is the author of a collection of poetry, Red Under the Skin (Pittsburgh, 1994) and many essays. She teaches at Johns Hopkins University and the Maryland Institute College of Art.



## Book Darts

Since books are my obsession I have become the recipient of many interesting accoutrements designed for the book reader - cushions to lay on one's lap and hold the book while reading in bed, calendars with the birth dates and deaths of famous authors, books about books etc.. This Christmas I received a truly revolutionary, but oh so simple, item - Book Darts. These are small (one inch) clasps, with an arrow on

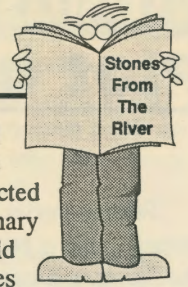
one side which can be easily slipped over the edge of a page to point to a passage or sentence one wants to go back to. They eliminate the need to turn down pages and underline.

A gimmick? Not if one reads the page-long description written by the designer. Book Darts were designed for teachers to help in marking passages to be read to classes. They are a way to return to a book time and time again and easily locate what one is looking for. Best of all they are re-

cyclable. For a book group reader they are the perfect way to easily flip to the page and passage one wants to quote. When the book group has discussed the book, remove them and start marking the next book.

Book Darts can be ordered from the makers at a cost of \$9.95 per 100 at - 3945 Willow Flat Road, Hood River, Oregon 97301. Buy 100 and share them with friends. They can also be purchased at some book stores in sheets of 15.

# Stones From The River - Ursula Hegi



Reviewed by Suzanne Shaw with help from Debbie Helfeld  
Scribner Paperback Fiction, 1994  
Simon and Schuster  
Fiction, 525 pgs., \$12.00

*Stones from the River* is a multi-layered novel which covers topics as diverse as the ways in which being different affects one's life, to the meaning of the human condition and its potential for good and evil. It views Hitler's rise to power in Germany through the lens of a small German town, in which Trudi Montag, a Zwerg - dwarf - is the spokesperson. Trudi has a dual role as the narrator. She outlines the catastrophe of Nazism as it unfolds, from the first hints of prejudice to the point at which she becomes aware (through defectors hiding in her house) of the atrocities in the KZ's - known, after the fact, as concentration camps. She is also the town's storyteller because she knows the secrets of many of its inhabitants.

From an early age, Trudi Montag is aware that her physical difference will greatly affect the rest of her life. In her early years she believes that she can change physically by hanging onto door frames and stretching herself out. While still hoping for normal growth, she discovered that her differentness held a power because: "Most grown-ups didn't look right at Trudi: they acted as if she were invisible and said things they would never say around other children. She found if she stayed very quiet they often kept talking, disclosing far more about themselves than they realized . . . The feelings they tried to hide sprang into their voices, and she could discern fear, joy, impatience, rage." (p. 72)

As the assistant to her father in the pay-library she is in a position to hear many of the stories while staying in the back shelving books. Over the years she learns to ask the questions that will elicit secrets from adults they didn't mean to tell. Her talent gave her a connection to how others were different as well. Hegi juxtaposes Trudi's differences with those of Jewish residents who are being dismissed and punished by the Nazis. In both cases, the town residents don't look beyond Trudi's dwarfism or Frau Abramowitz's Jewishness to see who the person really is. Because of her astute powers of observation and her role as storyteller she is in a unique position to observe the ways in which the town's Jewish residents are affected. As an outsider herself, Trudi's connection to the Jewish residents is amplified.

At first the harm of the Nazis was not clear, except to a very few. "Who really paid much attention to the frequent speeches that were delivered? . . . So what if their flags were in every public building?" (p. 194) The fuhrer was ending unemployment and improving the economy. He was helping the youth to find a new purpose and direction. "Frau Weiler saw a fresh enthusiasm in her son Georg, and his friends. How much damage could the Nazis really do, she wondered. . . . She stilled her misgivings by saying, 'At least let's wait and see what happens.'" (pg. 195)

But Trudi, being an observer, had doubts from the beginning. At a public speech by Hitler, "She fought the excitement of his gaze and voice because what he wanted from her was only too familiar - belief without doubts . . . She fought him by reminding herself what her father had said - that they lived in a country where believing had taken the place of knowing." (p. 167)

The power of the Third Reich unfolds from the beginnings as Germans and Jews are separated into different and distinct groups. Gradually, the ability of the Jews to live is taken away. Jewish doctors are no longer reimbursed for the patients they treat; Jews are not allowed to buy many food staples like sugar and coffee.

Those who are not Jewish are chastised for any wrongdoings against the Partei: Frau Weiler, a Catholic, is admonished when she helps a Jewish child who is beaten up by a gang of Nazi youth; Trudi ends up in temporary confinement when she makes disparaging remarks about being forced to sing the national anthem of the Third Reich. Any indiscretion which indicates less than full support for the Third Reich will be noticed by the eyes and ears of the supporters who have been trained to tattle on their fellow countrymen.

There is also, in this book, the courage of a people under siege. The ordinariness of their lives and ties to one another are revealed in ways which give hope. In spite of great loss the people of Burgdorf recognize that those who hid Jews and those who collaborated with the Nazis must live together after the war is over. They choose to turn a blind eye to the actions of other town residents. Pointing out the collaborators would not benefit anyone in the long run.

