



Fresh Fiction
from New Voices



WHERE STRONG VOICES
BECOME BESTSELLERS!



Fresh Fiction from New Voices



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Fresh Fiction from New Voices



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The City in the Lake

by Rachel Neumeier
Edited by Michelle Frey

HC: 978-0-375-84704-2
\$15.99/\$19.99 Can.
GLB: 978-0-375-94704-9
\$18.99/\$23.99 Can.
Young Adult Fiction
On Sale: 7/8/2008



from the editor



The City in the Lake is a haunting fantasy that tells a meaningful story of bravery and identity. But it's the flavor and quality of the writing that makes this book unique: lyrically beautiful and atmospheric, each sentence is a pleasure to read.

Though the writing is rich and unusual, the world it creates feels comfortably familiar—you feel you have heard the story before in a fairy tale, but you haven't.

This is the story of beautiful, solemn Timou, who alone holds the key to her Kingdom's salvation. Ever since the Prince disappeared, nothing in the Kingdom has been the same. Some cunning and powerful force is trying to control this charmed land, and it is up to Timou, who is learning to be a mage under her father's tutelage, to face the unknown disturbance.

Starring a brave but vulnerable heroine, this beautiful story of magic, hard-earned wisdom, and romantic love is sure to delight fantasy lovers as well as readers of all kinds.

—Michelle Frey

from THE CITY in the LAKE

Timou asked her father these questions one cold evening, when they both sat by the fire after supper. She did not mean to ask him. Timou sat on a rug on the floor—her favorite rug, with a maze of red leaves that wove into the center of the rug and out again, if you knew how to trace the pattern with your finger just the right way. She was leaning her elbow on the hearth and looking into the fire, but she was not seeing the coals or the burning wood. She was seeing a stone bridge and a woman with frost-pale hair holding out a rosewood cradle. And a tall somber man with her father's face, who reached out his hands to take it.

"Timou?" asked her father, watching her, wondering what was behind her silence, and when Timou looked at him she forgot to veil her thoughts. He saw the questions in her eyes.

"Ah," he said, softly.

Timou, since she was discovered anyway, asked him, "Is there always a woman, where there is a man and a mystery?"

Her father sighed and looked away from her, into the fire. "Likely so. And where there is a baby, there is likely a woman." He was not angry, but he had become somber. He added, speaking carefully and slowly, "Your mother was a beautiful woman, very fair, as you are, with winter-pale hair, as you have, but her eyes were dark as the winter sky."

It made Timou uncomfortable that her father should speak so carefully. She did not understand the shape of the secret she saw in his eyes. She asked tentatively, "Did she . . . did she die, then? Having me? Like Nod's mother?" She held her breath waiting for his answer: she was suddenly certain he would say, *Yes, your mother died as Nod's mother died*. No white-haired woman had given away her baby: there had only been the birthing struggle and then silence. That was why her father had brought her away from the City . . .

Her father moved a hand restlessly. But he said after a moment, "No. She did not die."

**"Is there always a woman,
where there is a man and
a mystery?"**

"Oh." Timou was silent for a moment, reordering her thoughts once more. "Then . . . why did she give me away to you? Wasn't she sorry to watch you take me away?" She wanted to ask, but was not brave enough, *Were you glad to take me with you?*

The secrets in her father's eyes moved and shifted like firelight, but did not take on any recognizable shape. His mouth thinned, not with anger, but with something even less familiar that Timou did not recognize. He said at last, "She could not keep you with her, and I . . . would not let her give you to anyone else."

Timou looked quickly into the fire so that the reflected light would hide the leap of her heart. When she thought she could keep her voice calm and the press of her questions secret in her eyes, she looked up and said, "Do you think she will ever—do you think I will ever meet her?"

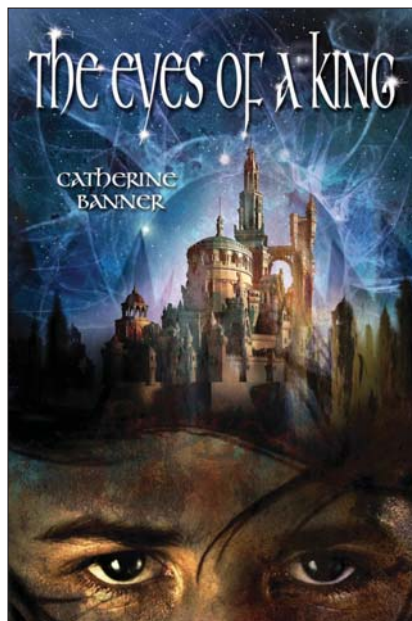
There was an infinitesimal pause. Then her father said only, "I don't know, Timou."

He spoke this time with a kind of restraint that made Timou wonder what he wasn't saying. She thought it was important. She looked into the fire again, wondering what kinds of secrets might make her father sound that way.

Rachel Neumeier got the idea for *The City in the Lake* from a painting she bought several years ago called *Temple of the Reality*, by Anatoliy Leushin. She lives in rural Missouri with a large garden, small orchard, and gradually increasing number of Cavalier King Charles Spaniels.



Photo © Hastings



The Eyes of a King

by Catherine Banner
Edited by Suzy Capozzi

HC: 978-0-375-83875-0
\$16.99/NCR
GLB: 978-0-375-93875-7
\$19.99/NCR
Young Adult Fiction
On Sale: 5/27/2008



from the editor



One sweltering summer Friday, I received a call from an agent, telling me about an exciting manuscript and an equally exciting author. I was intrigued. The project, a young adult fantasy novel, sounded like the perfect cure to the summertime blues.

The manuscript arrived and immediately I was transported to the fascinating world of Malonia, a war-torn country. And I was curious to uncover its ties to the parallel world of modern-day England.

I was captivated by the alternating narrative voices that moved between worlds and through time. And the spot-on storytelling of the protagonists—three engaging fifteen-year-olds—struck a chord.

Their stories ring true because their author, Catherine Banner, knows of whence she speaks. She began writing *The Eyes of a King* when she was fourteen! And now, over four years later, her writing still holds that power and promise—it transports, captivates, and resonates. And it's a marvelous debut.

—Suzy Capozzi

from the eyes of a king

The snow began to fall as I walked home. It was dark, though barely five o' clock, and cold. My breath billowed white in the darkness and everything was quiet. Even the jangle and thud of the soldiers' horses seemed deadened. The flakes were so cold that they almost burned where they touched my face, and they lodged on my clothes and stuck fast. I tried to brush them away and pulled my coat up tighter about my neck.

I was used to snow—we all were—but not at the end of May. It looked set to stay cold for at least a week. We got more than enough snow in the winter.

There was a sort of beauty in it, I suppose. The clouds had closed like a lid over the narrow squares of sky, and already the gas lamps were lit. The snow caked on their panes and glowed yellow. I stopped still, and then it was completely silent, without even the wet crunch of my footsteps. Quiet, not silent. I could hear the feathery sound of the snowflakes.

I looked up into the sky. The way the snowflakes swelled in towards my face made me feel as if I was rising. It got darker. It got colder.

I started to think about going home, but I didn't.

I began to shiver, but I went on staring into the sky. It got still darker. I would have stood there all night, perhaps. It was like an enchantment. And I did not want to go home yet anyway. The constant frantic motion of the snowflakes made me dizzy, and my neck ached from looking upwards. Still the snow fell. I was hypnotised.

Suddenly, I felt someone was near to me. The spell was broken. I was back in the street again.

I looked around, but there was no one. Only a presence in the air, as if someone was hiding in the shadows. I felt sick suddenly. There were ghosts here perhaps, invisible spirits moving close by. I turned away.

Before I had taken three steps, my foot met with something heavy and I stumbled.

Suddenly, I felt someone was near to me. The spell was broken. I was back in the street again.

from *the eyes of a king* continued

There was a black shape in the snow, spotted with the flakes my feet had thrown up. At first I thought it was a dead animal—a rat perhaps—lying there frozen.

