

WHERE STRONG VOICES  
BECOME BESTSELLERS!



Fresh Fiction  
from New Voices



Spring 2009

# Fresh Fiction from New Voices



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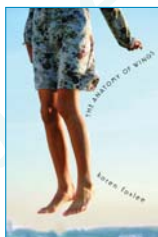
Back cover, top row from left to right: illustration from *Shadowed Summer* © 2009 Chad Michael Ward; photo from *The Anatomy of Wings* © by Photodisk Photography/Veer; illustration from *Heart of a Shepherd* © 2009 by Jonathan Barkat. Middle row from left to right: illustration from *Sunny Side Up* © 2009 by Allen Crawford/Plankton Art Co.; photo from *The Diamonds* © 2009 by Templer/zefa/Corbis; photo from *Carolina Harmony* © 2009 by Michael Frost. Bottom: Photo from *The Beef Princess of Practical County* © 2008 Birgid Allig/zefa/Corbis.



# Fresh Fiction from New Voices



## New for Spring 2009!



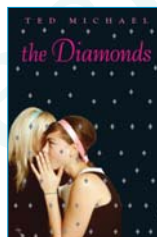
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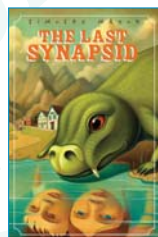
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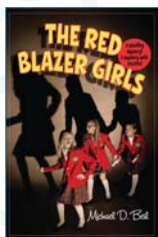
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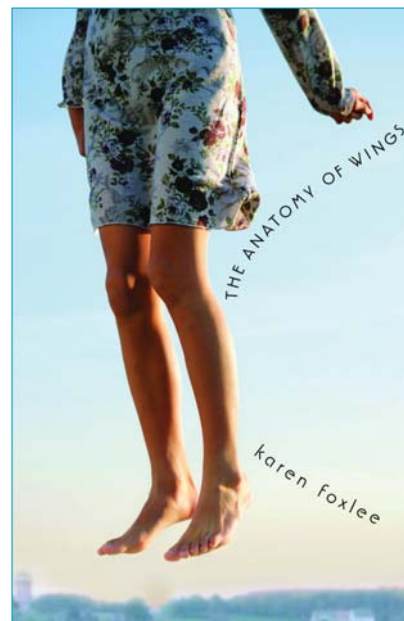
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debuts,  
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## The Anatomy of Wings

by Karen Foxlee  
Edited by Erin Clarke

ISBN: 978-0-375-85643-3  
\$16.99/\$18.99 Can.  
GLB ISBN: 978-0-375-95643-0  
\$19.99/\$22.99 Can.  
Young Adult Fiction  
On Sale: 2/10/2009



## from the editor



When I first read the manuscript for *The Anatomy of Wings*, I was stunned that it had been written by a first-time novelist. It is a richly complex debut that perfectly captures the often painful—and, in this case, tragic—transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Jenny, the ten-year-old narrator, tries to piece together the circumstances that led to her older sister's suicide in a small mining town full of secrets. Despite the unhappy circumstances of Jenny's family, *The Anatomy of Wings* is full of soul and hope and had me laughing on one page and crying on the next. It is a book that can be read and appreciated by teenagers and adults alike, as many of the best books in the world can.

—Erin Clarke

## from THE ANATOMY OF WINGS

Certain things were placed in the box. We were not supposed to touch them. No-one said it but we felt it. It was the way our mother held the box to her chest as she walked along the hallway, protectively, as though it were a baby. She hid it from us in clear view.

Angela and I removed it from the top shelf of the linen press. The door creaked. In the weeping house the only sound was our breathing in the silence that followed. Already, in the few weeks, a light layer of dust had settled over its lid.

It was Angela's idea. She said we needed to look inside to find my singing voice. It would help me to remember exactly when and how it happened that the words lodged in my chest quite close to my heart.

You'll never get it back unless you know why it went away she said. She was full of ideas.

It was a simple blue cardboard box. I thought it would be heavy. I thought the weight of it would make my arms shake, but it was light. The writing on the lid said in flowing white script Carnegie Elegant Glassware. In blue biro in the right-hand corner was one more word. Darling.

My sister Danielle was sleeping when we entered the room. She was facing us with her knees drawn up. In those weeks all anyone did was sleep. Our house was like Sleeping Beauty's palace after the enchanted spell is cast. People slept on beds and on sofas. They closed their eyes in chairs with cups of sweetened tea in their hands. Mum slept with pills that Auntie Cheryl counted out into her hand and guided to her mouth. Dad slept on the floor between us with one arm slung across his eyes.

Angela and I sat on my bed with the box between us. She looked at Danielle sleeping and then at me, asking me with her eyes if it was alright. I shrugged my shoulders. I didn't know what my mother would do if she found us with the box. I didn't know if she would sense it had been opened and leap from her bed and come running to find us. I didn't know what it would contain.

**I didn't know what my  
mother would do if she  
found us with the box.**

When I opened the lid the smell of fifty-cent-sized raindrops hitting dry earth escaped.

Angela opened her mouth into an O.

Up rose the scent of green apple shampoo. Of river stones once the flood has gone. The taste of winter sky laced with sulphur fumes. A kiss beneath a white-hearted tree. A hot still day holding its breath.

We removed the contents one by one.

There were two blue plastic hair combs. A tough girls' black rubber-band bracelet. A newspaper advertisement for a secretarial school folded in half. A blonde plait wrapped in gladwrap. A silver necklace with a half-a-broken heart pendant. An address, written in a leftward slanting hand, on a scrap of paper. Ballet shoes wrapped in laces.

From the box came the sound of bicycle tires humming on hot bitumen. Of bare feet running through crackling grass. Of frantic fingers unstitching an embroidered flower. Of paper wings rising on a sudden wind. Of the lake breathing against the shore.

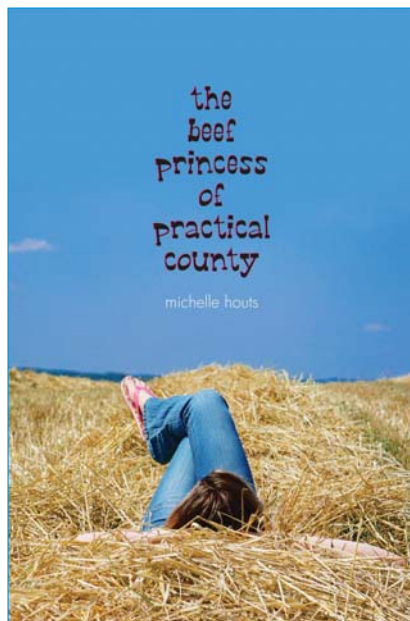
I didn't say anything. I kept very still. Danielle turned on her bed but kept sleeping.

"Somewhere in here," whispered Angela, "is the answer."

**Karen Foxlee** received the 2006 Queensland Premier's Literary Award for Best Emerging Author and has been nominated for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize. *The Anatomy of Wings* is her first novel. She has worked most of her adult life as a registered nurse and lives in Gympie, Australia, with her daughter, Alice.







## The Beef Princess of Practical County

by Michelle Houts

Edited by Claudia Gabel

ISBN: 978-0-385-73584-1

\$16.99/\$18.99 Can.

GLB ISBN: 978-0-385-90568-8

\$19.99/\$22.99 Can.

