

# Fresh Fiction from New Voices

Spring 2010



WHERE STRONG VOICES  
BECOME BESTSELLERS!

Front cover, clockwise from top right: Illustration from *Your Life, but Better!* by Angela Martini; illustration from *The Sixty-Eight Rooms* © 2010 by Greg Call; photo from *All Unquiet Things* © 2010 by Eva Kolenko; illustration from *Unfamiliar Magic* © 2010 by Marcos Chin.

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# Fresh Fiction from New Voices

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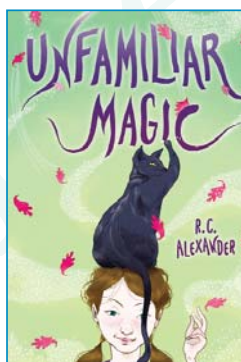
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# Fresh Fiction from New Voices



New for Spring 2010!



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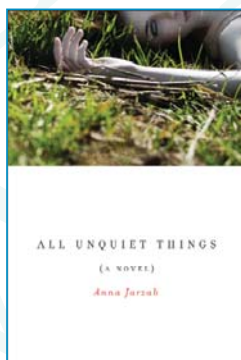
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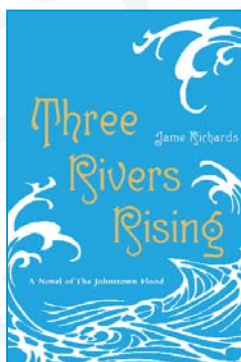
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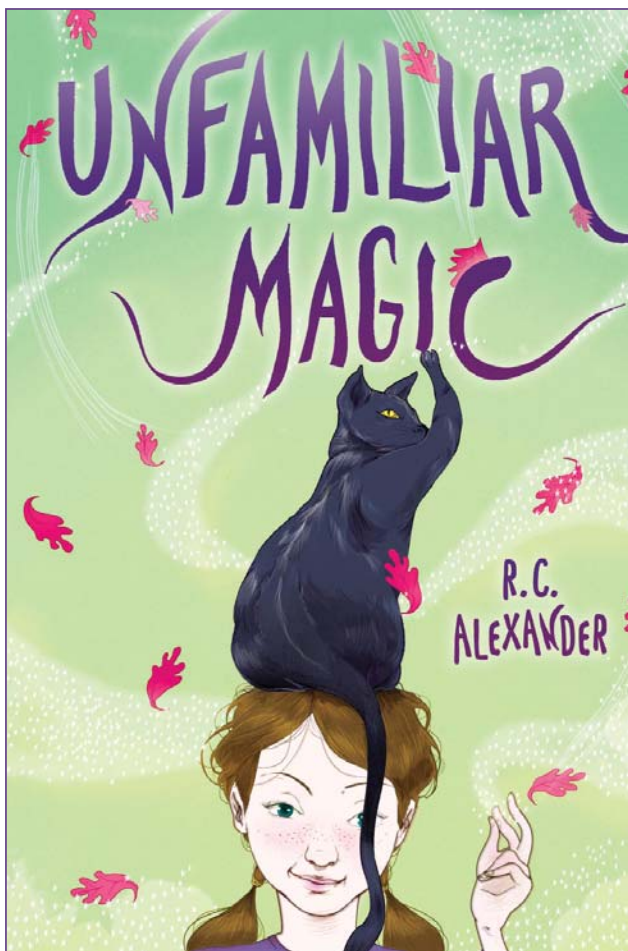


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Second novels from former  
It's a First! novelists  
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## Unfamiliar Magic

by R. C. Alexander

Edited by Nicholas Eliopoulos

ISBN: 978-0-375-85854-3

\$17.99/\$22.99 Can.

GLB ISBN: 978-0-375-95854-0

\$20.99/\$25.99 Can.

Middle-Grade Fiction

On Sale: 4/27/2010



## from the editor



It was a lucky day when *Unfamiliar Magic* first crossed my path.

At its core, this is the story of two girls learning to be sisters. But one of those girls is Desi, a pre-teen witch, and the other is Cat, a teen who *used* to be a witch's feline familiar. It's a hilarious setup that doesn't disappoint.

In fact, there's a lot of humor in the book. Desi's stepdad is a golem made of beer cans and sports pages. Her magic mirror is a hand-me-down that runs on an infuriatingly obsolete operating system. But Cat steals the show as she makes every effort to pass for human.