I bent closer. And I saw that it was not an animal at all but a book. Just a book. I reached out towards it cautiously. I could still feel a strange presence—someone else's thoughts like a vapor in the air.

I willed the book's cover to lift itself, with the slightest tensing of my fingers and my mind. It didn't stir. That was a trick I'd known for years, and it usually worked. Although it was only a cheap trick, no more. It did not even work on the Bible.

I was suspicious of the book. I did not know if I should touch it. Perhaps it would be the better to leave it where it was. I turned to walk away. But I could not. I was going to pick it up; I knew I was. It was unavoidable. There was no point reasoning with myself, then.

My fingers drew close to the dark leather of the cover even before I had decided. I watched them hover above it for a moment, as if they were someone else's. I tried to pull my hand away. I couldn't. For a second I was frightened. Then my fingers closed around the book, and at the same moment the presence vanished. I picked the book up and flipped the cover open.

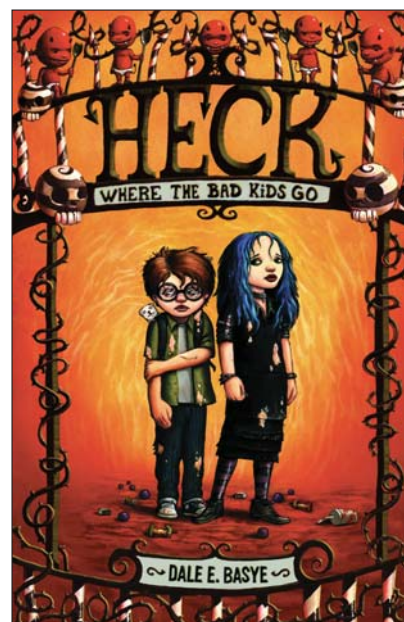
The pages were stiff and suntanned yellow, like sheets of bone. The first one was blank. I turned to the next. Nothing. The next one and the next one, too, were empty. I fanned the pages out loose, impatiently, bending the covers back almost to breaking point, so that the dry glue in the spine bristled. They were all blank.

The weather had changed while I looked away. The wind growled through the narrow streets, the pitch of its voice heightening. The snowflakes dashed at my face like ground glass. My jaw ached with cold, and my fingers on the book's cover were raw and wet from the melting snow. I pushed the book into my coat pocket and set off for home.

Catherine Banner lives in Cambridge, England, where she is busy working on the next two books in her trilogy.



Photo © Simon Trewin



Heck: Where the Bad Kids Go

by Dale E. Basye
Edited by Diane Landolf

HC: 978-0-375-84075-3
\$16.99/\$18.99 Can.
GLB: 978-0-375-94075-0
\$19.99/\$24.99 Can.
Middle-Grade Fiction
On Sale: 7/22/2008



from *the editor*



I met Dale E. Basye at a writer's conference, where he pitched me the idea of a novel about two siblings, Milton and Marlo Fauster, who die in a marshmallow bear explosion and get sent straight to Heck, an otherworldly reform school.

Was I interested? Heck, yeah!

Heck: Where the Bad Kids Go is the funniest, quirkiest, most unique novel I've ever had the privilege of editing. In Heck, all the teachers are real dead historical figures—Richard Nixon teaches ethics, Lizzie Borden teaches home ec, and the gym teacher is Blackbeard.

Dale is a hilarious new voice, and I'm so excited to have him on our list.

—Diane Landolf

from **HECK** WHERE THE BAD KIDS GO

In Generica, Kansas, Christmas wasn't something you felt in the chill of the winter air or the warmth of a generous smile. It was announced by the sixteen-foot tower of crystal angels at Grizzly Mall—the Mall of Generica.

And this year was no different—at first. Exhausted shoppers filed by, momentarily entranced by the shimmering, heart-faced, bare-bottomed cupids. That is, until Marlo Fauster smashed them to bits with the oar she'd stolen from Spoiled Sports Sporting Goods.

"Let's go!" shrieked Marlo, a blue-haired, thirteen-going-on-thirty-year-old girl, to her gangly younger brother Milton. Shards of shining wings and harps rained down around them.

The two children bounded across the showroom floor, Marlo running with a look of fierce determination and Milton running out of pure fear. Unbeknownst to both of them, they were also running out of time.

They ran past stunned shoppers into the mall concourse, Marlo waving her oar as if rowing furiously through a human sea. Milton fought to keep up.

Behind them, a full-bodied mall security guard lumbered in hot pursuit. Another defender of mall law soon joined him, slurping down a smoothie.

Milton and Marlo rushed into a crowd gathered around a white, globby sculpture. A fierce marshmallow bear, frozen in mid-attack, loomed over the horde of gawking Genericans.

Despite the heat radiating from the mob, Milton shivered. He squinted through his thick glasses and noticed a dark smudge. He wiped his lenses, but the stubborn smudge was still there, hovering on the edge of the crowd. The dark smudge was a boy.

A hulking boy. A cruel boy. A boy all too familiar to Milton. A boy whose eyes were dull, dark, wicked slits. A boy named Damian.

A fierce marshmallow bear, frozen in mid-attack, loomed over the horde of gawking Genericans.

In the blink of her eye, Marlo seized Milton by the arm and dragged him into the center of the crowd. She stopped just in front of the marshmallow bear and shoved the oar under her brother's neck.

"Don't come any closer!" she shouted.

Milton heard a faint sizzling sound coming from behind the bear. Curious, he turned his head—as much as he could with an oar wedged beneath his neck—and saw Damian smirking from the balcony. Milton followed Damian's gaze down toward a thin plume of smoke snaking out of the bear's white glob of a tail.

Damian had lodged a stick of dynamite in a place no real grizzly would tolerate.

Milton's eyes bugged out. He broke free of his sister's clutches and ran.

"Hey!" Marlo tried to chase after her brother. Unfortunately, the hem of her dress stuck fast to the marshmallow grizzly's gummy paw. She couldn't get away. Milton looked back and saw his sister struggling.

"Leave the dress!" he shouted.

"Are you kidding?" Marlo sneered. "This is vintage. One of a kind."

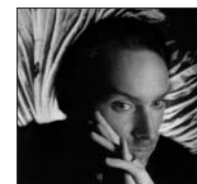
Milton ran back and tugged her sleeve. "C'mon! The bear's gonna blow!"

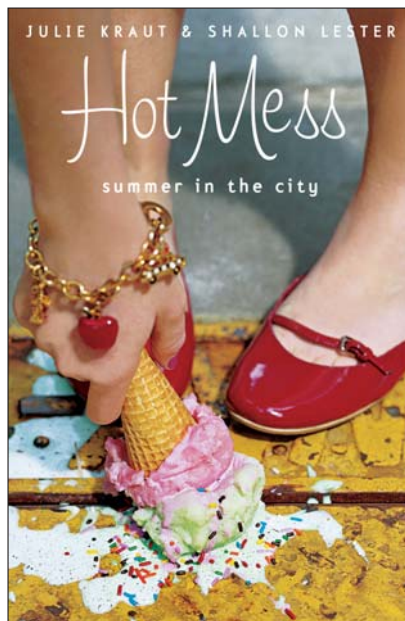
Marlo's face looked like a bowl of sour milk with makeup. "I'd sooner die than leave this—"

The sputtering fuse disappeared into the bear's bottom and the massive marshmallow monument exploded. Grown men screamed. Women wept. Marlo and Milton, hand in hand, were instantly engulfed in flaming goo.

Smoke, noise, and burning marshmallow fused together to create a sickeningly sweet moment, one that was both ridiculously tragic and tragically ridiculous. It was a moment that Generica would talk about for years to come. Yet for Marlo and Milton, it was the last moment that they would ever share. On earth, anyway.

Dale E. Basye has written stories, essays, and reviews for many publications and organizations. He lives in Portland, Oregon with his wife and son.