Middle-Grade Fiction

On Sale: 4/14/2009



## from the editor



What charmed me the most about Michelle Houts's debut middle-grade novel was its realistic depiction of life in the Midwest. The beautiful rustic setting is the perfect backdrop to a timeless coming-of-age story, narrated by a plucky, down-to-earth heroine. Young readers will love watching twelve-year-old Libby Ryan as she prepares to compete in the Practical County Fair's steer competition. They'll also laugh when Libby butts heads with the wicked Darling sisters, who have ruled the fair for years, and tear up when Libby must face auctioning off her calves, who have become like pets to her. Parents and teachers will find a lot to like as well. The Ryan family is a loving one that believes in tradition and promotes strong values; and the details about farming and the livestock industry paint a vivid portrait of what it's like to live in rural America. I am so proud to be publishing this gem of a book, and hope it finds a wide audience.

—Claudia Gabel

## from the beef princess of practical county

The barn was enormous from the inside. The huge, rounded roof arched what seemed like a mile overhead. The two mows, one for straw and one for hay, were nearly full this time of year, giving the place a fresh smell strong enough to overpower the damp manure from the stalls below.

Piggy ran to the gate to greet me.

"Hi, there, fella," I cooed to him as I scratched behind both his ears. He lifted his head and extended his long tongue to grab a hold of my coat sleeve. He had grown already and was starting to lose his fuzzy baby coat.

"You hungry again?"

**The calf turned his shiny black head toward me as I spoke. That's when I noticed his deep blue eyes.**

The second calf stayed out of reach at the far end of the pen. He never took his eyes off of me as I walked around the barn, sweeping the floor and pumping fresh water from the hydrant. He never flinched, even as I talked to him.

"We've got to come up with a name for you, fella. We can't just call you 'the other calf' forever, you know."

I threw one leg over the gate and my boot squished into the brown mixture of manure and straw. Piggy nuzzled my hand and licked my palm, hoping, I'm sure, to find it filled with grain.

"Sorry, Pig," I scratched his forehead and gently moved him aside. "I need to have a chat with this fella over here."

To my complete amazement, the other calf didn't startle or try to escape my presence as I approached. In fact, he stood perfectly still, allowing me to run my hands along his back and rub behind his ears.

"There now," I told him. "You're not unfriendly at all. You're just shy, aren't you, little guy?"

Testing my luck, I reached for the rope halter hanging on a nail over the feed

## from the beef princess of practical county continued

bunk. Slowly, carefully, I turned with the slightest of movements, fearing I'd spook him if I moved too fast. I kept one hand running evenly along his shoulder and back while I carefully slipped his nose into the halter. The calf turned his head from one side to the other, but never moved his feet at all.

"Now we're getting somewhere." I smiled at him as the halter slid easily over his ears and into position.

The calf turned his shiny black head toward me as I spoke. That's when I noticed his deep blue eyes. They were so blue, I had to look twice. He blinked his long, wispy lashes, again revealing the dark blue summer-night color of his eyes.

For awhile, I was sorry for misjudging him. For an instant my heart went out to this sweet, gentle animal standing so calmly before me. But only for an instant.

When I gently pulled on the rope halter to move forward, the calf did not budge.

"Come on," I coaxed. "Come on."

Nothing. I tugged at the halter and nudged his shoulder with mine.

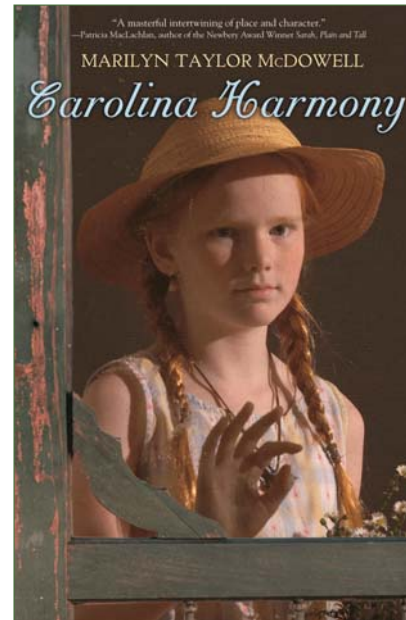
"Let's go," I said, a little louder.

Still not a step. It was as if his feet were glued to the straw below.

"All right," I nearly shouted. "COME ON!"

I yanked. Hard. By now the animal was moving. *Backward*. He stretched his neck against the pull of the halter, and without a moment's notice, he jerked his head. I was caught off guard. The rope slid from my fingers and I landed on my butt in the slick straw. As the wet manure below seeped up and soaked my jeans, the calf turned his head again to one side and blinked an innocent blue eye.

**Michelle Houts** is an elementary special education teacher and adjunct faculty member at Wright State University, Lake Campus. She lives in west central Ohio with her husband and their three children. This is her first novel.



### Carolina Harmony

by Marilyn Taylor McDowell

Edited by Michelle Poploff

ISBN: 978-0-385-73590-2

\$16.99/\$18.99 Can.

GLB ISBN: 978-0-385-90575-6

\$19.99/\$22.99 Can.

Middle-Grade Fiction

On Sale: 3/10/2009



## from the editor



It's always thrilling to find and nurture new talent and I feel we have a special newcomer here. Marilyn Taylor McDowell's luminous novel connects readers to a unique cast of characters and a natural landscape both beautiful and fierce.

Be prepared for twists and turns around every bend in this story of Carolina, a runaway hiding out at Harmony Farm, nestled in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains. The Harmonys treat Carolina as their own kin. Before this Carolina had a good life living with her family in the North Carolina mountains. But she won't risk telling the Harmonys about the accident that claimed them or talk about the year spent with Auntie Shen, her surrogate grandma, and certainly not about her terrible time in foster homes. When a troublemaker who lived in the foster home Carolina ran away from comes to Harmony Farm, Carolina sneaks him food and takes the blame for his pranks, until one night when something so terrible happens that Carolina feels forced to run away again.

I hope you'll join Carolina on this incredible journey. It's a trip worth taking.

—Michelle Poploff

from *Carolina Harmony*

**T**hey'd been having so much fun. Mr. Ray was telling stories with hilarious endings, contorting his face into the silliest expressions as he acted out one character after another. She'd gotten to laughing so hard she had to hold her belly. Even Mr. Ray was bent in two. All the while, he was teaching her how to drive the tractor.

Mr. Ray said it was not too late to turn this hillside into a field of cabbages, and then he went right into a story about a family of cabbage heads. That got Carolina laughing all over again. They made each other hungry talking about spicy cabbage relish and a crock full of sauerkraut. They agreed they would have a plentiful harvest come October. Mr. Ray said it was certain to be hard planting in this field, what with the rise and all, but you had to make the best of what you were given and appreciate the blessing. Carolina figured Mr. Ray to be the most thankful man she'd ever met.

He let her hold the steering wheel and then he showed her how to use the clutch. Her heart swelled with his praise—"You're a good learner. Aye, you're a natural." She drove at a slow and even speed, dragging the wooden stoneboat over the plowed field. After a while, Mr. Ray hopped down to the ground and let her drive all by herself.

Carolina felt on top of the world as she looked down from her perch on the tractor seat, holding that big steering wheel in her hands. Mr. Ray walked alongside in the furrows, picking up rocks in the overturned soil that were bigger than his fist and tossing them up onto the stoneboat. She steered the tractor around a large boulder. Mr. Ray began working at dislodging it. As the distance between them grew, she heard him yell, "Drive the length of this row and then stop."

Carolina figured she'd show Mr. Ray what a good driver she was. She knew she could turn the tractor around. Why, it would be simple. Didn't he say she was a natural? She shifted gears and pressed her foot on the gas, heading up the rise. She heard Mr. Ray holler and she hollered back, "I can do it!" Then everything went wrong at once.