Ursula Hegi, having grown up in post-war Germany, reveals with great insight the ways in which ordinary people act under a

force greater than their will to resist. One is left with the question, "Would I have acted differently than these ordinary German citizens? Or, would the fears and uncertainties they faced have kept me from speaking out, from acting out of principle in spite of the consequences.

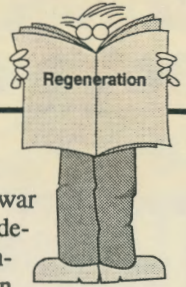
The question of the German character comes into play. Did their temperament feed into this blind following? A careful reading of the book shows that this is the case. Interestingly it is Trudi's father who is often the bearer of these truths: "We Germans have a history of sacrificing everything for one strong leader . . . It's our fear of chaos." (p. 112) and: ". . . I worry about the German attraction for one strong leader, one father figure who makes you obey, who is strong enough to make you obey. . . . Who tells you: This is the right thing to do. I worry about the belief that our strength is a military strength." (p. 166)

In the narrative itself, Hegi asserts her belief: ". . . the long training in obedience to elders, government and church made it difficult even for those who considered the views of the Nazis dishonorable - to give voice to their misgivings. And so they kept hushed, yielding to each new indignity while they waited for the Nazis and their ideas to go away." (p. 207)" and: "Most practiced the silence they were familiar with, a silence nurtured by fear and complicity that would grow beyond anything they could imagine. . . . To justify this silence they tried to find the good in their government . . . They knew how not to ask questions; they had been prepared for it by the government and church. Over the years they had forgotten that early urge to question." (p. 239)

One member of the book group felt this was the best book she had read in the year or so since joining. Unlike some discussions in which the same points come up over and over again, each person had something new to contribute, because there is so much in this book which one can discuss. Everyone agreed - "definitely a great read".

Many thanks to the members of the Sunday Evening Chocolate Society Book Group for contributing, through discussion of the book, to this review. They are: Claudia Leight, Francie Weeks, Mary Skogland, Martha Benson, Janice York, Ruth Draper, Mary Jo Kirschman, Anne Walker, Anne Blumenberg and Jevne Diaz.

# Regeneration - Pat Barker



Reviewed by Suzanne Shaw  
with comments and additions from  
Mary Jo Kirschman, Claudia Leight and  
Patti Carrington  
Plume/Penguin Book, 1991  
Fiction, 252 pgs., \$10.95

*This is the first book review, in a series, parts of which will be taken from the contributions of book group readers. Regeneration was read, almost simultaneously, by three book groups in the Baltimore area - the Sunday Evening Chocolate Society (SECS) Book Group, the Original Northwood Book Group, and the Radnor-Winston Book Group. The SECS Book Group has been together for over five years with many of the original members still in the group. Original Northwood is a relatively new book group that is focusing on books which have won the Booker Prize and/or books by authors who have won the Booker Prize.*

Regeneration, named by the New York Times as one of the nine best novels of 1992, is the first of a trilogy about World War I. The other two books are Eye in the Door, which won the Guardian Fiction Prize for 1993, and The Ghost Road, which won the 1995 Booker Prize. This first book focuses on a psychiatric hospital in the North of England where soldiers, who have become "shell-shocked," are sent to recover. It is, as the back cover states, "a war saga in which not a shot is fired." Many of the characters in the novel are based on real people. The therapies practiced by the doctors were actually used at the time.

The story revolves around Dr. William Rivers, the psychiatrist, whose job it is to get to the bottom of the emotional problems of his patients in order to make them mentally stable enough to leave hospital and, more importantly, return to the trenches where their mental collapse began. The atrocities which have brought Rivers' clients to Craiglockhart are ones not easy to forget. As the Washington Post review asks, "Is he making these men 'well' or taking them from a healthily honest recognition of the horror their situation, into a sort of repression and madness which is necessary for army services. So does regeneration come from remembering or forgetting?" The descriptions of the events which lead these young men to be excused from the war indicate only too clearly how World War I was truly a war fought in the trenches, man to man, body to body.

The most famous of the clients is Siegfried Sassoon, a decorated war hero and noted poet, who enters the hospital after having declared that he will no longer fight in a war which has reduced the troops to acts of senseless slaughter. Unlike his fellow patients, Sassoon is in hospital because his superior officers don't know what else to do with him. He has sent the officers a letter in which he states that his abandonment is "an act of willful defiance . . . because I believe the war is being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it." (p. 3) The letter is written on behalf of his fellow soldiers. He believes that they have been deceived into fighting not for the cause of liberation but rather to prove that England can conquer.

Sassoon's sessions with Rivers are word plays in which Rivers pretends that he is trying to get to the bottom of the psychosis that has brought Sassoon there. Based on the experiences of his other patients, Rivers fully understands that Sassoon's position may be justified. Rivers, the neurologist, undergoes the major transformation in the book as he thinks about issues of repression, masculinity, patriotism, and the work he is doing to patch up war victims only to send them back to the front.

Aside from the conflict between Sassoon and his superiors, Barker also writes of the conflict between patient and therapist, class conflict and the conflicting feelings of wives who are relieved to have unwanted husbands sent to war - at times expressing the sentiment that they are not sure they want them to come back. Barker presents us with the wartime paradox that leaders in battle become the nurturers and care givers of their men, while the women left at home are free to take on the "male" roles of breadwinner. One of the gender issues was the comparison between the breakdowns men suffer in wartime and the anxiety disorders women suffer in peacetime. Both, the book explains, develop not from trauma or horror alone but from prolonged stress and powerlessness.