Hot Mess:
Summer in the City
 by Julie Kraut and Shallon Lester
 Edited by Krista Marino

TR: 978-0-385-73506-3
 \$8.99/\$10.99 Can.
 GLB: 978-0-385-90499-5
 \$12.99/\$15.99 Can.
 Young Adult Fiction
 On Sale: 5/13/2008



from **the editor**



When I was nineteen, I moved to New York City for the summer to do an internship. The experience was surreal. Not only was I in the most dazzling playground a teenager could possibly imagine, I was pretending to be an adult.

So when I got *Hot Mess* I was thrilled—two adults had written a summer internship experience that was real! Not all interns are overachievers and not all available internships are at MTV. The reality is far from glamorous and that in itself is fodder for some pretty funny situations.

And I loved that Julie Kraut and Shallon Lester were able to turn all that into a story about two normal girls that was laugh-out-loud funny.

I acquired *Hot Mess* for all those teenage girls who doubt themselves. Because no matter how average you feel you are, if you put your mind to it, you're capable of fantastic things. And what could be funnier than doing that on an unpaid intern's salary?

—Krista Marino

from **Hot Mess**
 summer in the city

“Hey, you must be Emma, c’mon in, have a seat,” he said loudly, snapping off his headset. “I’m Derek Dorfman, the head honcho around these parts.” I smiled politely. “Some people call me the boss, the bossinator, bossman, bossmanerino. But you can call me Derek.”

This was the welcome wagon to corporate America.

“So!” he clapped his hands loudly, making me jump. “Tell me about yourself.”

I took a deep breath and tried to get comfortable, sliding myself back in the chair. My sweaty acrylic pants made a small fartlike squeak, and I blushed and rattled off my interests, hobbies, typing skills, and superhuman work ethic. I might have even included the words “move the needle”—something I’d once heard my dad’s co-worker say—to which Derek gave an appreciative nod.

**What the flip was I
 doing? Bombing this
 interview, that’s what.**

“Let me tell you something, Em. Can I call you Em?” No pause for my response. “I’m pretty confident that you can type a letter and organize my filing system. I mean, I wouldn’t be

the boss here if I couldn’t read people, you know what I’m sayin’?” He smiled self-importantly and paused. “But, I want to know more about Emma Freeman the individual. Are you compatible with MediaInc on a *mano y mano* level?”

I had no idea what he was talking about but I smiled sycophantically and enthused that I was.

“Like, Em baby,” he pointed toward the “Personal Interests” section of my resume. “Tell me about this musical comedy troupe you’re in.” Crap. I may have exaggerated my fifth grade starring role in “Stars, Stripes, ‘n’ Sharp Notes” into a full-blown extracurricular. “What skills have you learned from singing and performing that could be applied to a work environment?”

“Um . . . well, like now. The acting is helping.”

Derek gave me an encouraging “Uh-huh.”

“And, well, just watch this.” I spread my fingers into jazz hands, shimmied them

from *Hot Mess* summer in the city *continued*

around, and sang, “*Ya dah dah dah dah, hire me!*” Then I struck a very Fosse finale pose. “You see, performing can apply to any situation.”

What the flip was I doing? Bombing this interview, that’s what. Did I seriously just do jazz hands? Good God. I started a mental list of the restaurants around Union Square where I could waitress this summer.

“That’s great, Em.” To my complete surprise, his tone wasn’t sarcastic at all. “I used to do a little acting myself.” He contorted his face into an exaggerated frown and then slowly moved his hand upward, over his face. When he hand crossed his mouth, he was grinning. “Pretty good, right? So Em, what’s your weakness?”

Before I could answer he shouted, “*Men! Ok then, chillin’, chillin’, mindin’ my business. Yo, Salt, I looked around, and I couldn’t believe this.*”

He stopped mid-rap, leaning over his desk to hold an invisible mike in my face, and waited for me to take over. Was he singing Salt-N-Pepa? For real? I think I was still a fetus when this song came out. When I came up lyrically empty-handed, he continued himself and proceeded to rap all four verses of “Shoop.” I finally stopped him and sputtered out a question regarding hours and lunch breaks.

“Oh don’t you worry about that. All that can be sorted out tomorrow.”

“To—tomorrow?” I stammered. Did this mean I was hired? ”

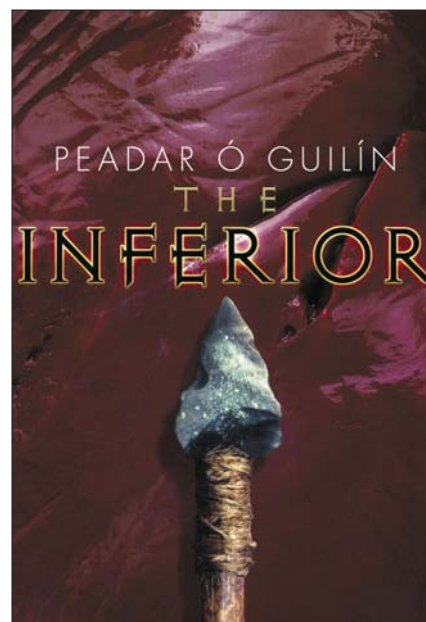
“Yeah, I’m going to need you to come back tomorrow around the same time for a second interview. But brush up on your hip-hop and rap, girlfriend. Tomorrow is Tupac Tuesday! Ha!” He laughed at his own joke for a good fifteen seconds before I awkwardly got up to leave.

Did all of that really happen or could I be hallucinating?

Julie Kraut hails from the not-so-mean streets of suburban Maryland. She now lives in New York City where she shimmies her sensible pumps up the corporate ladder. **Shallon Lester** hails from Orange County, California. She currently lives in Manhattan where she is a gossip writer for the *New York Daily News*.



Photo © Dana Masson



The Inferior

by Peadar Ó Guilín
Edited by David Fickling

HC: 978-0-385-75145-2
\$16.99/\$20.99 Can.
GLB: 978-0-385-75146-9
\$19.99/\$24.99 Can.
Young Adult Fiction
On Sale: 6/10/2008



from the editor



There is but one law: eat or be eaten. Stopmouth and his family know of no other life than the daily battle to survive. To live they must hunt rival species, or negotiate flesh-trade with those who crave meat of the freshest human kind.

It is a savage, desperate existence. And for Stopmouth, callously betrayed by his brother, the darling of the tribe, and used as bait in a plan that goes horribly wrong, the future looks especially bleak. Then a strange and beautiful woman falls from the sky. It is a moment that will change his destiny, and that of all humanity, forever.

Peadar Ó Guilín is a terrifically talented newcomer and this is his sensational future-fiction debut for the *Matrix* generation. Horror, science fiction, and action-adventure twisted into a deliciously grizzly and utterly compelling new form.

With echoes of Tarzan, Conan, and the *Truman Show*, *The Inferior* is an action-and-ideas-packed blockbuster that will challenge your perceptions of humanity and leave you hungry for more.

—David Fickling

from THE INFERIOR

The rule was to keep running—*Don't stop, don't die*. The Tribe needed its strongest to survive. So Stopmouth fled for his life through the streets of Hairbeast territory, while its non-human inhabitants looked on with indifference. Already the cries of his brother were fading behind him.

'Please, Stopmouth!'

The Armourbacks preferred living prey. When they caught Wallbreaker, they'd drive him home with spears to feed their young. The screams of such captives lasted for days, echoing down streets and over rooftops.

Stopmouth tried not to think about it. 'K-keep running,' he told himself. He leaped barrels of flesh and sprinted into an alley narrow enough to give the pursuers some trouble if they were still on his tail.