**She hollered back,  
"I can do it!" Then  
everything went  
wrong at once.**

A jerk, a bang, the tractor rising, her hands leaving the steering wheel as if a force was pulling it away from her, and out of the corner of her eye, she saw Mr. Ray running as fast as he could.

She remembered how strange it was, how at the moment when she flew off the seat, it was as if she was floating in slow motion. First she saw sky, then mountain peaks, then trees and hill and field. She remembered the scream dying in her throat as she saw the underside of the tractor, thinking she was about to be crushed. But before her back hit the dirt, she was caught in his arms, yanked away, just about thrown. She landed with a solid thump. It knocked the wind out of her. She lay still, as if she'd been struck deaf and dumb. She remembered staring up at the soil caked between the wide ridges of the tire and seeing a cloud floating in the blue sky above it. Finally, she rose onto her elbows, uncertain whether ten seconds or an hour had passed.

That was when she saw Mr. Ray.

His eyes were closed as if he was sleeping, as if he was . . . No, she wouldn't let herself think that.

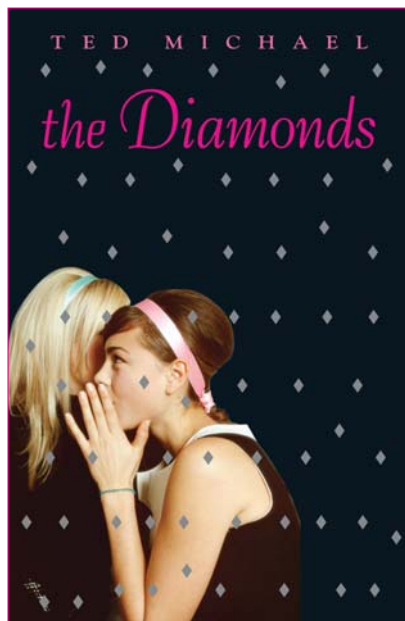
She crawled across the dirt quick as a spider. She shook him gently. "Mr. Ray, Mr. Ray, wake up." He made not a sound. He lay still as a stone. "Mr. Ray, Mr. Ray, please wake up." She saw the blood seep through his skin, saw a slow trickle make its way across his forehead.

After that, all she remembered was running. Get help! Every other thought in her head moved out of the way.

**Marilyn Taylor McDowell** has been bringing children and books together for over twenty-five years as librarian, storyteller, teacher, and proprietor of a children's bookshop. She lives in North Chittenden, Vermont.



Photo © Peter Barry



### The Diamonds

by Ted Michael

Edited by Stephanie Elliott

ISBN: 978-0-385-73579-7

\$8.99/\$9.99 Can.

GLB ISBN: 978-0-385-90565-7

\$11.99/\$13.99 Can.

Young Adult Fiction

On Sale: 4/14/2009



### from the editor



When I first read the proposal for Ted Michael's *The Diamonds*, I knew I had something special in my hands. Not only did he have a great, hook-y plot—anyone who's ever tangled with a Mean Girl clique will love this story of a former member taking them down—but the voice of Marni Valentine, the former Diamond who has her life turned upside down when she has the nerve to flirt with the lead Mean Girl's ex, is sharp, unique, and hilarious. She's not a chick lit stock character—she's a real, believable, funny person, and her reactions to her friends' increasingly extreme behavior are totally sympathetic. Further, Ted managed to create a smart novel with substance, working in the Constitution and the issue of protecting civil liberties, that's still hilarious and an utter joy to read.

—Stephanie Elliott

## from *the Diamonds*

There were more people in the Chorus room for my trial than all of the previous ones combined. People were clumped around the doorway, balancing on their toes to see inside. To see me.

Clarissa, Priya, and Lili looked formidable and gorgeous in their chic, black robes; I thought about mine, laying in its garment bag somewhere, and how—now more than ever—all I wanted to do was put it on and stand beside them.

Members of the jury scowled at me. Neither Mr. Townsen nor Principal Newman was anywhere to be found. Only the Diamonds and myself, separated by a judges' bench and an apology.

Clarissa looked stone cold. "You are being charged with multiple offenses, Ms. Valentine, including but not limited to First Degree Back-stabbing with Intention to Hurt, Second Degree Being a Huge Slut, and Third Degree Fugliness. How do you plead?"

"Why didn't you return any of my calls?" I asked.

Despite everything, I couldn't help but laugh at the ridiculousness of the entire scenario. "Is this for real?"

"We need your answer," Priya said.

"Why didn't you return any of my calls?" I asked.

"Please note the defendant refuses to answer the question," Clarissa said stiffly, "which automatically enters a default plea of Guilty."

I could tell I needed a better tactic. "Look, I have absolutely no desire to talk about this with you guys in front of all of these people"—I glanced around the room—"but you're making it impossible to do otherwise, so here goes: I'm sorry." I locked eyes with Clarissa. "This thing with Anderson just . . . happened. I didn't tell you because I didn't want you to be upset. I don't want to lose your friendship over something like this."

For a moment Clarissa's face softened, but then she said, "So you admit to having a secret relationship with Anderson behind my back, and behind Priya and Lili's, too?"



from *the Diamonds* continued

I felt my heart fold itself in half. Yes, I said, because really, what else was there to say? Someone behind me whispered *slut* and someone else whispered *dumb tranny*, which I hoped wasn't about me (but probably was), and before I knew it, Clarissa slammed down her gavel and said:

"The Diamond Court finds you guilty of all the above charges." Apparently, she didn't even need to check in with the jury for this one. "You betrayed our trust and you're never to speak to us again. If you see us in the hall, look the other way. Delete our numbers from your phone, and forget our e-mail addresses. Don't sit next to us in class." She leaned forward and scowled. "From this moment on, Marni, you no longer exist."

I was speechless. Lili stepped down from the bench and walked toward me. She looked the same as always, only there was something meaner, something crueler that lay just beneath her skin. "Hand over your necklace, Marni."

My hand involuntarily went to my collarbone, where my diamond pendant lay against the base of my throat. "You can't be serious," I said, waiting for her to apologize for this outrageous scenario.

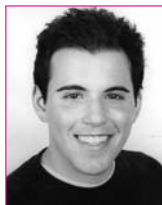
"Give us back the necklace," Lili said. "Now."

Slowly, I reached behind me and unclasped the one tangible item that proved I was a Diamond; the daily reminder of who my friends were and what my place at Bennington was.

I dropped it into Lili's hand, and held onto her fingers before letting go.

"Case closed," Clarissa declared.

**Ted Michael** was born in 1984 and grew up in Roslyn Heights, New York. He is a graduate of Columbia University and the Juilliard School and is a Presidential Scholar in the Arts. This is his first novel.



**The Forest of Hands and Teeth**

by Carrie Ryan  
Edited by Krista Marino

ISBN: 978-0-385-73681-7  
\$16.99/\$18.99 Can.  
GLB ISBN: 978-0-385-90631-9  
\$19.99/\$22.99 Can.  
Young Adult Fiction  
On Sale: 3/10/2009



from *the editor*



Bookmaking can be a long, drawn-out process. Sometimes it takes years to acquire, edit, and publish a book. But there are times when discoveries happen fast, and it's just as exciting for an editor as it is for an author when it does.

*The Forest of Hands and Teeth* came to me on a Friday afternoon. The summary looked interesting so I printed it out and took the manuscript home for the weekend. I started reading it on the train that evening and I couldn't stop until I'd finished. The story was so remarkable, it had me completely consumed.