The interplay between the patients, as they probe one another's emotional wounds, is worth the read, aside from the political issues of the justification for war. The author has a remarkable ability to create what is essentially a male voice about the experience of war. It is hard to remember that this book, so entirely about men,

was written by a woman. She captures the ambivalence about the horrors of war versus the thrill and comradeship of the trenches - a comradeship difficult to find in civilian life.

## BOOK GROUP COMMENTS

Mary Jo - Sunday Evening Chocolate Society Book Group "Our book group had a very lively discussion of Regeneration. One of the issues we focused on was the responsibilities of individuals whose eyes are opened to evils, such as the war machine, to go along, to question, or to protest or to remain in silence. We asked one another who the heroes were, if any. There was much disagreement about this issue.

We saw Rivers' evolution from detached practitioner to questioner and self-doubter as the central development of the novel."

Patti - Original Northwood Book Group - "Our book group found this book a "rich read." That is, worthy of discussion on several levels, with complex, well-drawn characters. I have never been drawn to works of war fiction, though found Barker's exploration of the many internal conflicts of her characters gripping. This occurred most strikingly with Rivers, as the book progressed, intensified by his increasing discomfort with the work assigned to him.

There was homosexual tension throughout the book, hinted at between Sassoon and Rivers and more explicitly with the Pryor character. This dovetailed with Barker's ideas of masculinity, femininity and the roles that war assigns to our gender. All the more interesting because this was written by a woman, a fact that surprised several members of our group. Barker clearly has some clinical background - her psychiatric knowledge and historical context were sophisticated, to say the least." (This book group includes both a psychiatrist and medical doctor.)

# Bebe Moore Campbell

by Suzanne Shaw

## BIOGRAPHY

Bebe Moore Campbell grew up primarily in Philadelphia with her mother and grandmother. During the summers of her childhood she lived in the North Carolina with her father - a paraplegic as a result of a car accident. She graduated from an all girls' high school in Philadelphia with honors and went on to receive a B.A. in Education from the University of Pittsburgh. Recently she received the institution's Distinguished Black Alumna award.

After college, Ms. Campbell taught elementary and middle school for five years, was married and had a daughter. During this period she began writing. She was unsuccessful at getting her fiction published but, had better luck working as a freelance writer. She published non-fiction pieces in *Essence*, *Parents* and *Glamour* and the now defunct *Savvy*. An article for *Savvy*, "Successful Women, Angry Men" generated such response that Ms. Campbell decided to temporarily abandon her fiction-writing. "I could not sell fiction, but I got such a response from that article that I thought I would concentrate on it," she said. The outcome was the book *Successful Women, Angry Men: Backlash in the Two Career Marriage*. (Random House, 1986)

After this book was published Campbell quit her teaching job to write. Her second book, *Sweet Summer: Growing Up With and Without My Dad* was published in 1989, followed by *Your Blues Ain't Like Mine* in 1992 and *Brothers and Sisters* in 1994. She has already started a fifth book, but remains mum on the subject. She is also a regular commentator for National Public Radio.

## OVERVIEW

Each of Bebe Moore Campbell's books is different, not only in the subject matter, but in the way it is approached. *Sweet Summer: Growing Up With and Without My Dad*, is an autobiography, full of the love and memories of a happy and secure childhood, punctuated with the longings for a father who is not always there, but an ever-present part of her life. *Your Blues Ain't*

*Like Mine* is a social commentary, on the relations between whites and blacks in the South: a portrait of living in a rural Southern town during the early Civil Rights era in which the ground was shifting - not fast enough for the blacks and too fast for the whites. *Brothers and Sisters* is the story of a modern black woman trying to make it in the corporate world - hoping to crack the glass ceiling, but not really believing that it is possible. It explores the tensions that exist between blacks and whites in the world of work.

## SWEET SUMMER, WITH AND WITHOUT MY DAD

Ballantine Books, New York, 1989  
Autobiography, 272 pgs. \$12

*Sweet Summer* is about Bebe Moore Campbell's years growing up in Philadelphia during the 1950s and 1960s, in a world whose scope and rules are ever changing for blacks. It is the story of many black

*"If this is a fair world, Bebe Moore Campbell will be remembered as the most important African-American novelist of this century --except for, maybe, Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin. She's smart enough to see everything and courageous enough to write it down."* Carolyn See, *The Washington Post Book World*.

children, at that time, whose winters were spent in the North and summers in the South with relatives.