Stopmouth realized he couldn't hear his brother any more. He skidded to a halt. The hot air of mid-afternoon stank of blood and rang with the booming howls of fighting or mating Hairbeasts. He could feel his heart battering against his ribs and he leaned his tall frame for support against a crumbling wall. Don't stop. Don't think. Keep running. He wiped his stinging eyes and whispered the name, 'Wallbreaker.' Humanity might survive without his brother, but Stopmouth knew he could not. Wallbreaker had always been the darling of the Tribe. He'd been a sweet child, grown up to be a great hunter, and people would forgive him anything, even a half-idiot brother. And they had forgiven always, smiling indulgently through the younger boy's stammers in order to please his handsome sibling.

And yet, if Wallbreaker failed to make it back, Mossheart would have to marry somebody else and that would mean . . . Stopmouth pushed the thought away with a shiver of self-disgust. He forced himself to turn round. He tried to spot his brother, but crowds of burly Hairbeasts blocked his way. The creatures filled the market place with the sharp stink of their fur. They bartered for flesh in high gabbling voices and sometimes the larger males would push against each other, chest to chest, until one gave way.

The rule was to keep running—Don't stop, don't die.

He shoved sweaty brown hair out of his eyes and marched back the way he'd come. The councillors would be angry if they knew what he was doing. 'Suicide!' they'd cry. 'Waste!' He didn't even have a spear to defend himself, having abandoned it in his flight.

He reached the last place he'd heard his brother's voice: an alley flanked by tall buildings where light from the great Roof struggled to penetrate. He found some traces of blood here, but they were old. Stopmouth tiptoed to the far end, his muscles trembling with exhaustion, his body and loincloth dripping with sweat. Here at last he heard the tones of human speech: a whimpering, pleading voice so unlike that of the great hunter Wallbreaker was becoming.

This can't be my brother, Stopmouth thought.

The alley opened onto a small square, where incomprehensible murals covered the walls with swirls of dried blood. A few Hairbeasts watched curiously as Wallbreaker, his fair hair streaked with filth, retreated before the spears of the Armourbacks. He made no effort to take one of his attackers into death with him. Instead, tears flowed freely down his handsome face, shaming him and his family.

Even as his heart swelled with pity, Stopmouth began having second thoughts about a rescue. How could two humans hope to defeat five Armourbacks? The adults reached chest height on a man, but they were broader, and a rock-hard shell made them tough to kill.

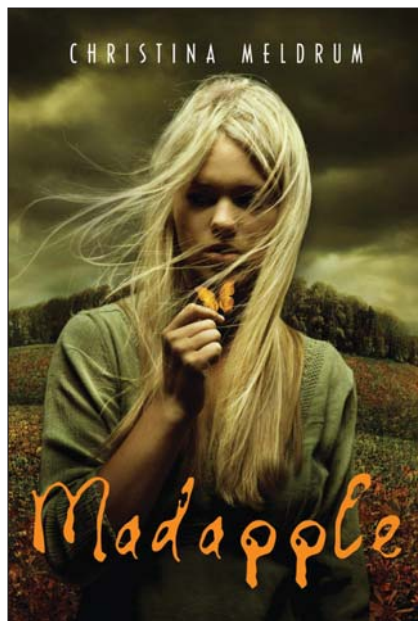
Stopmouth gritted his teeth. He wasn't ready to die, but he refused to let these beasts keep his brother. And he still had time—they preferred live prisoners to quick kills.

He swallowed his fear and jogged back to the mouth of the alley. Then he took a quiet lane running parallel to the one the Armourbacks would probably follow to their territory. He'd need to find a place where he could come out ahead of them. And a plan—he'd need one of those too. He'd have to think one up as he ran.

Peadar Ó Guilín has been writing curious stories for as long as he can remember. He has written plays, published short stories, performed as a stand-up comedian and is fluent in French and Italian. Peadar lives in Dublin where he works for a giant computer company.



Photo courtesy the author



Madapple

by Christina Meldrum

Edited by Michelle Frey

HC: 978-0-375-85176-6

\$16.99/\$20.99 Can.

GLB: 978-0-375-95176-3

\$19.99/\$24.99 Can.

Young Adult Fiction

On Sale: 5/13/2008



Alfred A. Knopf

from the editor



Madapple is one of the most accomplished books I've read in the past few years—and one of the most original. It's bizarre and disturbing and there are no taboos it doesn't break.

Part mystery, part suspense, part exploder of any religious idea you've ever had, this sophisticated YA recounts one seventeen-year-old girl's strange and isolated upbringing, and the even more twisted world she encounters after her mother's death, when she lands with family she never knew existed. Soon she's sucked into a web of complicated, long-buried family secrets that reveal her past is darker than she'd ever imagined.

Virgin births, poisonous plants, religious fervor, and mysterious deaths all play a role in this deeply compelling tale with an unreliable narrator. You won't be able to put it down until the last, mind-blowing page and you won't believe this extraordinary book was written by a first-time author.

—Michelle Frey

from Madapple

I'm standing plain in the yard, like a blue pickerelweed in the starkness of a marsh, when the door opens. The drummer steps onto the porch; at first she doesn't see me. But I see her, better than when she was inside. She passes down the stairs, then from the stairs into the soft light of the low sun, and I realize she's the apparition—the apparition of Mother. Except she is no apparition, and she's not Mother. She's the person I saw earlier, the one I thought was Mother—the ghost of Mother. The coincidence seems too much, too strange, and I wonder if I'm dreaming now, or if I was dreaming then when I thought I saw Mother's ghost. The days and nights since Mother's death blur in my mind; it's hard for me to be sure what's real.

I set the suitcase on the ground and sit down on it, aiming to make myself smaller, less visible, as I try make sense of the sign, the music, this woman, that preacher. As I try to find some moisture in my mouth. I feel the masking tape wrinkle beneath me, and stick to my dress; I feel the tickle of the warm grass on my calves. I'm not dreaming, I think: this woman is real.

Fallen apples speckle the yard as sores on the grass, and she begins to collect them . . .

She's older than I am—I see this in her body—but not much older. And while she shares some features with Mother—the pale skin, the delicate frame—she's different, too. Taller. Her movements less erratic. Her eyes larger, her lips fuller.

Still, she reminds of mother. She wears a loose white garment that rides high up her neck, reaches to her ankles, extends to her wrists despite the heat; it billows as she descends the stairs, and it seems for a moment the air alone could lift her. A dandelion gone to seed.

Fallen apples speckle the yard as sores on the grass, and she begins to collect them; she bundles the front of her gown and drops them in—as if to weigh herself down. Mother often referred to apples using the Celtic word, *abal*, the foundation of the word *Avalon*, the mythical isle of apples. She said the apple symbolizes the life inside a mother's womb. *Abal* connotes fertility, immortality.

from Madapple continued

Minutes pass, and I start to think it possible the woman won't notice me—she seems absorbed in the gathering, in the arranging of abal within her gown. I feel my jaw ease, feel the familiar ache that follows the unclenching of my teeth. She'll go back inside, I tell myself. And I'll slip away, watch the church from a distance, look for my Dimmesdale from where I can't be seen. But then the woman jerks to a stop and looks directly at me. And I expect she knew I was there all along.

Her cheekbones roll creamy-white; her fair skin is fairer than mine. Yet her lips are full, and their color so vivid, they seem too lavish, almost clownish. Her eyes are those of the black-eyed Susan, that daisy-like flower with light rays eclipsed by a black-moon core.

The kerchief she wears slips, and some of her hair falls loose, and I see it's a menagerie of pink and black and reddish gold. I wonder how she painted her hair that way. And I wonder whether her hair is her hairstreak.

"You caught me scavenging," she says, and she laughs a laugh that's scratchy and high-pitched. "I hate letting the apples go to waste. *Gudinden* hates when I do this. She says they're full of vermin."

"*Gudinden*?" I say. But I understood her words. *Gudinde* means goddess, in Danish. I've never heard anyone but Mother speak Danish.

Christina Meldrum earned her Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School. She has worked for the International Commission of Jurists and as a litigator at the law firm of Shearman & Sterling. She currently lives in the San Francisco Bay area with her family.