On Sunday I emailed my publisher on her Blackberry and on Monday we acquired this project.

*The Forest of Hands and Teeth* is different from anything I've read before. It's a story that does what books are meant to do—whisk you away to a different world. It's truly books like this that make me love my job.

—Krista Marino

# from THE FOREST OF HANDS AND TEETH

**M**y mother used to tell me about the ocean. She said there was a place where there was nothing but water as far as you could see and that it was always moving, rushing towards you and then away. She once showed me a picture that she said was my great-great-great-grandmother standing in the ocean as a child. It has been years since, and the picture was lost to fire long ago, but I remember it, faded and worn. A little girl surrounded by nothingness.

In my mother's stories, passed down from her many-greats grandmother, the ocean sounded like the wind through the trees and men used to ride the water. Once, when I was older and our village was suffering through a drought, I asked my mother why, if so much water existed, were there years when our own streams ran almost dry? She told me that the ocean was not for drinking—that the water was filled with salt.

That is when I stopped believing her about the ocean. How could there be so much salt in the universe and how could God allow so much water to become useless?

But there are times when I stand at the edge of the Forest of Hands and Teeth and look out at the wilderness that stretches out forever and wonder what it would be like if it were all water. I close my eyes and listen to the wind in the trees and imagine a world of nothing but water closing over my head.

It would be a world without the Unconsecrated, a world without the Forest of Hands and Teeth.

Often, my mother stands next to me holding her hand up over her eyes to block the sun and looking out past the fences and into the trees and brush, waiting to see if her husband will come home to her.

She is the only one who believes that he has not turned—that he might come home the same man he was when he left. I gave up on my father months ago and

**It would be a  
world without the  
Unconsecrated, a world  
without the Forest of  
Hands and Teeth.**

buried the pain of losing him as deeply as possible so that I could continue with my daily life. Now I sometimes fear coming to the edge of the Forest and looking past the fence. I am afraid I will see him there with the others: tattered clothes, sagging skin, the horrible pleading moan and the fingers scraped raw from pulling at the metal fences.

That no one has seen him gives my mother hope. At nights she prays to God that he has found some sort of enclave similar to our village. That somewhere in the dense Forest he has found safety. But no one else has any hope. The Sisters tell us that ours is the only village left in the world.

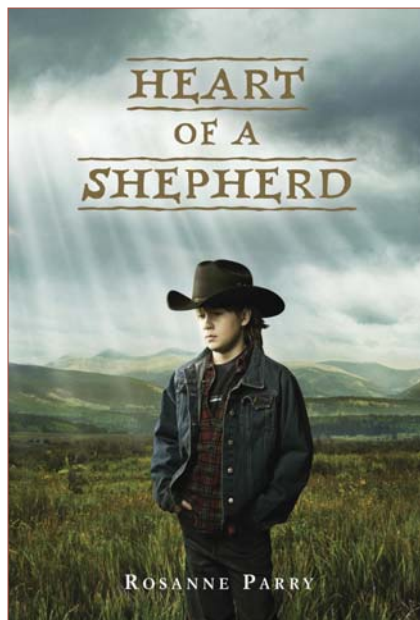
My brother Jed has taken to volunteering extra shifts for the Guardian patrols that monitor the fence line. I know that, like me, he thinks our father is lost to the Unconsecrated and that he hopes to find him during the patrol of the perimeter and kill him before our Mother sees what her husband has become.

Jed and I watch our mother closely now and we never allow her to approach the fence line unaccompanied. At times, Jed's wife Beth used to join us on these vigils until she was sent to bed rest with her first child. Now it is just us.

Born and raised in Greenville, South Carolina, **Carrie Ryan** is a graduate of Williams College and Duke University Law School. A former lawyer, she currently writes full time in Charlotte, North Carolina.



Photo © Darren Casasse



## Heart of a Shepherd

by Rosanne Parry  
Edited by Jim Thomas

ISBN: 978-0-375-84802-5  
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GLB ISBN: 978-0-375-94802-2  
\$18.99/\$21.99 Can.  
Middle-Grade Fiction  
On Sale: 1/27/2009



## from the editor



All it took was one day of helping out on her best friend's ranch in eastern Oregon to convince Rosanne Parry that being a cowboy was not her true calling—and stock horses everywhere are grateful!

The lessons in calf roping never stuck, but the stark beauty of eastern Oregon and the neighborliness and shared purpose of the ranching community made a lasting impression. Rosanne found a similar rapport among the military families she knew when her husband, an army officer, was deployed to the First Gulf War. Both experiences were profound, and inspired her to write her first novel, *Heart of a Shepherd*, a soulful and uplifting look at one corner of the heartland and the people there who, as a matter of tradition and duty, join the reserves, who are “boots on the ground” in our current conflicts. Who are as diverse as Irish, Mexican, and Basque; Catholic and Quaker. Who are bound to each other and bound to the land.

—Jim Thomas

# from HEART OF A SHEPHERD

## Cow Camp August

The trouble with four-thirty in the morning at our cow camp up in the mountains is not just that it's darn early, it's freezing cold, too, even in August. I want to hide in the bottom of my sleeping bag, but I know better than to make Dad call me twice. I slide down from the top bunk and gasp in a big, chilly breath when my bare feet hit the cabin floor.

John's awake already and sitting on Pete's empty bunk. He looks an inch taller to me since he got back from basic training in June. Maybe it's just the extra muscles. Now that they both have army haircuts, Jim and John could be twins. They both have Grandpa's nose and Dad's square chin, and we all have

“Do you need medical help? A translator?

Please remain calm.

Please clear the area.”

Grandma's blue eyes. Frank's still got a mop of red hair. It's all I can see sticking out of the top of his sleeping bag. Jim pokes him a couple times to get him out of bed, and Frank growls at him in a much deeper voice than he used to have.

Dad fusses with the woodstove and then slides the cast-iron skillet into place. I pull up a stool to the long table in the middle of the room, put a couple handfuls of beans into the coffee grinder, and start cranking. John clears away the cards and poker chips from last night and sets the table. Jim is the oldest brother here, so he heads out to the shed to take care of the horses.

I keep thinking one of my brothers is going to say something about Dad leaving today, but I guess “not talking” is a big tradition nobody told me about up here at cow camp. I've been dying to come every summer since I was nine, when Frank went with the big boys and left me the only kid at home with Grandma. You have to be twelve to go; that's the rule. Dad made an exception this year. I'll be twelve in October, and Dad won't even be back home next summer.

from **HEART OF A  
SHEPHERD**  
*continued*

The first orange-pink light from the east window warms up one end of the table. Dad puts the last of his Arabic CDs into the player and pops on the headphones while he cooks breakfast. He repeats the same phrases over and over, switching from Arabic to English and back again.

“How many kilometers to the well? The hospital? The police station? The nearest road?”

He turns the steaks over and cracks an egg next to each one.

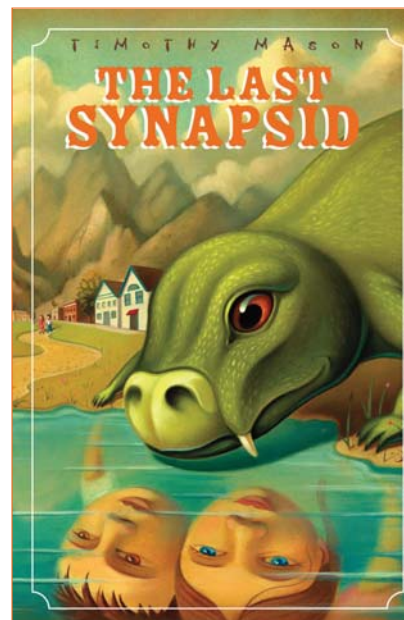
“Do you need medical help? A translator? Please remain calm. Please clear the area.”