Cat is a refreshing change of pace from gossip girls and glamour queens, too. Much like her animal namesake, Cat is loving without being codependent. Her confidence doesn't come from popularity, but from realizing that she's a uniquely beautiful creature, whether in human or cat form.

Though she does *really* miss her tail. . . . —*Nicholas Eliopoulos*

from

# UNFAMILIAR MAGIC

Cat cautiously drew in the delicious aromas from the dish set on the table before her. They had buried the fish in leaves and things, but it was there, just like she had imagined, and it smelled wonderful. She put her nose against the meat and savored its sweetness, then gave a careful lick. Perfection. She scooped a tiny bite up with her tongue but lost most of it. This would take some practice. She opened her mouth, lapping out with her absurdly short, smooth human tongue, lost the piece of fish again, and sat up straight, frustrated but determined.

Without warning, Desi poked her with an elbow, making her jump. When she looked around warily to see what was wrong, she got a surprise: they were all using a tool in their paws, their “hands,” to pick up their food. How bizarre! Cat could do that, too; she had her own hands and fingers, so she grasped her own tool and poked her food. It was difficult at first, but finally she managed to get a portion of the fish off of the dish and into her jaws. Amazing! How clever, these humans. She hadn’t given them credit.

Hurriedly Cat gobbled up all the meat before anyone else could snatch it from her, glancing up occasionally to make sure they were undisturbed. No one was near, but she got another surprise—Jeff had picked up his water bowl and was pouring the contents down his throat. She thought he was going to choke or gag, but he just put the bowl down gently.

Cat knew then she was in a whole new world. She decided that if she had to look like a monkey she would act like one, too. Grasping her own water bowl in her paws, she tentatively poured a little into her mouth. Immediately she burst out in a fit of coughing and choking. Desi tried to cuff her on the back like she had done something bad, but she fought her off.

**Without warning, Desi  
poked her with an elbow,  
making her jump.**

“Are you okay?” Bob asked. He seemed worried.

Cat caught her breath. “Yes. Okay.” She was determined to get this. If a mere human could do it, she could, too. She poured tiny drops of water into her mouth, just like lapping it with her tongue. Much better.

As she ate her good fish, Cat checked on the others out of the corner of her eye. The two males were eating rapidly, each with one eye on their food and the other on her and Desi. That made sense: one careless moment and—*Phwppt!*—your dinner was in someone else’s

stomach. They didn’t seem to be guarding against each other, though.

Bob finished his food first but made no move to steal Jeff’s portion away from him, though as the stronger male he easily could. Was he sick?

Cat waited to see if he regurgitated

his meal, but he sat there unconcerned, looking at her with his round monkey eyes. This puzzled her until she realized they were family, just like she was with Desi. Family she understood. They might tussle with one another, but when it came to the important things like food and safety, they were one against the world.

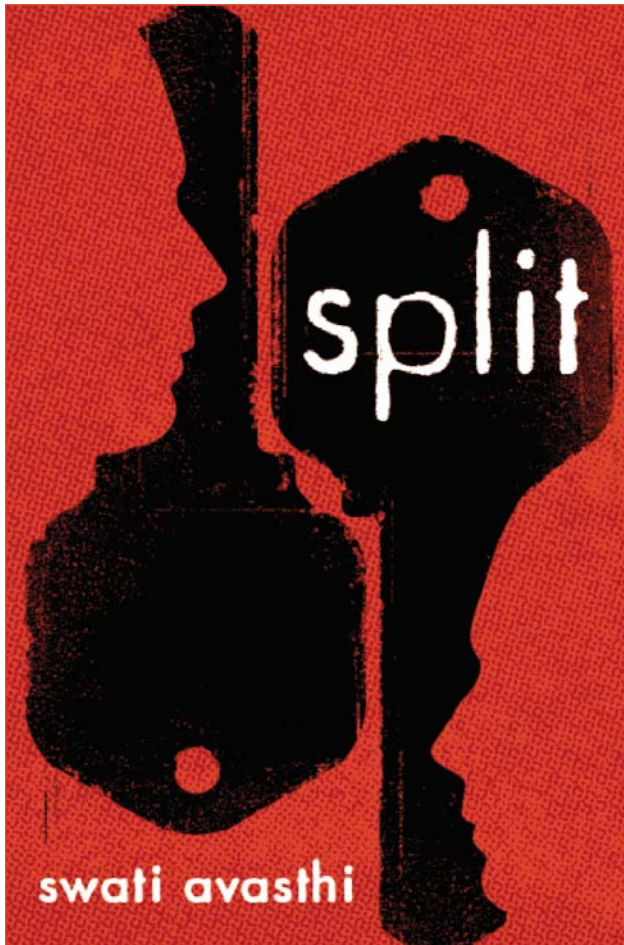
Desi had hardly touched her food—understandable, with all the changes they had been through. Cat chided herself to be more kind. She had been so young when she was taken away from her own mother that she hardly remembered her, but the pain of losing her was still strong inside her gut. To show her sympathy, she shared some of the fish out of her own mouth, dropping it onto Desi’s plate when no one was looking.