Photo © Victor Hong



The Order of Odd-Fish

by James Kennedy

Edited by Stephanie Lane

HC: 978-0-385-73543-8

\$15.99/\$19.99 Can.

GLB: 978-0-385-90524-4

\$18.99/\$23.99 Can.

Young Adult Fiction

On Sale: 8/12/2008



from the editor



Prepare yourself. Before you begin *The Order of Odd-Fish*, you'll want to find a comfortable place to curl up, because you're not going to want to move for awhile. You'll want to limit your intake of liquids, because they may well come shooting out of your nose in an ill-timed burst of laughter. And you'll want to keep your imagination primed and ready to work, because the sights, smells, and wonders of the mythical Eldritch City are truly something to behold.

I fell in love with *The Order of Odd-Fish*, James Kennedy's wild, rollicking, and hilarious debut fantasy novel, because it reads like Roald Dahl as rewritten by Monty Python. Yet it also has a heart, a soul, truly original plotting, and characters that will linger in your head long after you reach the end. Once I started reading, I couldn't wait to rejoin these characters and find out what insane shenanigans they'd be up to next! I think James Kennedy is a remarkable new talent, and I hope *The Order of Odd-Fish* entertains you as much as it has entertained me.

—Stephanie Lane

from The Order of Odd-Fish

On his bedside table sat the package from the sky.

The back of Jo's neck tingled. She reached out, touched the package . . . no, she couldn't open it. She would wait for him to wake up. All his talk about "unsafe in the wrong hands"—Jo had never thought of her hands as wrong, but she had never thought of them as particularly right either. And yet . . .

She took the package.

The room was silent. Even the snoring Korsakov was momentarily still. And before Jo knew it, she had broken open the lid, sifted through wadded-up newspapers, and grasped the thing inside.

Jo stared at it. It was a black box, made of intricately carved wood and decorated with silver designs. A faint jingling came from within. She put her ear on it and heard something like a tiny alien orchestra: gurgling chimes, the cry and echo of horns, murmuring beeps and bloops . . .

Jo turned the box over, breathing faster. A silver crank stuck out the side. What would happen if . . . ? She touched it and her hand trembled; she felt fluttery, as though she were on a roller coaster that was at the top and just about to take the first plunge.

An angry voice broke Jo's trance.

"It's unbelievable! The dirty rag! *Shameless!*"

Jo dropped the box in shock.

A giant cockroach walked into the room, three feet tall, wearing a purple velvet suit with a silk shirt, cravat, and bowler hat. A green carnation was fixed in its buttonhole. The cockroach clutched a newspaper with four arms, reading it through a monocle. Jo backed away, but the insect barely acknowledged her.

"Libel! Scandal! Outrage!" said the cockroach. "I suppose *you*, too, would like to hear the latest slander about me?"

"What?" said Jo weakly.

"Oh, listen to this!" said the insect, flourishing the newspaper and reading aloud: 'Intoxicating evening at Christmas costume ball . . . Shootings, canings, and bludgeonings from the sky enlivened the evening, as well as the irrepressible SEFINO . . . Sefino, who dresses with that desperately flamboyant chic depraved cockroaches so effortlessly achieve! Nor did it take long for the enterprising gentleman to find someone to bind him palp to thorax, and subject him to delicious humiliations in the cellar.' He hurled the newspaper across the room. "What on earth! Really!"

Jo managed to stammer, "Who . . . what are you doing here?"

"A youthful indiscretion," continued the insect, wagging his finger. "A dreadful nightclub in Cairo—an excess of gin—a frightful glass chandelier which, I maintain, was improperly installed—it could've happened to anyone, don't you think? Or do you?"

"Um . . . it could've happened to anyone?"

"You have good sense. I can tell. We'll get along smashingly," said the cockroach. "You *are* Jo Larouche, aren't you? I'm Sefino, of course. And it's all very well for *you*. You aren't hounded night and day by these . . . these *jackals*! Chatterbox indeed. Will I never be rid of these rumor-mongering muckrakers?"

Jo gawked at the insect. She had no idea what to do.

**"Will I never be rid of
these rumor-mongering
muckrakers?"**

James Kennedy, 32, has had short stories appear in *The Chicago Reader*. He recently moved back to the U.S. from Japan where he was working as a teacher, and he lives in Chicago.



Playing with Matches

by Brian Katcher

Edited by Claudia Gabel

HC: 978-0-385-73544-5

\$15.99/\$19.99 Can.

GLB: 978-0-385-90525-1

\$18.99/\$23.99 Can.

Young Adult Fiction

On Sale: 7/8/2008



from the editor



Once I finished reading Brian Katcher's funny yet bittersweet manuscript, which was a finalist in Delacorte's annual YA fiction contest, I knew that I couldn't pass up the opportunity to publish this book. Not only am I a sucker for love triangles, but I'm also easily smitten with self-deprecating slacker types like the protagonist, Leon Sanders. And then there is Brian's fresh and authentic writing style that had me laughing during my commute and tearing up while eating lunch at my desk.

Still, what made me feel like I had to have this novel was the fact that Leon's dating dilemma doesn't involve a geeky girl who simply needs to be made over in order to compete with her prettier rival. The story is much richer and more complicated than that, which is why I think it's perfect for teens who are in the midst of figuring out why they love who they love and discovering what kind of people they want to become.

—Claudia Gabel

from **PLAYING WITH MATCHES**

"Excuse me. . . ." came a mumbled voice at my elbow.

"What!" I bellowed, directly into Melody Hennon's scarred face.

Most girls would have either stepped back or kicked me in the nether regions for treatment like that. Melody simply blinked for a long moment. I was surprised to notice her eyelids bore no scars. Maybe they were artificial.

"Sorry," I grunted, moving away from her new locker.

She didn't answer; she simply opened her locker and grabbed a binder. I tried not to stare.

Now, we're trained at an early age not to gape at people who are "different." How did you look at a human monstrosity? How did she face that in the mirror every morning?

**There was pain in that sigh,
of someone who'd had all
she could take that day and
it was only 8:57 a.m.**

It wasn't like she could just pretend nothing was wrong, like she could if she was missing an ear or just had one bad scar. Her entire face, her entire head, looked like something you'd see in a low budget wax museum. Her normal eyes and perfect teeth only accented her ugliness.

The world is a cruel place, anyone can tell you that. But I think only people like

Melody could truly cite examples. I still cringe when I think of the names she was called in elementary school. Every time a new horror movie came out, the other kids would make it a point to call her by the name of the monster. Freddy Kreuger. Leatherface. Gollum. The Thing. They'd wait until she was just in earshot on the playground, then scream in mock horror, pretending Frankenstein had escaped from the movie screen and come to get them.

I guess I shouldn't say "they." By fifth grade I was already on the fast track to loserville, and more than once I insulted Melody before anyone could start making fun of me.

Now that we were all a little older and, theoretically, more mature, we replaced our insults with a stony silence. When Melody passed us in the hall, we averted our eyes. When we were obliged to talk to her, we were brief and to the point. Not that we didn't like her personally; it's just that she was something we'd rather not think about.

from **PLAYING WITH MATCHES**

continued

There was nothing we could do to help her (aside from making an effort to be her friend, which no one was willing to do).

Melody shut her locker and sighed. There was pain in that sigh, of someone who'd had all she could take that day and it was only 8:57 a.m. I had to say something.

I remembered a joke Ryan Kelly had told me in sixth grade.

"So this pirate walks into a bar with a steering wheel sticking out of his pants. The bartender says 'Hey, you got a steering wheel in your pants,' and the pirate says 'Aargh! It's drivin' me nuts!'"