He puts two shakes of salt and pepper on each egg and turns them over.

His voice sounds so strange to me in Arabic. His words are stiff and formal, and when I hear them, I feel like he’s gone already.

As soon as the steak and eggs smell done, the rest of the boys are at the table like a shot. Somebody should say something about Dad going. He and I are riding back home this morning and then driving to the airport this evening to send off his unit. Fourteen hours, and he’ll be in the air. But the brothers just pull up, speed through table grace, and start eating like today is the same as every other day.

**Rosanne Parry** lives in an old farmhouse in Portland, Oregon, with bunnies and chickens and her husband and four kids. She wrote this story in a tree house in her backyard. Visit Rosanne’s Web site at [www.rosanneparry.com](http://www.rosanneparry.com).



**The Last Synapsid**

by Timothy Mason  
Edited by Stephanie Lane

ISBN: 978-0-385-73581-0  
\$16.99/\$18.99 Can.  
GLB ISBN: 978-0-385-90567-1  
\$19.99/\$22.99 Can.  
Middle-Grade Fiction  
On Sale: 2/10/2009



from **the editor**



I’m thrilled to share with you one of my favorite books that I’ve edited thus far at Delacorte. *The Last Synapsid* is a warm, funny, touching adventure novel for middle-grade readers that reminds me of E.T. It’s the perfect curl-up-with-a-cup-of-cocoa-and-get-lost book.

Faith, Colorado, doesn’t get many visitors. But this spring, a mysterious creature is lurking on the mountain. What is it, and what does it want? Only twelve-year-old Rob and his best friend Phoebe are brave enough to investigate. What they find on the mountain is *The Last Synapsid*, a creature that looks like a dinosaur crossed with a wienerdog, who not only speaks English, but claims to need Rob and Phoebe’s help. Having wandered into a time snag from his own era, 250 million years before the dinosaurs, “Sid” is chasing a violent carnivore called a gorgonopsid. The Gorgon, he explains, has become fascinated by humanity and refuses to return to his proper place in time. But if he doesn’t, history will realign, humans will never evolve, and Rob and Phoebe will end up as nothing more than characters in an elderly synapsid’s dream.

—Stephanie Lane

# from THE LAST SYNAPSID

**I**t stepped forward and Rob and Phoebe both took a step backwards. It sniffed the earth at its feet, then looked up and sniffed the air, and then its gaze settled again on the two kids. They had goosebumps, and a tingling skittered up their spines. The creature took another bow-legged step toward them, and the kids took another step back and the air began to feel warm and humid.

Suddenly the creature turned around in a full circle and lay down, just like a dog would—its head up, facing them, its front paws folded under its chest. Nothing could have surprised Rob and Phoebe more.

“What kind of a thing is it?” whispered Rob.

“I don’t know,” Phoebe whispered back. “But I think it just saved your life.”

“I guess.”

“Is that fur? Or hide?”

“I’m not sure.” All this, in whispers.

The beast seemed to be studying Rob and Phoebe as well, its deep black eyes moving over them slowly. It stood again, and the kids nervously stepped back.

A long silent moment passed among them. The first pink rays of dawn touched the tip of Stair-Master, and leapt from peak to peak, on into the distance. A gentle spring wind tousled the kids’ hair, and the beast raised its head and sniffed, and its brow furrowed just a bit.

There it was again: a wet, warm, swamp-like odor. They seemed to see the creature through a humid shivering layer of warm air.

“Phoebe?” Rob whispered. “I don’t think this guy attacked any horses.”

“I don’t know,” said Phoebe. “Those tusks . . .”

The beast snorted and gave its head a little shake.

**The beast snorted  
and gave its head a  
little shake.**

“I’m going to touch it,” said Rob.

“No,” breathed Phoebe. “Rob, you don’t know anything about it, it’s not safe . . .”

But Rob had already taken a step toward the animal, who responded by lifting its head and gazing at him intently.

“Okay, fella,” said Rob. “I’m just gonna give your head a little pat here, just a friendly little pat.”

The creature didn’t move. Its big dark eyes followed Rob as he approached. Rob’s left hand was actually shaking as he slowly reached down to put his fingertips on the top of the animal’s glistening head. The moment he made contact, Rob was engulfed in a hot wind, strange cries shrieked in his ears and beads of sweat sprang out on his forehead.

He pulled his hand away fast, like he’d burned it, staring with wide fearful eyes at the creature.

“What?” said Phoebe. “What is it, Rob? What just happened?”

Rob was breathing hard. He shook his head.

And then the beast opened its jaws and said, “That’s where I come from.”

**Timothy Mason** is an award-winning playwright. Among many other works, he wrote the book and lyrics for the Broadway Musical *Dr. Seuss’s How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* He lives in New York.



Photo © Leo Beier





## Mudville

by Kurtis Scaletta

Edited by Allison Wortche

ISBN: 978-0-375-85579-5

\$16.99/\$18.99 Can.

GLB ISBN: 978-0-375-95579-2

\$19.99/\$22.99 Can.

Middle-Grade Fiction

On Sale: 2/24/2009



## from the editor



Welcome to Moundville, where it's been raining for twenty-two years straight, where talk of an ancient curse hovers in the humid air, and where twelve-year-old Roy McGuire lives and longs to play baseball.

From the moment I sat down to read Kurtis Scaletta's debut novel, I've been in love with this strange town and its vibrant characters. Right from the brilliant opening pages, the narrative voice pulled me in—it's so immediate and authentic, I felt as if I were there, watching the clouds miraculously clear, rooting for Roy's spirited (but seemingly doomed) baseball team until the very last triumphant sentence. Along with the funny, muddy premise and the perfect dose of magical realism comes a story with true emotion—this is a novel about loyalty, teamwork, friendship, and family.

I hope that as you read *Mudville*, you find yourself laughing out loud, drawn into the lives of these irresistible characters, and eager to share this hilarious and heartwarming book with anyone who appreciates blue skies after the rain.

—Allison Wortche

## from *Mudville*

My father says the defining moment of his life came when he was twelve years old.

"The defining moment in a person's life isn't necessarily the greatest moment," he tells me. "When you were born, Roy, that was the greatest moment in my life. But this was the defining moment. It's the moment everybody knows me by. It's the moment I knew exactly who I was."

"Who's that?"

"The luckiest son of a gun there ever was, that's who."

This moment came on the Fourth of July, during the last baseball game he ever played. It was the annual game between our hometown of Moundville and our archrival, Sinister Bend. It was the bottom of the fourth inning, and Moundville was trailing by eleven runs.

Seeing black clouds creep in across the sky, the Moundville coach corralled the boys in the dugout and told them to take their time. Hold up the game, he said. Pray for rain. By long-standing rule, the game wouldn't be official until the fourth inning was done. If they could just prolong the inning until the sky opened up,

Moundville could reschedule the game in a week or so, when their star pitcher was healthy again.

Hold up the game,

he said. Pray for rain.

The first batter dawdled all he could but lasted only a few minutes. The second flailed at the first pitch and grounded out.

My father was Moundville's last hope. He stood in the batter's box for nearly half an hour, fouling off pitches, stamping around in the dirt, and adjusting his gloves between every pitch, until the Sinister Bend pitcher looked ready to take off his head with a fastball.