**As she ate her good fish,  
Cat checked on the others  
out of the corner of her eye.**

**R. C. Alexander** lives in Florida with his wife and son on twenty acres of woodlands in a house he built himself under the supervision of Angel, the family cat.



Photo © E. A. Alexander



## Split

by Swati Avasthi

Edited by Nancy Siscoe

ISBN: 978-0-375-86340-0

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GLB ISBN: 978-0-375-96340-7

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Young Adult Fiction

On Sale: 3/9/2010



Alfred A. Knopf

## from the editor

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Sometimes you read a book that is so gripping, so intelligent, so moving, so ridiculously accomplished, that you can't believe it's a first novel.

I remember surfacing from my first can't-look-away, must-finish-it-now reading of *Split* and shaking myself back to reality thinking: where does such amazing talent come from and how did I get so lucky to be one of the first to see it?

I couldn't wait to share *Split* with my colleagues, and it just blew through the office. Within a matter of days, everyone was gushing. One thing that tends to surprise those outside the industry is that publishing people don't read at their desks. Reading is done at night or during commutes or on weekends. But with *Split*, several people called to guiltily confess that they'd shut their office doors and ignored all calls until they'd finished it. Truly, I can think of no higher praise.

It gives me such pleasure to be able to introduce Swati Avasthi to you. You'll read *Split* quickly, but you'll be thinking about these two brothers for a long time to come.

—Nancy Siscoe



from

# split

While I stare through the windshield at the building my brother lives in, I try to think up a good lie, but nothing comes to mind. “I was in the neighborhood”? Yeah, right. It’s nineteen hours from Chicago to Albuquerque. If you drive all night.

Maybe I should try “One more stop in the eternal quest for the perfect burrito.” Pathetic. Unless Christian has gone blind in the last five years, no lie is gonna cut it. My split lip might tip off Clever Boy. I run my tongue over the slit and suck on blood.

My face will tell half the story. For the other half, I’ll keep my mouth shut and lie by omission. Someday I’ll fess up, tell him the whole deal, and then he can perform a lobotomy or whatever it takes. But right now, I just need Christian to open his door, nudge it wider and let me stay.

Inside, the lobby is cramped, and the once-white walls are striated with grime. I scan the list of names next to the buzzer buttons.

There is no Witherspoon. Our last name is missing.

I yank my camera bag off my shoulder and crouch, searching for the envelope that my mom handed me before I left. I recheck the address. I’m in the right place, but I notice, for the first time, it was postmarked a month ago.

I taste copper. If Christian has moved, how am I supposed to find him? The envelope says 4B. Even though 4B is labeled MARSHALL, I press the button, and the buzz echoes in the tiny foyer. *Answer. Be home and answer.*

A shrunken man drags the door open and holds it for his shrunken wife. Before they even step over the threshold, they see me and stop.

**Some people go all deer-in-the-headlights when they panic. Me—my foot’s on the gas and the map’s flapping out the window.**

from

# split

*continued*

I *am* quite the picture. The split lip isn't the only re-landscaping my father has done. A purple mountain is rising on my jaw, and a red canyon cuts across my forehead.

They stare at me, and I suck in my lip, hiding what I can.

At that moment, a distorted voice comes through the speaker: "Who is it?"

Can I really have this conversation over a speaker? *Remember me? The brother you left behind? Well, I've caught up.* Even in my imagination, I stop here. I leave out the rest.

"Um," I say, "FedEx."

The couple unfreezes. The man grasps his wife's elbow, tugs her outside, shoves the door closed, and helps her hobble away. Great way to start my Albuquerque tenure: scaring the locals.

The buzzer sounds. I grab the handle, turn it, and climb the steps.

I know some people go all deer-in-the-headlights when they panic. Their lungs stop, their muscles freeze, even their brains silence. Me—my foot's on the gas and the map's flapping out the window. My imagination creates scenes in rapid succession:

*He'll throw open the door and hug me until I can't breathe.*

*Or, maybe, I'll be overwhelmed by the sweet smell of pot, and his hair will be sticking up wildly, and he'll mug me for the \$3.84 I have left.*

*Or, maybe, he won't recognize me.*

Swati Avasthi completed *Split* at the University of Minnesota, where she is studying for her MFA and teaching creative writing. She lives with her husband and their two children in Minneapolis.