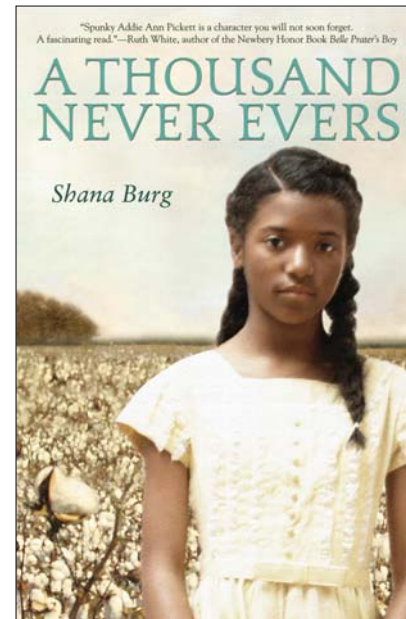
Melody blinked once, and I was afraid I was adding to my socially inept reputation. Suddenly, she giggled. Melody had a pleasant laugh, like something you'd hear from the host of a children's program.

"You don't know how much I needed a laugh this morning." She then turned and walked off. As I gathered up my own books, I smiled a little. I couldn't remember the last time anyone had laughed at one of my jokes.

Brian Katcher wrote *Playing with Matches* on a third-hand laptop while living in Mexico. He is a school librarian and lives in Missouri with his wife and baby daughter. This is his first novel.



Photo © Sandra Katcher



A Thousand Never Evers

by **Shana Burg**
Edited by **Michelle Poploff**

HC: 978-0-385-73470-7
\$15.99/\$19.99 Can.
GLB: 978-0-385-90468-1
\$18.99/\$23.99 Can.
Middle-Grade Fiction
On Sale: 6/10/2008



from **the editor**



Set against the backdrop of the American civil rights movement, this story features Addie Ann Pickett, an African American girl living in the segregated town of Kuckachoo, Mississippi, 1963. When a careless act by Addie Ann leads to her beloved brother's disappearance, she and her mama and Uncle Bump don't know if he's dead or alive. Then a good deed meant to unite the blacks and whites of Kuckachoo sets off a chain of explosive events. Addie Ann has witnessed the danger of silence and now must decide whether to be a bystander or take action.

Shana Burg sets a new standard in literary historical fiction with this powerful novel of personal growth. To write this book, she conducted scores of interviews, read old newspapers and magazines, listened to oral histories and the blues, and memorized endless gardening facts. Shana Burg is a rare talent who has given voice to a cast of characters that will resonate for a long time. You're in for a memorable reading experience.

—**Michelle Poploff**

from A THOUSAND NEVER EVERS

I don't let Honey see I'm watching her because Mama always tells me not to look at white folk too close. Some of them are members of the Ku Klux Klan. And Lord knows I don't want trouble from cross-burning haters, so I got in the habit of fixing my eyes to the ground while I wait for Elias to come on out of the store.

Adding all the times I've waited on the grass beside the Corner Store parking lot, I bet I've seen hundreds—maybe even thousands—of feet go by. Black patent leather shoes with frilly white socks. Brown penny loafers oiled to shine in the sun. Saddle shoes scuffed on the black and white leather alike. And bare feet that never wear shoes, except maybe to church on Sunday.

Today, though, it doesn't take but a few minutes till I notice a pair of feet different from any I've ever seen: two plump sausages strapped in six-inch high heels teetering along the gravel edge of the parking lot. And this time I can't help it. I've got to see the southern lady who can actually walk in such things!

My eyes climb the green heels to the red-and-white-checked dress, to the bright red lips, to the hat on the lady's head. And there they are—a bunch of plastic strawberries stuck right on the brim.

Before I know it, my eyes get ahead of my brain and hang a second too long on the far-out sight.

"Just who do you think you are?" the lady snaps, and soon as she does, I see she's got enough freckles to fill a pepper mill. Her face is the spitting image of Honey's. I reckon she's Honey's mama, Mrs. Worth. "A stare like that can get a girl like you in big trouble!" she says.

When Mrs. Worth talks, the strawberries on her hat jiggle, and something about the moving strawberries makes the laughter bubble up inside me like cola shook up in a bottle. Thank goodness she disappears inside the store, because even though I cup one hand over my mouth, a giggle gets out anyway. And then a

My eyes climb the green
heels to the red-and-white-
checked dress, to the
bright red lips, to the hat
on the lady's head.

snort. I stare at the hole in my sneaker and try to stop, but the more scared I am, the more giggles I get, till an ugly voice splits the sky.

"Ain't you got manners, dirtbag?"

I look up, only to see Buck Fowler skulking toward me, Jimmy Worth steps behind him.

There's no mistaking what kind of trouble these two bring. And I'll tell you one thing: if I knew they were here at the store, I would've waited for my brother round the bend.

But now it's too late. Buck hovers above me. "Nobody laughs at Jimmy's mama," he says. "Nobody."

My bottom lip quivers worse than ever.

I pick up Flapjack, glance across the parking lot to the shop steps, and wonder what's taking Elias so long. No doubt there's plenty of white folks to ring up first. Well, soon as my brother does come on out of the shop, he'll know what to do. He'll make Buck and Jimmy leave me alone. In my head, I beg for Elias to open that shop door, while my breath, it flames inside my chest.

I take a step toward the store.

Buck whips out an elbow to block my path. "Gimme the cat," he says.

I hug Flapjack tight, but Buck clenches the scruff of Flapjack's neck and tears him from me.

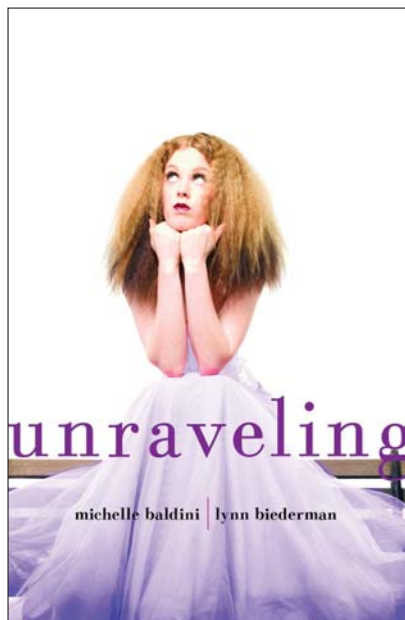
Flapjack moans.

I jump up to save him but snatch twilight instead.

Shana Burg is a former sixth-grade teacher. Her debut novel was inspired by her father's role in the civil rights movement. Shana lives with her family in Austin, Texas.



Photo © Gabriella Tai



Unraveling

by Michelle Baldini

and Lynn Biederman

Edited by Stephanie Lane

HC: 978-0-385-73540-7

\$15.99/\$19.99 Can.

GLB: 978-0-385-90521-3

\$18.99/\$23.99 Can.

Young Adult Fiction

On Sale: 7/8/2008



from the editor



When I first read this manuscript about fifteen-year-old Amanda Himmelfarb and her toxic relationship with her mother, I could not put it down. Amanda is such a smart, honest, sometimes frustrating character. I wanted to leap into the pages and alternately shake her and give her a hug.

It's rare to find writers who can write family interactions that feel so cutting and messy, but true. Even readers who have great relationships with their moms will recognize the strong emotions behind Amanda and her mother's fights—all of those heightened expectations and needs. And Amanda's frankness about sex, virginity, and her total confusion about both feels very authentic and very relatable for teen girls.

I love this sharp, chatty, compulsively readable novel, and I hope you will too.

—Stephanie Lane

from unraveling

Malady and The Cap stayed at the pool, lingering and then eating dinner there at the bar. Unlike me, Malady would do *anything* for The Captain's attention. I was busy trying to stay under her radar. I had taken Paige's advice and crawled into bed with my book. I was in the middle of reading *Vanishing Acts* by Jodi Picoult when I heard them both go into the adjoining room.

My mother called "Manda" halfheartedly. "Are you hungry?"

"No."

"Do you want to talk about what happened?"

"No, I'm reading," I said in a low voice. I wanted to say, No, when I wanted to talk, *you were out with Melody*. She didn't ask twice. She never did.