His defining moment came on the thirty-second pitch. By that time, the sky had opened, sending sheets of rain across the baseball field while lightning was flashing in the distance.

# from *Mudville* continued

The hit itself was nothing—a lucky seeing-eye single that squirted on wet grass by the diving third baseman and skittered to the fence. It was booted and mishandled and overthrown by the defense, mostly due to the slippery conditions. My dad even came around to score, on a single and three bases' worth of errors by the Sinister Bend team.

It didn't make much of a dent in the box score. It made all the difference, though, because the game was called just one out short of being official. All eleven Sinister Bend runs were off the books. If it wasn't for the rain and lightning, the Moundville players might have carried my dad off the field on their shoulders. Instead, they huddled in the dugout, waiting for the storm to blow over.

The Sinister Bend team refused to yield. They sat in their dugout, looking with determined eyes at the Moundville team, who also refused to yield. If the Sinister Bend team would wait, so would they. The dugouts were covered, but sheets of rain were sweeping in, keeping the boys plenty wet and miserable.

"It was a game of wet chicken," my dad likes to say.

It grew dark, and the parents of boys on both sides began to drive by, flashing their lights in the mist and honking their horns. Every time a car passed, one or two boys would have to quit the standoff and go home.

The last two boys were my father and the Sinister Bend pitcher. They were the only ones whose parents had not come to pick them up and take them home. They waited, wet and cold, in different corners of the muddy diamond, a full hour after every single other person had gone home.

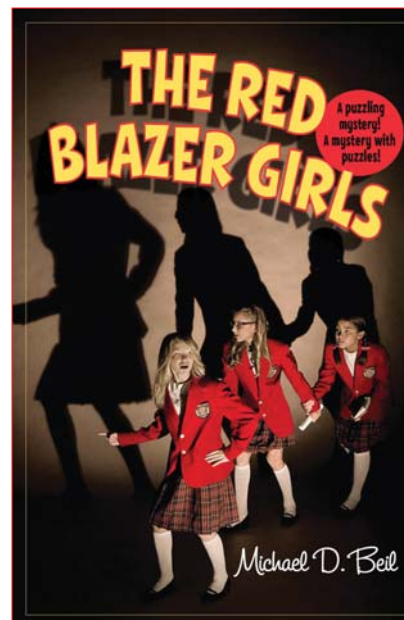
At last, the Sinister Bend pitcher stood up and stepped out of the rain. "This isn't over!" he shouted at my dad. "Not by a long shot!"

It still isn't over, twenty-two years later. After all, it's still raining.

**Kurtis Scaletta** lives in Minneapolis with his wife and several cats. He got the idea for *Mudville* during a rain delay in a game between the Minnesota Twins and the Texas Rangers. He wondered, what if it just kept raining? To find out more about Kurtis, visit [www.kurtisscaletta.com](http://www.kurtisscaletta.com).



Photo © Angela Scaletta



## The Red Blazer Girls

by Michael D. Beil

Edited by Cecile A. Goyette

ISBN: 978-0-375-84814-8

\$16.99/\$18.99 Can.

GLB ISBN: 978-0-375-94814-5

\$19.99/\$22.99 Can.

Middle-Grade Fiction

On Sale: 4/14/2009



## from the editor



Smart girls rule—and they solve mysteries! Why did I want to take on this project from a first-time writer? First, I liked the girls he created; they could've been friends of mine and I liked that they were interested and enthusiastic about things in a way that felt authentic. Mike (the author) avoided the depressing cliché of middle-grade characters that are all "yeah right, whatever, I'm so bored." As an editor and reader, I am beyond tired of that.

Next, the story is so interesting—with history and legends, family drama, friendship issues, twisty clues, and a boy, a *really* great boy, to add to the delicious mix. I could just see these girls running around Manhattan, meeting at each other's apartments to decipher the latest puzzle or problem. And they still have to go to school, deal with parents and siblings, each other, and, well, life!

I am delighted to report that the girls have found themselves in another sticky, mysterious situation, coming your way in summer 2010. In the meantime, here's hoping you enjoy this debut and that *it's a first* of many more to come.

—Cecile A. Goyette

# from THE RED BLAZER GIRLS

As we're beginning to think that this Ms. Harriman is just a lonely old lady looking for someone to talk to, she takes a deep breath, sits back in her chair, and tells us her story.

"To begin, my father, Everett Harriman, was a well known archaeologist. The time we spent in dusty old tents, reading poetry and talking about art, literature, and politics—those were the happiest days of my life."

She stops while her maid refills our cups with the oddly appealing Flower Power tea.

"And then I met Malcolm Chance, a young colleague of Dad's at Columbia. Tall, dark, handsome—like something out of a romance novel. We were married, and a few years later, I had a beautiful little girl, my Caroline. You girls remind me so much of her. I remember how proud she was the day she received *her* red school blazer, how she stood in front of the mirror admiring herself in it."

Margaret and I smile sheepishly at each other; we did the exact same thing.

"Ms. Harriman, er, Elizabeth, we're just, just kids—how can we possibly help you?" Margaret, as ever, gets right to the point.

"By helping me find something." From a cream colored envelope she takes out an ordinary looking birthday card.

"Twenty years ago, Dad bought this birthday card for Caroline's fourteenth birthday. Then he stuck it inside *The Complete Poems of Tennyson*, where it remained until yesterday, when I discovered it. She hands it to Margaret. "Here, please read it aloud."

**Margaret reads:**

My Dearest Caroline,

On the auspicious occasion of your fourteenth birthday, I present you with a gift of rare and precious beauty to match your own. However, you must

prove yourself worthy of possessing this gift, and so, in keeping with our mutual love of riddles and all things mysterious, I have created an elaborate puzzle for you: solve the puzzle, and you will find your gift.

You will find the first clue in the school library, within the only copy of our favorite play, Renidash's "Cholos orf Lanscad."

With all my love,

Grandpa Ev

"He never gave it to her. He died on December 8, the day before her birthday. He was in that very chair when I found him."

I squirm uncomfortably and tell myself over and over not to freak out just because I was sitting where a guy died. Deep breaths, Sophie. Deep breaths.

"You think the clue might still be in the school, inside this play?" Margaret asks.

Ms. Harriman nods. "Not just that clue. Everything."

"But twenty years a *long* time for somebody to *not* find something stuck in a library book," I say.

Margaret looks directly at me. "Well, we won't know if we don't look."

That brings a satisfied smile to Ms. Harriman's red-as-my-blazer lips. "Would you really look for it for me?"

Margaret looks first at Rebecca, and then at me. "What do you think, guys? Up for a little adventure?"

"Always," I say.

"No problem," says Rebecca.

And then we are on our way out the door. "We'll let you know as soon as we find anything," Margaret says.

"If," I say, half under my breath.

"When!" Margaret corrects me.

And *that* is how the Red Blazer Girls got their very first case.

**Michael D. Beil** is a New York City high school English and theater teacher. He counts Encyclopedia Brown, classic and nonclassic horror films, and his students as among his literary inspirations.