Her prose is lyrical and enchanting. She writes in the poetry of spoken black language. Some examples follow:

*"My mother viewed speaking impeccably proper English as a strategy in the overall battle for civil rights."* (p. 15)

*"When he tired of reading, he'd lean back in his chair and sing. Mr. Abe's reading wasn't so hot, but his singing was better than any television show. The music eased out of his half-parted lips effortlessly. Mr. Abe moaned hymns so old and handed down, so syncopated by human rhythms that there was a clink of chains in each verse."* (p. 55)

*"The little band of Negroes at Logan felt something more than puberty. Fierce new rhythms - bam de bam de bam bam bam! - were welling up inside us. We were figuring things out. . . . We watched the nightly*

*news - the dogs, the hoses and nightsticks against black flesh - and we seethed . . . In the schoolyard and the classroom we saw the sea of white surrounding us and we drew in closer. We'd been fooling ourselves. It didn't matter how capable we were: it was their school, their neighborhood, their country, their planet. . . . Our bitterness exploded like an overdue time bomb.* (pg. 178)

The thing that sets this book apart from other books written about growing up female and black is Campbell's expression of love for her father and the importance of black men in her life. ". . . as I look back, I realize that this is what I know: My father took care of me. Our separation didn't stunt me or condemn me to a lesser humanity. His absence never made me a fatherless child." (p. 271)

There are, as well, other men in her life who encourage her. She is perhaps more tuned into them because of her father's absence. There is Pete the man who lives upstairs, her Uncles who live in Philly and much later, Mr. Logan, whom she babysits for. It is he who provides the role model of a father in her late teens - teaching her to cook fried chicken, giving her advice, watching out for her, being as proud as any parent when she graduates. The absence of a father in her cousin Michael's life and the subsequent results, reiterate the importance of her own father's role and the difference it made in hers.

*"Touching . . . With this candid account and loving tribute to a special man, Campbell breaks through all the stereotypes about black family life and reveals candidly how her parents - although divorced - sustained her."* *New York Daily News*

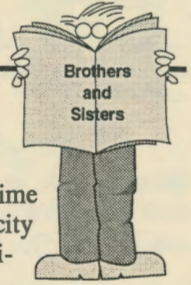
## YOUR BLUES AIN'T LIKE MINE

Ballantine Books, New York 1992  
Fiction, 332 pgs. \$12

*Your Blues Ain't Like Mine* is essentially the story of a black youth, Armstrong Todd, from the North, visiting relatives in the South for the summer and the trouble he gets into not understanding the local customs with regard to black and white rela-



# Literary Works of Bebe Moore Campbell



tions. He makes the mistake of speaking French to the wife of the white pool hall owner, Floyd Cox. Within hours the relatives of the white woman - husband, father-in-law, and brother-in-law, are on the doorstep of the boy's grandmother looking for him. Shortly thereafter he is found dead from a horrific beating. For those who remember Emmet Till, the incident is similar, in the spirit of what happened. Despite the fact that Floyd Cox is not found guilty of murder, his life and that of his family are as inextricably changed as that of Armstrong's family.

Because of action by Armstrong's mother, Doletha, the story is published in the newspapers - a story that would have been hushed by the Southern press. As a result the spotlight shines brightly on the way the town is run and on its residents, who see their behavior in new ways. "The realization that people all over the country had witnessed their oppression, encouraged new dreams. In subtle ways the death of Armstrong Todd began to change them." (p. 122)

As the story unfolds the thinly disguised superiority the Coxs felt, as whites, begins to show up their own weaknesses. Both of the brothers soon face financial crisis. The town has turned its back on them for bringing disgrace to the white community. Floyd's life falls apart piece by piece and in the decay, his wife Lily begins to question some of her assumptions about men. Each of their children, Floyd junior and Doreen, is affected - one of them drowning in bitterness and hate, the other growing in strength and character.

Armstrong's parents come together and for a brief time appear to have risen above the loss of their son. But, the birth of another son reaps its own destruction in an overprotective mother who can see no wrong in him, and a father who gives up because he has been given no role in his son's life. Doletha reflects: "She remembered the old days when she and Armstrong waited for Wydell to come and he never showed up. More and more often these memories plagued her and why shouldn't she remember. Wydell had deserted one son. Does he think she was fool enough to trust him with another?" (p. 271)

In the end, both sides begin to see the part they have played in their own destruction and that the way out of their circumstances is strength of character and forgive-

ness. Doreen, the Cox's daughter says, "I was raised around here and even though I went to school with them, I always felt I was different from them, like I was better than they were . . . but Momma, you know one thing, it's getting to where I just can't afford thinking like that no more. Them feelings just ain't practical." (p. 290) In Chicago, the second son of Doletha and Wydell is in a great deal of trouble. Doletha says, "All I ever wanted was for W.T. to be safe, for white people not to kill him like they done Armstrong." (p. 313) Her brother-in-law Lionel replies, "The streets are killing more black boys than white folks ever could." (pg. 313)

"Wonderfully imagined . . . Campbell's deeply sympathetic, ecumenical, and unsparingly honest book will not comfort racists in their disease, nor victims in their passivity; but it will open up a new kind of discourse, in fiction at least, where writers work harder to create understanding for the characters they, the authors, are most unlike." Raleigh News and Observer

## **BROTHERS AND SISTERS**

G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York 1994  
Fiction, 476 pgs., \$6.99

I remember in social work school when Dr. Cyprian Rowe told our Racism class, composed primarily of white students, that they should assume every black person they encounter dislikes and/or mistrusts them. Those students were dismayed that someone who doesn't even know them could have an opinion about them, never questioning the preconceived notions they had about blacks. If any of these students are still in a quandary about the reason behind the mistrust reading Brothers and Sisters should give these students, and other whites, the insights they may be lacking.

Bebe Moore Campbell has more to say in the first chapter of this book about race relations - in particular black and white - than many authors say in an entire book. She does not hold back the emotional content of her characters feelings or the thoughts running through their heads, even as the words coming out of their mouths are those used in the corporate world of banking.