I knew that calling me Manda signaled she felt a little guilty, but I had no intention of letting her off easy. We both had the tough, unforgiving gene. When I was finished reading I turned off the light above my bed. I thought about *Vanishing Acts*. A woman learns that her father kidnapped her as a child to protect her from her alcoholic mother. I wondered whether I'd be mad at my dad for lying about my mother being dead, or if I'd be thankful that he put his life at risk to save mine. At that moment I wanted my dad to take me somewhere, anywhere, as long as it was away from her.

Melody came into our room and flipped on the light next to her bed. She put it on the brightest setting and dropped her wet towel and bikini to the floor. I was

about to curse her out when our parents started going at it again. The hotel walls were paper thin like the ones at home.

**At that moment I wanted
my dad to take me some-
where, anywhere, as long
as it was away from her.**

"Amanda just doesn't listen . . . or think."

"Let it go, Susan."

"Don't tell me to let it go."

"She's been worked over enough today."

The volume of the television went up. I guess he was attempting to block her out and probably keep me from hearing her latest tirade.

from unraveling continued

"Turn that brain-killer down. Please. I want to read. Some of us like to expand our minds."

"Okay Miss Smarty-Pants. Sorry this mere high school grad is only dumb enough to rake in the dollars. Maybe with your guidance, our girls will be as accomplished as you one day."

"You know full well why I can't work full-time."

I remembered when The Captain was working. Everything at home was better and not because of the money. She didn't obsess about me or my whereabouts as much. It seemed like she liked her job, like she had a purpose outside of us.

"What keeps you handcuffed here?"

"Oh right, of course. You weren't around when Amanda was failing eighth grade. Or when she was turning into a juvenile delinquent."

"Right, you're so *right*," my dad said.

"What we should worry about is that Amanda's much more you than me. That's what we really have to worry about. Not whether either of them is as accomplished as I."

"If we're lucky, at least Amanda will stay that way, like me."

"Well, you can rest easy. Don't you worry . . . there's not a sliver of me in her body."

"Susan, shhhhh! . . . Keep your voice down," he said.

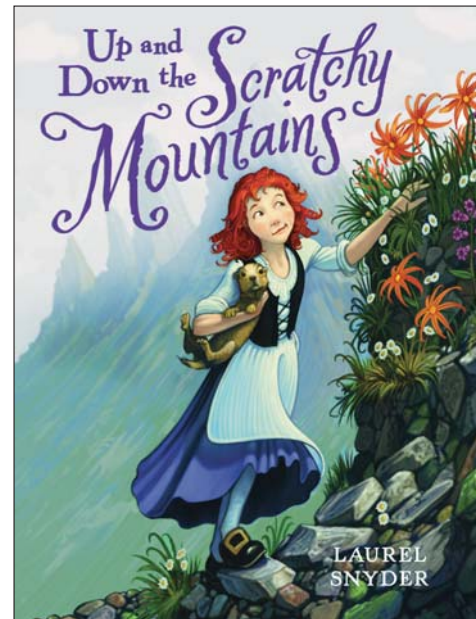
I lay there and let each of those words, *not . . . a . . . sliver . . . of . . . me . . . in . . . her . . . body* seep like ice through my veins. I curled tighter, pulling my knees into my chest.

Dad turned the television up louder.

Lynn Biederman, a former elementary and high school librarian, is currently working on a second YA novel. Visit her at www.lynnbiederman.com. **Michelle Baldini** works for the School of Library and Information Science at Kent State University in Ohio. Visit her at www.michellebaldini.com.



Photos courtesy of the authors



Up and Down the Scratchy Mountains

by Laurel Snyder

Illustrated by Greg Call

Edited by Lisa Findlay

HC: 978-0-375-84719-6

\$16.99/\$20.99 Can.

GLB: 978-0-375-94719-3

\$19.99/\$24.99 Can.

Middle-Grade Fiction

On Sale: 8/26/2008



from the editor



Sometimes a manuscript will drop out in out of the blue. You didn't request it and you've never heard of the author—but it's surprisingly wonderful! Like the famous tollbooth, it's an unexpected invitation into a new world.

That's how I felt when I entered Laurel Snyder's land of silly songs and mysterious mountains. Although I'd never been to the Bewilderness before, it felt as cozy as the places I had visited in books as a kid. A classic fairy tale with a modern, funny sensibility, this book is about questioning the rules, finding one's place in the world, and (of course) friendship.

Laurel has been a delight to work with because she's both wackily creative and consummately professional. Every minute of my journey with Laurel has been a pleasure. I am pleased and proud to present her book—a book I am sure kids and parents will want to share.

—Lisa Findlay

from Up and Down the Scratchy Mountains

What did Lucy know about her mother? She knew that her mother's name had been Nora, because once in a while a neighbor twittered, "Oh, Nora would be so proud of the girls!" or "What would Nora have to say about that?" Each time it happened, Lucy's father stared silently at his feet. Which meant he was very sad and everyone else should be quiet.

She didn't exactly miss her mother because she couldn't exactly remember her mother, despite what she'd said to Sally . . . but there was something like an empty space in her belly when she thought the word *Mama*. She wondered—if her mother was alive—what she looked like, if her hair was brown, or black or blond or purple, or green, or red like Lucy's own. Had she grown fat? Or had, perhaps, the mountain life kept her young? Lucy imagined it was hard work, running with the goats. She finished the song.

*We think of you with kindly thoughts,
but seek the simple life.*

*We choose the mountain over all the joys of
hearth and wife.*

*We've felt the sun from heaven,
and breathed the mountain air*

*And now it seems that city life
is too much life to bear.*

Lucy had never thought about the last verse before, really thought about it. She'd never considered what might be hard to bear. But yesterday, between the king's mention of her mother, and the loss of Wynston, Lucy had felt *burdened* for the first time herself. Or at least fumble-headed. Life seemed more complicated than she could remember, and she wasn't sure what she could do to make it simpler. She thought. And thought. And thought.

And the more she thought, the more convinced she became that she too

**She felt a nervous jittery
stretchy feeling replace
the ache in her belly.**

belonged on the mountain with the goats. She wanted to see the guiding stars too. And most of all, she wanted to find her mother, figure out who she was and where she came from.

Mr. Boots meowed a tiny question at her and Lucy stroked his head. "I wouldn't stay away long, Mr. Boots. My home is here in Thistle. But maybe I could find out something about my mother. Maybe I have cousins on the mountain, or a grandmother, even! In reply, Mr. Boots just yawned and stretched his claws into the heavy quilt.

"And maybe, just maybe, if I find her, I could bring her home . . . to Papa." Lucy whispered this to the kitten.

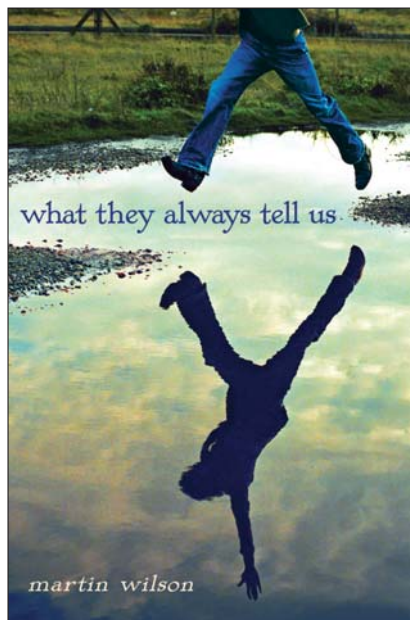
But Mr. Boots didn't have a thing to say about the matter. He pounced down onto the floor and exited the room. Lucy took in a gulp of air. She felt a nervous jittery stretchy feeling replace the ache in her belly.