## Shadowed Summer

by Sandra Mitchell  
Edited by Wendy Loggia

ISBN: 978-0-385-73571-1  
\$15.99/\$17.99 Can.  
GLB ISBN: 978-0-385-90560-2  
\$18.99/\$21.99 Can.  
Young Adult Fiction  
On Sale: 2/10/2009



## from the editor



I read *Shadowed Summer* on a cold winter day, and it completely transported me. I loved the sultry setting, and the story in which much happens below the surface (a bit like the small town it is set in, Ondine, Louisiana). Sandra's strong writing and eye for detail made this submission stand out, and the feel of the story reminded me of an old movie, *The Gift*—small town Georgia psychic is tormented by visions connected to the murder of a local vamp (Katie Holmes, pre-Tom Cruise). And, it turns out, Sandra's not only a debut novelist, she's a screenwriter, naturally!

While there's a ghost in this book, it's not really a ghost story. It's about relationships and secrets and regular teenagers who find themselves digging into the past. It's the kind of book that I think readers will really respond to. And who knows, maybe it will inspire them to uncover some family secrets of their own. . . .

—Wendy Loggia

## from *Shadowed Summer*

"You're not supposed to do it by yourself," Ben said, unfolding the board between us. Perched on top of Jules, me and Collette sat on one side of the board, like students to Ben's teacher on the other side. "You need at least two, to keep from being possessed."

Nodding at this wisdom, we watched as Ben shook the pointer out of its red velvet bag. His witchboard was even better than we hoped.

Instead of cardboard and plastic, like the kind that came from the store, Ben's was made out of wood—mahogany, with light pine letters set right into the top. When I touched the pointer, it was warm and buttery. And heavy, too—alive and full of witch fire.

Secretly, I admired Ben a little more for owning something so fine and rare, but only a little.

"Where'd you get this?" I whispered.

"It was my nonna's," he said, rubbing the board with a fluffy cloth square. "And it was her nonna's; she brought it over when she came from Italy."

**Secretly, I admired Ben  
a little more for owning  
something so fine and  
rare, but only a little.**

Generations of Ben's family had passed the board on? Most people had only bothered to bring a family Bible over from Europe. That they brought this, that made me twice as impressed.

"All right, everybody has to promise not to push," Collette said. She put the pointer in the middle of the board, then tapped the edge with her finger to test it. It took barely anything to slide to the spot on the bottom that said *Addio*. Since I recognized *Sí* and *No* on the top, I guessed *addio* meant 'goodbye.'

"I'm not going to push," I promised quietly as I put my fingers down.

"What should we ask first?" Collette whispered.



# from shadowed summer

continued

Rolling his head back to stare at the sky, as if the answer would be written in the clouds, Ben thought about it for a minute. “Is anybody listening?”

The pointer didn’t move.

Every second lasted a whole afternoon, and I felt old and wound-up when I finally said, “Maybe we should try something else.”

Nudging me, Collette lifted her fingers from the pointer to rub the sweat from them. “You should ask if he’s here.”

“Who?” Ben smiled, his eyes flicking at me, then back at her.

My face went hot. I guess I deserved it, for going out of my way to embarrass Collette at the Red Stripe the day before, but still. If I’d wanted to mention being a little crazy, I would have brought it up myself. “Nobody.”

“She saw a ghost, right here.” Collette nodded toward Claire’s crypt. “Well, over there, really. He came right up close and said her name.”

Ben’s mouth dropped open. “Really?”

Shrugging, I gritted my teeth. I hadn’t had a chance to tell her I must have made it all up, but selfishly, I didn’t want to give Ben a reason to take his beautiful witchboard home. “Yeah.”

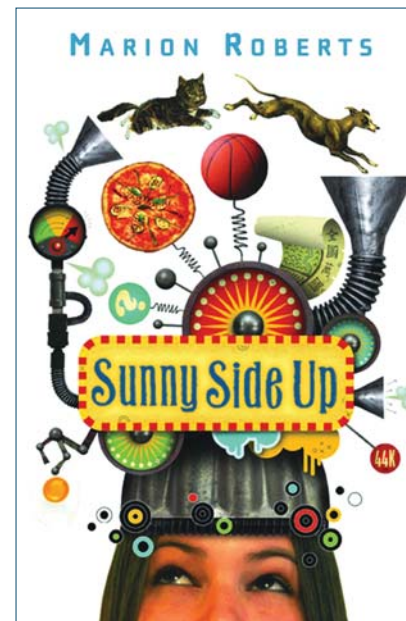
“Then we should try him,” Ben said. His eyes were cornflower blue; I’d never noticed that before.

The pointer slipped around under my fingers, and I watched the tendons flickering in my wrist. Out of curiosity, I pushed real light. Even though the pointer moved, my muscles hardly told on me; Collette and Ben didn’t seem to notice. “I guess we could try.”

A screenwriter and author, **Saundra Mitchell** penned the screenplays for the Fresh Films and Girls in the Director’s Chair short film series. She lives in Indianapolis and welcomes you to visit her at [www.saundramitchell.com](http://www.saundramitchell.com).



Photo © Jason Walters



## Sunny Side Up

by Marion Roberts  
Edited by Wendy Lamb

ISBN: 978-0-385-73672-5  
\$15.99/\$17.99 Can.  
GLB ISBN: 978-0-385-90624-1  
\$18.99/\$21.99 Can.  
Middle-Grade Fiction  
On Sale: 2/10/2009

WENDY  
LAMB  
BOOKS

## from the editor



The summer of 2007 was grim—in the world of the YA submissions on my desk. Assistant editor Caroline Meckler and I were beginning to lose our minds on a steady diet of novels about flu epidemics, serial killers, and teenagers who were 1. about to die, 2. trying not to die, 3. in love with someone dead, 4. dead, but in touch with the living.

We came to life when we read this charming first middle-grade novel by a talented new Australian writer with a knack for bringing humor to a story that is touching and emotional at heart. *Sunny Side Up* is told in a wry, funny voice by eleven-year-old Sunny Hathaway, an only child living near the beach in Australia. An oppressive heat wave is making Sunny sizzle, just when her perfect life is about to change. Big time.

We hope young readers will enjoy every summer-sunny minute of *Sunny Side Up* as much as we did.

—Wendy Lamb



## from **Sunny Side Up**

Carl, Lyall, Saskia, and Boris officially invaded on Wednesday, right after school. Mum and Carl wanted to have a modern blended family dinner to celebrate our new togetherness. I asked if we could make baked Alaska for dessert, because so far I'd only ever seen pictures of it in Larousse Gastronomique (which is a cookbook that's so fat it should really think about going on a diet), but as usual Mum said it was too complicated and that it would be better to do it in the school holidays, which, of course, had just finished. Let's face it, it's never school holidays when I get the urge for baked Alaska.

Boris was locked in the front room as part of his settling-in process. He is a pure-black cat. They're meant to bring you bad luck if you happen to see one crossing your path, but in Boris's case I think the bad luck boomeranged. For a cat like Boris, who looks a lot like a rabbit, winding up sharing his life with a greyhound isn't exactly fortunate. He was definitely lined up to become a dog's breakfast. Willow had taken up a full-time position outside Lyall and Saskia's room with her snout squeezed under the door, making loud snorting sounds and shaking all over.

"They'll be fine," Mum said, peeling carrots. "They'll get used to one another. It happens all the time with dogs and cats."

We were out in the shed kitchen waiting for Carl to come home. Mum was making a Vietnamese salad to go with the barbecued fish. I was cutting potatoes into wedges and thinking about Willow and Boris, and baked Alaska, and about how my head was awfully itchy.

"Can I help peel?" asked Saskia.

"I want to help too," said Lyall, who probably didn't really want to help at all, but didn't want to miss out on something Saskia got to do, even if it was as dull as peeling carrots. That's what siblings do, you know. It's a constant competition.