The setting is the aftermath of the Rodney King trial, in which four white police officers are acquitted after beating

King, and the subsequent eruption of violence in the black community. Racial tension is at an all time high in Los Angeles, a city which truly reflects the diversity of America.

The drama is played out in the corporate world of banking. Esther, the protagonist, is a black woman who has reached middle management through hard work. She is hoping to move up the corporate ladder and solicits the help of a white woman, Mallory, to do so.

The second character of primary importance is Humphrey Boone - an up-and-coming mover, who has all the qualities the corporate world wants, and, in the aftermath of the riots, with the public demanding a more diversified face in the corporate community, he has the added bonus of being black. The president of the bank, for which Esther works, sees in Boone his replacement. After being used as a pawn in the racial game, Humphrey Boone sees for the first time, a crack in the glass ceiling and takes the job as manager of the lending department, with an enthusiasm he thought impossible.

Boone replaces Kirk, a white male, who has worked hard to pull together his department and is completely thrown off balance when he is demoted and replaced by a person he feels is only being hired to appease tensions in the black community. While everyone gives the appearance of accepting this change, there is a great deal going on behind closed doors.

The last several chapters of the book bring the characters into a riveting climax, as they play out their roles in the corporate climate of dog-eat-dog. One's sensibilities are thrown hither and yon as the reader are forced to sympathize on one page with one character and on the next page with their opponent. I found the ending as good as many mysteries I have read - better than most. I could not put down the book, despite it being the middle of the night.

*Captivating. With wit and grace, Campbell shows how all our stories -- white, black, male, female -- ultimately intertwine.* Time



# Children's Literature

The following books have been recommended by more than one reader. I will be publishing write-ups of each of these books in the next issue, as well as reader comments. **IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO CONTRIBUTE - EITHER COMMENTS, OR YOUR OWN VERSION OF WHAT A BOOK IS ABOUT, PLEASE LET ME KNOW.** Books which are underlined have won the Newberry Prize for Children's Fiction. Those which have an \* were listed by adults as one of their favorite books.

## INDIVIDUAL BOOKS OR SEQUELS

JULIE OF THE WOLVES 1973

MANIAC McGEE 1991

JACOB HAVE I LOVED 1981

ISLAND OF THE BLUE DOLPHINS 1961

MRS. FRISBY AND THE RATS OF NIMH 1972

RACSO AND THE RATS OF NIMH

THE CAY & TIMOTHY OF THE CAY

THE DOOR IN THE WALL

THE MIXED UP FILES OF MRS.

BASIL E. FRANKWEILER 1968

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN  
& MY SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

HARRIET THE SPY

MATILDA

THE GIVER

ROLL OF THUNDER HEAR MY CRY 1977

\*BRIDGE TO TERABITHA 1978

A WRINKLE IN TIME 1963

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER

HATCHET

\*\*\*THE SECRET GARDEN

GOODNIGHT MR. TOM

WHERE THE RED FERN GROWS

TUCK EVERLASTING

ARE YOU THERE GOD,

ITS ME MARGARET

WISE CHILD

DIAMOND IN THE WINDOW

CRAZY LADY

THE GREAT AMERICAN ELEPHANT

CHASE

\*DEAR NAPOLEAN I KNOW YOU'RE

DEAD, BUT ...

OLD YELLER

JEAN CRAIGHEAD GEORGE

JERRY SPINELLI

KATHERINE PATTERSON

SCOTT O'DELL

ROBERT C. O'BRIEN

JANE LESLIE CONLY

THEODORE TAYLOR

MARGUERITE DE ANGELI

E. L. KONIGSBURG

JEAN CRAIGHEAD GEORGE

LOUISE FITZHUGH

ROALD DAHL

LOIS LOWRY

MILDRED D. TAYLOR

KATHERINE PATTERSON

MADELINE L'ENGLE

MARK TWAIN

GARY PAULSON

FRANCES HODGES BURNETT

MICHELLE MAGORIAN

WILSON RAWLS

NATALIE BABBIT

JUDY BLUME

MONICA FURLOUGH

JANE LANGTON

JANE LESLIE CONLY

JILLIAN CHASE

ELVIRA WOODRUFF

FRED GIBSON

## SERIES

NANCY DREW

\*THE DARK IS RISING

\*LITTLE HOUSE IN THE BIG WOODS

REDWALL

\*\*WIZARD OF EARTHSEAS

PRYDIAN CHRONICLES

CAROLYN KEENE

SUSAN COOPER

LAURA INGALLS WILDER

BRIAN JACQUES

URSULA LE GUIN

LLOYD ALEXANDER

## OTHER FAVORITE CHILDREN'S BOOKS OF ADULTS

\*\*\*\*LITTLE WOMEN

THE FARTHEST AWAY MOUNTAIN

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

LYNNE REED BANKS

*If you would like to be sent copies of write ups about these books, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope (55c stamp) and I will send them to you. In the next issue I will include a list of other recommended books.*

# Book Summaries



## WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LIVE NOW

by Meredith Maran

Reviewed by Suzanne Shaw

Bantam Books, 1995

Women's Studies / Sociology

352 pgs., \$11.95

What can you say about a book that is recommended by the owner of Ben and Jerrys, the President of the Ms. Foundation for Women and the Editor of Mother Jones magazine? It is obviously politically correct. But, it is much more than that. It is, as the reviewers, say "*chock-full of laughter . . . a recipe for life . . . exposes the naked truth of our existence . . . down to earth.*"

Meredith Maran, herself, is, "*the most irresistible force I have ever had the good fortune to meet . . . wise, resilient, loving and funny . . . charming and confrontational.*" (quotes from the back cover).