All these years cloaked in quiet it had never occurred to her to take matters into her own hands. She pondered this and realized that she'd leaned too much on Wynston. Always waiting for Wynston, who was, she admitted to herself, a slowpoke. Lucy felt a tremor run down her spine as she imagined the mountain. *I can do this*, she thought. *I can find Mama, and I can do it by myself. I'll show all of them!*

You have not read **Laurel Snyder's** first book, *The Very Naughty Unicorn*, because it was handwritten, bound in scraps of pink wallpaper, and ripped to shreds by a badly behaved boy named Henry when Laurel was only eight. She lives in Atlanta and online at www.laurelsnyder.com.



Photo courtesy Sonya Heaman



What They Always Tell Us

by Martin Wilson
Edited by Jodi Keller

HC: 978-0-385-73507-0

\$15.99/\$19.99 Can.

GLB: 978-0-385-90500-8

\$18.99/\$23.99 Can.

Young Adult

On Sale: 8/12/2008



from the editor



I've loved Martin Wilson's *What They Always Tell Us* from the moment I met his thoughtfully drawn narrators. I say *met* because Martin brings his characters to life with such perception and nuance that they stay with you long after the last page has been turned.

Alex and James are the two brothers at the heart of this powerful story. They have barely anything in common—least of all their experiences in high school, where James is a popular senior and Alex is suddenly an outcast. But at home, there is Henry, their ten-year-old neighbor, who eagerly befriends them both. And when Alex takes up running, there is James's friend Nathen, who unites the brothers in moving and unexpected ways.

Martin is a remarkably talented new author, whose insightful novel explores the secrets we keep, the friendships that bind us, and the kinds of rules we're meant to break. It's a captivating read, and I know you'll savor it as I have!

—Jodi Keller

from what they always tell us

Coach, ever stone faced and earnest, extends his hand. "You're on the team. Congrats."

Alex is speechless for a moment, but he manages to squeak out a thanks.

"I knew you'd do it," Nathen says, walking Alex to his car. He has his arm draped lightly around Alex's shoulder, and this only adds to his stunned euphoria.

"I still can't believe it," Alex says. But he edits himself from saying what he's really thinking—I can't believe I'm an athlete now; I can't believe I belong to a team; I can't believe your arm is around me.

At home, Alex waits in his car before going inside to face his brother James, who is probably expecting bad news, and his father and mother, who have no idea he's just made the cross-country team, have no idea that Alex is even a decent runner. He wants to savor the moment, alone, for a few more minutes.

It's been so long since he has felt, well, happy. Or this happy.

He's not foolish—he knows it won't last, this euphoria. It will be replaced by the realities of the hard training on top of the daily grind of school and homework. And he can still fail, can't he? He's on the team, but what if, after all this, he

**It's the charge he feels
with Nathen. The charge
of having a friend again.**

really *isn't* a good runner? He could go on and on with these negative thoughts, but he shuts them out through sheer will. Because it's not even the jogging or making the team that is making him feel so ecstatic. It's the charge he feels with Nathen. The charge of having a friend again.

He finally gets out of the car and heads toward the side door. That's when he sees Henry across the street, sitting on his porch with his dictionary.

Henry waves, like's he been waiting for Alex to notice him. It's a wave that Alex can't just brush off with a wave of his own, even if he wants to. He drops his bags in the driveway and crosses the street.

from what they always tell us

continued

"Learn any new words today?" Alex says. He sits next to Henry on the brick stairs.

"Not really. So many of them are stupid words no one ever uses." Henry's tone sounds down, like he's pouting about something.

"Yeah, I guess you're right."

"This kid at school called me a 'redheaded bastard' today."

"That's horrible," Alex says.

"I didn't really know what 'bastard' meant, not really. But now I do. Most kids just ignore me. I don't care, either. I just listen to the teachers. They're the ones who are nice to me. But this kid, he won't stop calling me stuff."

"What a creep." It dawns on Alex that Henry is sort of a younger version of himself—an outcast, a misfit. A weirdo. And he's not even in middle school yet.

"Yeah, I guess so. Mom says just ignore him. She said, 'Sticks and stones may break your bones, but words can never hurt you.'"

"Yeah, that's what they always tell us."

"But it's not really true, is it?"

"Not really. Lots of things they tell us aren't true. A lot of what they tell us is garbage."

"Then why do they tell us stuff like that?"

Alex says, "I don't know." Maybe he could think of a few reasons, but he still feels wrapped in his little bubble of happiness, and none of the ugly things can get to him now. He feels happy and light, as if at any moment the cool breeze of this November night will lift him high into the air.

Martin Wilson was born in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He received a BA from Vanderbilt University and an MFA from the University of Florida, where one of his short stories won a Henfield/Transatlantic Review Award. He lives in New York City.

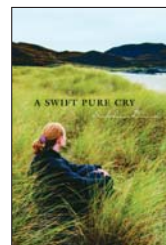


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Fresh Fiction from New Voices



Recent Notable Debuts



dab
David Fickling Books

★ "Beautifully realized account of one girl's loss of innocence, and her resilient recovery."

—Publishers Weekly, Starred

"Elegant, unsentimental prose. . . . Don't let your kids keep this book to themselves."

—People

"Flowing eloquent prose . . . this engrossing and haunting tale will not let the reader go."

—Kirkus Reviews



WENDY
LAMB
BOOKS

Runner-up for the National Jewish Book Award in the Children's and Young Adult Literature Category

A 2007 Association of Jewish Libraries Teen Book Honor Book

★ "Superbly crafted."

—School Library Journal, Starred

★ "A moving first novel . . . readers will quickly become absorbed."

—Publishers Weekly, Starred

"[The] story is developed with skill, attention to detail, and poignancy."

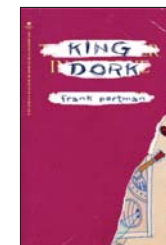
—Booklist

"A deftly crafted story of family love and human connection."

—The Bulletin

"Fabulous debut."

—Kirkus Reviews



Delacorte
Press

Ranked #6 on Entertainment Weekly's Fiction Books of the Year List

★ "A biting and witty high-school satire."

—Kirkus Reviews

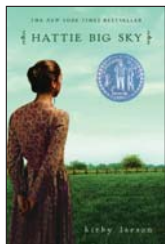
"The author's biting humor and skillful connection of events will keep pages turning."

—Publishers Weekly

★ "This dazzling novel will linger long in readers' memories."

—School Library Journal

Recent Notable Debuts



Delacorte
Press

A Newbery Honor Book

★ "A masterful picture."
—*School Library Journal*, Starred

★ "Engaging . . . a richly textured novel full of memorable characters."
—*Booklist*, Starred

"This fine offering may well inspire readers to find out more about their own family histories."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Hattie's strength and intelligence, her courage and loyal friendship make her a real hero . . . moving and inspiring."

—*KLIATT*



WENDY
LAMB
BOOKS

"Absorbing. Young readers will find this a journey worth taking."
—*Publishers Weekly*

"It's a great credit to first-time author Rebecca Stead that the reader quickly begins to accept the frosty alternative reality . . . and to cheer for Thea's daring, expansionist vision."

—*The Wall Street Journal*

"Engrossing . . . a mix of science, suspense, and adventure."

—*The New York Post*

"With so many kids and grown-ups worried about the environment, *First Light* is a great discussion starter."

—*The Washington Post*



Delacorte
Press

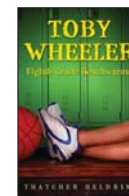
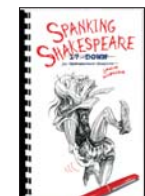
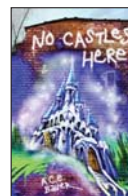
"First time author Barnes's upbeat yet haunting novel about being the new kid in school will likely grab readers with its clever, original twist."

—*Publishers Weekly*

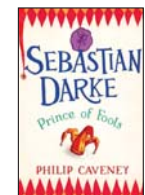
"A well-balanced blend of fast-moving fantasy and light, playful chick-lit."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

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