Photo credit: Ann Marsten



## The Dark Days of Hamburger Halpin

by Josh Berk

Edited by Michele Burke

ISBN: 978-0-375-85699-0

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Young Adult Fiction

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Alfred A. Knopf

### from the editor



*The Dark Days of Hamburger Halpin* is a coming-of-age mystery starring an unforgettable hero—deaf, overweight, wisecracking Will Halpin.

Attending mainstream high school for the first time, Will is doing his best to fade into the background. But that doesn't stop the only kid in school less popular than he is, a Hardy Boys aficionado named Devon Smiley, from befriending Will. Then an obnoxious quarterback is pushed to his death during a field trip to the Happy Memory Coal Mine, and with Will's lip-reading skills and Devon's crime expertise, they are perfectly situated to get to the bottom of the mystery—before someone else ends up at the bottom of the mine.

This is a book that succeeds on every level. It has a hilariously funny narrator—an outsider whose condition gives him unique insights and challenges. It is a great friendship story, and it is also a superbly crafted mystery that will keep readers guessing until the very end.—**Michele Burke**

# from The DARK DAYS of HAMBURGER HALPIN

“**M**iner Carl” is dressed in real period garb, with oldtimey overalls, a miner’s lantern helmet, and coal grime on his face. He shows us to a bin so we can each take a piece of coal for ourselves. The girls don’t like that it messes up their hands. There is a nervous energy in the room. It is clear that *something* is going to happen, and everybody is waiting for “the moment.”

Carl hands out miner helmets for everyone and then starts his speech. “The history of coal mining is interesting and enlightening,” he says, looking like he might weep from boredom. Is that a pun? *En-light*-ening because coal powers lamps? Is this going to be one of those tour guides who try to be funny? Then M.C. turns his back to me and speaks the rest of the tour into a little microphone. I am left, as it were, in the dark. My mind wanders, thinking about how Leigha looks beautiful even in a coal miner hat and Pat’s too-big jacket. Would she be hot dressed as a nun? A lunch lady? A crossing guard?

This diverting train of thought is interrupted when I suddenly feel about seventy eyes turning on me at once. Despite the cool chill in the subterranean air, I am flushed. Then Pat Chambers raises his hand and says something like, “Excuse me, Miner Carl. I didn’t realize ghosts could be, like, weird fat kids.”

What the hell did I miss? Why can’t ghosts be fat? And why is everybody . . . Oh crap. Miner Carl must’ve said something about the ghost of William Halpin, prompting Pat’s brilliant comment. Leigha sort of covers her mouth like she knows she isn’t supposed to laugh at the poor deaf kid. It is obvious that the highlight of this trip, the thing everyone will talk about afterward, is how funny Pat is, how ballsy and awesome it was that he actually raised his hand and made that crack about Halpin to Miner Freaking Carl. Hilarious!

A sick grin cracks the fake grime on M.C.’s face as he turns off the light on his helmet and introduces the finale. “Now it is the (*something something something*)

**It is clear that SOMETHING  
is going to happen, and  
everybody is waiting for  
“the moment.”**



to please shut your lanterns off on the count of three. I'll keep the light (*something something*)—just one minute will feel like an eternity. Imagine what it was like for these men every day of their lives (*blah blah blah*). Your eyes play tricks with you down here.” I shut my light off early in case I can’t pick up his count. I don’t want to be the only one standing stupidly with my spotlight on. A. J. Fischels does the same. . . . Hmm. Devon fiddles with his camera, then signals to me that he is going to climb one of the boulders jutting out of the side so he can get a good angle for his photo of total darkness. The rest of the class spreads with their buddies to the corners of the large, spooky room, milling around in excited anticipation.

“It will be the darkest thing you have ever seen or ever will see,” Miner Carl declares.

Poof. There is a flash from Devon’s camera and then total blackness. A chunk of time gone, like coal ripped from the earth.

**Poof. There is a flash from  
Devon’s camera and then  
total blackness. A chunk of  
time gone, like coal ripped  
from the earth.**

**Josh Berk** is a librarian in Allentown, Pennsylvania, a job he loves and which allows him to indulge in his no-longer-secret rereadings of the Hardy Boys mysteries. He and his wife live in a cornfield in Allentown and are the parents of two young children.