While you the reader may not be bisexual, or live the hip life-style of the Oakland/Berkeley corridor, or have the pleasure of working in Smith and Hawken's art department, there are in this book many of the truths of life for women in their forties (and maybe fifties and thirties as well). There is the issue of where to live so that our children will not be isolated from the real world, while at the same time worrying about the dangers in that very same real world. Maran analyzes what it means to have long-term female friends who mean more to one than life itself, but also provide much of the angst in our lives. She explores the difficulties of putting all of one's eggs in a basket when the world today is so fluid. She discusses the pain of raising children in two households with different rules; the sharing of children between two parents.

She agonizes over how to present Judaism to her sons, as well as the subsequent issue of deciding where Jewish religion and culture fit into her own life.. Maran grew up in a family which did everything it could to get away from being identified as Jewish which complicates her feelings and decisions. These issues are

presented in chapters titled: What It's Like To Love . . . To Be Family . . . To Stay Alive. . . To Pursue Happiness Now.

Maran has a breezy, self-reflective, honest approach to her life. She analyzes each and every aspect and comes out with self-revelations that make the reader think of how it applies to their own lives. For me the book was worth the read just for the section on friendship. On the one hand, "*is it just too damn scary nowadays to love a friend enough to last a lifetime?*" (p. 94). On the other hand, "*With each birthday I am more aware of how difficult it is to make the kind of new friends who will someday be old friends. As my past becomes the greater portion of my life it becomes increasingly important to me to have friends who have lived at least some of it with me.*" (p. 95)

Try it, I think you'll like it. The issues she deals with - breast biopsies, friends dying of AIDS, the breakup of a marriage, facing the prospect of growing older etc. are serious ones, yet, her writing is full of humor and hope.

## LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE GIRLS

By Erica Bauermeister and Holly Smith

Penguin Books, New York 1997  
Education / Children's Literature,  
224 pgs., \$10.95

Following their highly acclaimed 500 Great Books by Women: A Readers Guide, Erica Bauermeister and Holly Smith address the need to provide children with role models who are fearless, fair-minded, funny - and female. Just in time for Women's History Month in March, LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE GIRLS: 375 Great Books for Readers 2-14 reaffirms the author's belief "in the power of books to give children a vision of what is possible."

As in their previous book, Smith and Bauermeister recommend a rich and wide-ranging selection of books that take us around the globe and across history. They introduce girls and women, both fictional

and real, who are strong and resourceful, whether they are outwardly tough or quietly brave, ordinary or extraordinary. Here are the best-loved females of literature, from Eliose and Miss Rumphius to Laura Ingalls Wilder and Harriet the Spy; and accomplished women such as Jane Goodall, Harriet Tubman, Golda Meir, and Louisa May Alcott. And there are many new discoveries as well. These are girls and women who hunt fossils, swim with sharks, outwit dragons, learn to read, win the Nobel Peace Prize, make friends. These are characters, the authors note, who "teach us that 'greatness' can be defined in many ways."

## I NEED YOUR HELP

- What are your favorite biographies/memoirs/autobiographies? Would you be willing to contribute a short write-up either about the book and/or why you like it so much?
- Suggestions for bedtime reading to the older child - those over nine or ten who can read to themselves. Books that are longer than they might choose to read alone and/or a little more difficult than they are ready to tackle. Books that are a pleasure to read out loud.
- Do you have comments on the books that have been presented thusfar? What books has your book group read that they really liked and/or lead to a great discussion? I'd love to get feedback on Book Group Books?

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**WOMEN'S  
LITERATURE  
REVIEW**

A Birthday, Treat or  
Thank You for a special favor

# Map of the World - Jane Hamilton



## POINT

by Suzanne Shaw

Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1994  
Fiction, \$12.00, 390 pgs.

Map of the World has elicited many responses from its readers. As noted in the first newsletter (November 1996) it can be said to be both "deeply depressing" and a book that some "loved." It is true that the book begins with tragedy and, through a tumbleweed of events, it continues down a path of further disasters. In the first chapter it is Alice Goodwin's turn to watch the two young daughters of her friend and neighbor, Theresa, as well as her own. While upstairs looking for her bathing suit, Lizzie, Theresa's two-year-old, wanders out the unlocked screen door to begin her swim in the pond. Alice realizes as soon as she gets downstairs that Lizzie is missing. She finds her face down in the pond, no longer breathing.

For parents of young children, the death of Lizzie is more than they can bear - too close to home. Some cannot continue from there. But, for those who stick with the book, there is much to be gained, as the reader watches Alice's life and sense of security disintegrate piece by piece. Aside from the stigma she now faces, as a result of Lizzie's drowning, what is at the core of her problems is her "differentness." She says from the beginning that she has not made friends in this small rural, turned suburban, community, in which she, and her husband Howard, are running the last family farm. It is this lack of community connection that makes her vulnerable in her job as school nurse. She allows her hostility toward a difficult child to push her beyond reasonable behavior. Because of this error in judgment and restraint, Alice once again finds herself in trouble - this time with the law, rather than just her conscience.