**"They'll be fine," Mum said, peeling carrots.**

**"They'll get used to one another. It happens all the time with dogs and cats."**

"Lyall-luh! I asked first, and anyway there's only one peeler!" roared Saskia.

"That's unfair-ruh. You always get to peel-luh."

"Well, jeez, Lyall-luh, find your own job-buh."

"Mum," I said, scratching my head, "I think I might have lice."

"Eeew, like, gross," said Lyall.

"No it's not. It's not my fault. The whole school's got them, Lyall. There's an epidemic."

"Not at our school," said Saskia.

And I said, "What? Catholics don't get lice?"

And Mum said, "Now, come on, you lot." (Can you believe I get referred to now as you lot? I used to have my own name.)

"Can you check, Mum?" I said, leaning my head toward her. "Please?"

"Sunny, it's not really the right time, darling. Can't it wait until after dinner? Lyall, how about lighting the barbecue. Do you think you can do that?"

"I want to light the barbecue!" said Saskia, throwing down the peeler and racing Lyall outside.

"On second thoughts you guys, maybe wait till your dad gets home!" Mum shouted after them.

"Mum, I can't bear it! I need you to run through my hair with the lice comb. I can feel them multiplying!"

"Sunny, for God's sake! It's not all about you right now, okay? I said I'd do it after dinner!"

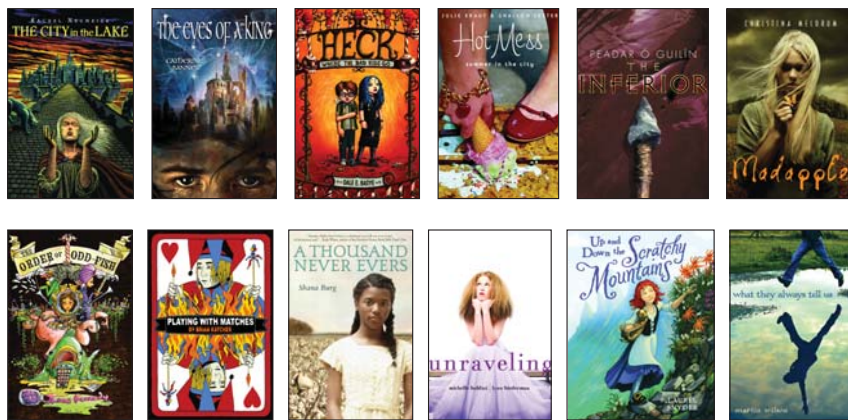
"Fine!" I said, tossing the potato wedges into a baking tray. "Be like that, then!" And I went inside and played "Greensleeves" as loud as I could on the piano, until Carl came home and asked me to stop because I was creating noise pollution.

**Marion Roberts** lives in Melbourne, Australia. She has worked as a chef and taught cooking, but started writing because she wanted a job she could do in her pajamas. *Sunny Side Up* is her first novel.

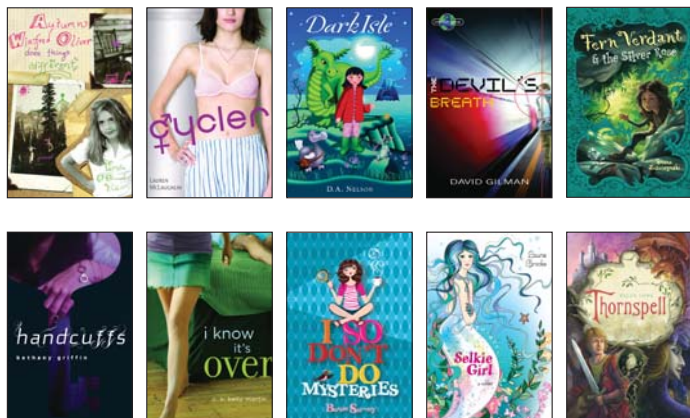


Photo © Jan Ritchie-Jones

## New—Available Now!



## New for Fall 2008!



[www.randomhouse.com/kids](http://www.randomhouse.com/kids)

[www.randomhouse.com/teens](http://www.randomhouse.com/teens)

## Recent Notable Debuts



"In debut novelist Christina Meldrum's mesmerizing literary mystery *Madapple* (Knopf), the worlds of science and fiction collide."  
—*Vanity Fair*, "Hot Type" section, June 2008 issue

★ "Audiences will need some intellectual mettle for the densely seeded ideas, but they won't be able to stop reading."  
—*Publishers Weekly*, Starred

★ "There is much to ponder in this enthralling achievement from a debut author."  
—*Booklist*, Starred

★ "With this spellbinding debut, Meldrum marks herself as an author to watch."  
—*Kirkus Reviews*, Starred



★ "Uproarious. . . . The author's umpteen clever allusions . . . make this book truly sparkle."  
—*Publishers Weekly*, Starred

"Parents and readers . . . are in for a treat with Dale E. Basye's very funny debut novel."  
—*Wall Street Journal*



## Recent Notable Debuts



★ “Debut novelist Martin displays uncanny insight, replacing the issue-driven engine common to most pregnant-teen stories with an emotionally complex and disarmingly frank coming-of-age tale.”

—*Publishers Weekly* Starred

★ “Authentic and sophisticated, the teen banter appeals to both casual readers and literary enthusiasts. Rich characters and honest interactions set Martin’s debut novel apart, and readers will look forward to whatever gestates next.”

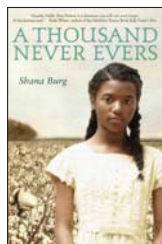
—*Kirkus Reviews* Starred

“A great choice for mixed-gender book groups.”

—*The Bulletin*

“Miller doesn’t shy away from anything. . . . Readers will be wiser and more understanding of themselves and their friends.”

—*KLIATT*



A 2008 NAPPA  
Gold Award Winner

A 2008 Parents’ Choice  
Silver Honor Winner

★ “References to significant historical events add authenticity and depth, while Addie’s frank, expertly modulated voice delivers an emotional wallop.”

—*Publishers Weekly*, Starred



★ “Amanda speaks with wit . . . an ambitious, timely first novel.”

—*Publishers Weekly*, Starred

“The story moves at a quick pace . . . thanks to Amanda’s honest and often humorous voice, as well as her thoughtful poetry interjected throughout.”

—*School Library Journal*



★ “Insightfully evoked, Alex, James and their friends will leave a lasting impression on readers.”

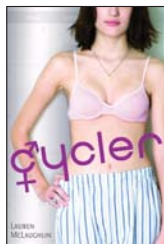
—*Publishers Weekly*, Starred

“This is a refined and sensitive account of two brothers in the midst of figuring out who they’ve been and who they want to be.”

—*The Bulletin*



## Recent Notable Debuts



"The sci-fi plot is so unique, so downright weird, it will keep the pages turning."

—Chicago Tribune

"The narrative toggles back and forth between Jill's and Jack's points of view, comically detailing the problems you can get into when you're half boy and half girl, including what happens when the boy falls for the girl's best friend."

—The New York Times Book Review



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

## Recent Notable Debuts



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

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

—Kirkus Reviews

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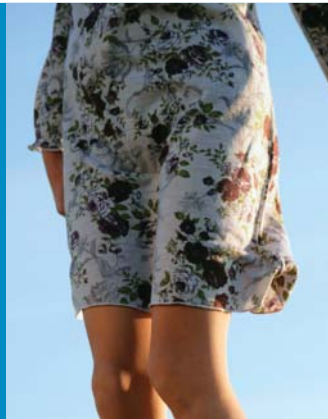
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