Jane Hamilton is a terrific writer. She is eloquent, poetic and truth telling. The thoughts that are expressed in Alice's narrative are poetic versions of thoughts the reader could imagine having themselves. Alice is vulnerable in many of the same ways we all could be - subject to the whims of the majority when her feelings and opinions are very much outside the norm. If this statement seems far from reality, consider the litigious nature of our society and

the vulnerability of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Behavior which may seem perfectly natural in a supportive environment, may appear sinister when one's observers are hostile. Think of the House Unamerican Activities Committee; imagine being a pacifist in a gun-toting NRA-supporting small town.

You may very well ask, "Why read a book which is so clearly painful, when there is so much else to read?" My answer would be that Map of the World forces one to look at their own lives, their own vulnerabilities and examine how they would act and think under the circumstances. It is so easy to be judgmental when someone else appears to be at fault, but what if the same things happened to us? At its best, it brings out the compassion and empathy of the reader. It is also a pleasure to read Jane Hamilton once you get beyond the grief of the events described.

I am aware of at least three book groups which have chosen not to read this book because of comments in the previous newsletter. BUT, my book group, which includes many women with young children, overall, felt positively about the book.

## COUNTERPOINT

by Lauren Dale

It is a rare experience to say of a book, "This is a very well written book, and I don't want to read another word." Are the shortcomings within the book or the reader?

In A Map of the World by Jane Hamilton, Alice and Howard Goodwin and their young daughters, Emma and Claire, live on a dairy farm, the last in their part of the Midwest, a sanctuary of four hundred cheap acres. The land around them is being devoured by housing tracts and suburban development. The Goodwins are oddities, outsiders, vulnerable to the forces of the surrounding community even before a disastrous accident occurs.

A Map of the World is a grueling book, the kind of vivid book that swallows you up and takes over your emotional state. The difficulty with that degree of persuasion is that the events within the story are grim in the extreme and deteriorate with every page. The themes tackled are significant: loss, responsibility, friendship, vulnerabil-

ity, the balances and dances between spouses, and between parents and children.

There is no shortage of meaningful material in this novel, but the power of the writing makes the repeated calamities, which sweep away the characters, literally too much to bear. The reader can either close the book with a sigh of relief and turn gratefully to some mundane, but safe, task or deliberately distance and detach from the characters in order to be able to finish the story.

Neither approach is very satisfactory. It is a bizarre conundrum for Ms. Hamilton to write so well that she becomes unreadable.

*"Hamilton's chillingly accurate prose keeps her fine novel buoyant. She is superb in her observation of the natural world and in her examination of psychological nuance."* Washington Post

*"It takes a writer of rare power and discipline to carry off an achievement like Map of the World. Hamilton proves here that she is one of our best."* Newsweek

Jane Hamilton's first book, The Book of Ruth won the Pen/Ernest Hemingway Foundation Award in 1994. It is currently on the paperback best seller lists, because it was a featured book on Oprah.

## NEXT ISSUE

Charms For The Easy Life by Kaye Gibbons

Author Lee Smith . . .

In The Time of Butterflies by Julie Alvarez . . .

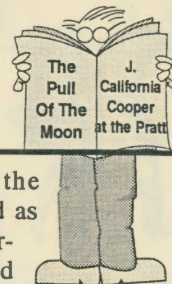
Baltimore Blues, by Laura Lippman . .

The Liars Club by Mary Karr . . .

Memoirs - An Analysis . . .

Lives of Girls and Women by Alice Munro . .

# The Pull Of The Moon - Review & Book Group Comments



by Elizabeth Berg  
Reviewed by Mary Ann Dunevant  
Fiction, \$21.00 (hardback), 224 pgs.

*The Pull of the Moon* is a novel composed of letters, written by Nan, a 50 year old woman, to her husband, whom she has temporarily left in order to take a trip by herself. Each letter is followed by an entry into the turquoise journal that was the inspiration for this trip. It is the expression of Nan's feelings and memories, as articulated through the letters, that so moved me. On nearly every other page, I had to pause while I realized that I, too, had felt exactly the same as she.

**On motherhood:** "Of course there were some bad days. Remember the time Ruthie was napping on a Saturday afternoon and I sat in the living room literally tearing my hair out and saying that

*I was too smart to do this, that a chimpanzee could do what I was doing - better!"* (p. 98 )

**On dying:** "Let it be this way: Let me be eighty-eight. Let me have just returned from the hair-dresser. Let me be sitting in a lawn chair beside my garden, a large-print book of poetry in my hands. Let me hear the whistle of a cardinal and look up to find him and feel a sudden flutter in my chest and then - nothing. And, as long as I'm asking let me rise up over my own self, say, "Oh. Ay." (p. 80)

Since the book touches on issues of aging, marriage and classism, it made for a great, passionate book group discussion. Like me, several people unabashedly loved the book while other despised it. Among

those who didn't like the book, Nan was described as "spineless and vapid," "narcissistic," "wasteful," and "unable to take responsibility for her life."

The discussion was very personal and thought-provoking. We talked about the invisibility of aging women and how loss of youth and beauty gives women "one less card to play" in a society that values youth, wealth and marital status. This book brought out more people on a cold February night when snow was forecast than any other book has for years. Read it. Read it with your group. Maybe even buy it . . .

*I would welcome other reviews of this sort - a summary, or review of the book and book group comments. For the next issue I would need to receive them by May 23rd - the Friday before Memorial Day.*

## J. California Cooper at The Pratt

Contributed by Charlotte Taggart

Five hundred enthusiastic fans greeted author J. California Cooper at the Omni Inner Harbor Hotel on Saturday, February 22nd. While enjoying a buffet breakfast, her audience laughed, sighed and voiced approval at her words of wit and wisdom.

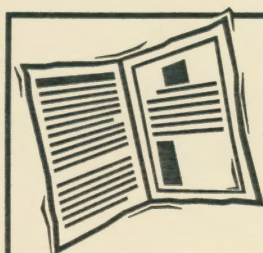
Ms. Cooper is one of America's foremost fiction writers who tells moral tales and parables rich in insight and wisdom. In her works she writes of simple people living complex lives and of complex people whose actions reveal simple tales of life. Her two novels are Family and In Search of Satisfaction. In addition, she has created four collections of short stories: the

winner of the 1989 American Book Award, Homemade Love; Some Soul to Keep; A Piece of Mind; and The Matter is Life. She has been honored as Black Playwright of the Year (1978), received the James Baldwin Writing Award (1988) and the Literary Lion Award from the American Library Association (1988). J. California Cooper now lives in Texas.

According to Ms. Cooper, she was a solitary child who took delight in observing others. "I've always loved wisdom; I didn't want to make mistakes." When she wanted to go out to play her mother would say that any fool could have fun and that she should stay in the house and learn something.

J. California admonished her listeners to look at their lives and take control of them; to build their world and make their own happiness. Ms. Cooper views the Ten Commandments as directions for life. When a young man once remarked that everything fun was a sin, this author replied heatedly, "Is lying fun? Is stealing fun? Is murder fun? Is adultery fun, (pause) after the first few times?"

After a spirited reading of two short stories, Ms. Cooper answered questions from the audience. In strident tones Ms. Cooper concluded her presentation by advising her listeners to do the things they love. This energetic woman confided that she is currently enjoying both tap dancing and piano lessons.



**Subscription:** Three issues annually, plus an additional mailing, for \$15

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## More Reading Weekends:

by April Seitz

(interspersed with quotes from "The Bookworm's Weekend Retreat", by Barbara Beckwith, US Air Magazine, March 1994)

In the last issue of this newsletter, Suzanne introduced the glorious experience of "reading weekends". I too am a devotee of this perfect melding of good books, good food, and good companionship, and it is my assignment to elaborate on the preferred settings for such a literary escape.

Since the essential focus of the weekend is to immerse yourself in the worlds of your favorite books and authors for long, uninterrupted blocks of time, comfort is primary. (The quality of your reading choices are just as important, but that is a topic for a future article). Also, as in many fields of endeavor, remember the importance of: location, location, location! Select a destination that does not have the typical tourist or activity distractions - you don't want your surroundings to lure you away from the purpose of your

retreat. A cabin in Hedgesville, West Virginia, and a bed and breakfast in rural Carroll County, Maryland have both served us well on past trips.

The most important consideration for me, however, is the comfort level of the place you settle into. Soft, cushy, but supportive furniture is a must (the more cushiony the sofa or chair available the better!). Also, make sure good lighting is present. Movable lamps with wattage sufficient for reading are a necessity. Bring extra light bulbs with you. Is the indoor temperature controllable by you? Lighting, temperature control and comfort are all things you want to check out before you commit yourself to staying at a particular place. If you don't want to bother with cooking, and have the money to eat out all weekend, the proximity of good restaurants conducive to conversation should be considered as well.

I believe the best times of year for reading weekends are fall and winter. What could be better than cocooning in front of a fireplace with a juicy novel, your favorite cookies, and a friend interested in hearing all the good parts?! Spring is a wonderful time,

though, if you like taking a walk to exercise your legs and discuss what you've been immersed in.

Whenever, and wherever you go, though, is really besides the point- the main thing is just to go!! A bibliophile deserves the utter joy, every so often, of being able to savor the beginning, middle, and end of a delicious read all in one day or weekend. After you've experienced your first reading weekend, the anticipation of your next one becomes as fun as the actual event. Suzanne and I have become so addicted to these twice-yearly escapes from the real world, that we've begun to plan the meals, snacks, and the most comfortable wardrobes needed, as enthusiastically as we plan the choices of books to bring! Don't deny yourself this pleasure!

*"Brief spurts of reading between subway stops on our way to work, or semiconscious moments before falling asleep, weren't enough to make a dent in the pile (of books). We were frustrated. It was like being surrounded by luscious fruit we had no chance to eat." Barbara Beckwith)*



### Women's Literature Review

4908 Crowson Avenue  
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- \*Information About a Book Group and What They Have Read
- \*Ways to Improve Book Group Discussions

### WHY ONLY BOOKS BY WOMEN?

ONE CAN ONLY DESIRE WHAT ONE KNOWS ABOUT AND BOOKS BY WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE REVIEWED THAN THOSE BY MEN. CHECK THE WEEKLY BOOK REVIEW SECTIONS OF NATIONAL PAPERS AND YOU'LL SEE WHAT I MEAN!

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*"I myself have never been able to find out  
precisely what feminism is:  
I only know that people call me a feminist  
whenever I express sentiments that  
differentiate me from a doormat..."*

*Rebecca West*