Photo © Olaf Staronjinski



## To Come and Go Like Magic

by Katie Pickard Fawcett

Edited by Allison Wortche

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Middle-Grade Fiction

On Sale: 2/9/2010



Alfred A. Knopf

## from the editor



From the moment I began *To Come and Go Like Magic*, I found myself in Mercy Hill, Kentucky, right alongside twelve-year-old Chili Sue Mahoney. I could taste Miss Matlock's sugar cookies dripping with icing. I could hear Chili's father's voice rising above the church choir. I could see the morning emerge, as "light seeps in through the tree branches and melts the fog and moves like a ghost through the valley."

Katie Pickard Fawcett has set her novel in a place she knows so well, and she's given us an irresistible narrator—a spirited, determined, and observant girl who longs to see the world. But while she's waiting for her chance, Chili uncovers deep-rooted secrets and finds unexpected friendship right in Mercy Hill.

I love that this novel is written in vignettes; the short, graceful chapters span a defining year in Chili's life and paint a moving portrait of a 1970s Appalachian town filled with poverty and pride, heartache and beauty. I hope you enjoy Katie Pickard Fawcett's stunning debut (and Miss Matlock's delicious cookies!).—**Allison Wortche**

## from **To Come and Go Like Magic**

**M**omma's ironing on the sunporch when I break the news. "Someday I'll leave this place," I say. The glider creaks when I give it a push.

"Where you going?" She looks at me with about as much concern as if I'd told her I was going to Brock's store for a Coke.

"Not sure," I say, putting my eyes on my painted toenails. Aunt Rose spent the weekend with us and polished my nails Hot Geranium to match hers. I imagine these red toes walking down some wide tree-lined boulevard in a faraway city.

"People don't leave Mercy Hill," Momma says, laughing her *you don't know what you're talking about* laugh as she swipes the iron across Pop's white shirt, giving it a lick and a promise.

**I imagine these toes  
walking down some wide  
tree-lined boulevard in a  
faraway city.**

"I don't care," I say. "I want to see what it looks like, see if it feels the same and smells the same someplace else." I'm thinking fresh smells, like new-car vinyl and strange food scents in a city full of fancy restaurants. Not like here. Not like Mercy Hill's coal smoke and sawdust and fields of cow manure fertilizing the corn.

Outside these plastic porch windows the winter sun is white hot and the bare maples and elms shudder in the slapping wind. In the spring Pop will take off the scratched-up plastic windows and slip in screens, but today the backyard is a blur. It's like looking through water or into a dream world from some other place and time.

\* \* \*

Three o'clock on a sunny February Thursday. The school-bus doors fold open and I get off, plop down my books on the front-porch swing, and turn back around and start walking—down Persimmon Tree Road I go.

At Miss Matlock's old house a musty scent from the boxwood hedge swirls in the air like a strange perfume. Suddenly, a strawhat bobs above the bushes.

from **To Come and Go Like Magic** *continued*

Something sharp and shiny, a pair of clippers, reaches over the top of the hedge and snips the air.

“Who’s there?” A screechy voice slips through the boxwood. I stop like a soldier at attention. Zeno says old Miss Matlock’s crazy. Last spring she threatened his cousin Clydie, said she’d cut him up in little pieces and throw him in the Cumberland River if he didn’t quit riding his bicycle through her purple phlox plants. She opens the gate now and steps in front of me with her hands on her hips like a judge, but she’s my same height eye to eye.

“Who are you?” She asks.

“Chileda Sue Mahoney,” I say. “I’m in your third-period class.”

She flips up the dark plastic shades attached to her eyeglasses. “Oh, yes, yes, yes,” she says. “Mahoney. Bick Mahoney’s girl? Come inside my gate, Miss Chili. We’ll take a trip.”

It smells like a library. Tall bookcases circle the parlor walls and every table and chair is stacked with yellowed newspapers, leaving hardly enough room to sit or stand. With every step we take the wood floors creak like bones breaking.

Miss Matlock drags a rickety ladder from a closet and asks me to climb up and take down a thick red and black book from the top shelf. I hear her singing in the kitchen and the tinkling together of silverware and dishes. A few minutes later she’s back carrying a flowered teapot with steam escaping in smoky threads. She sits and creases back a page in the big book.

“Now we begin,” she whispers.

**Katie Pickard Fawcett** grew up in the hills of eastern Kentucky and has spent time as a social worker in Appalachia. She now lives with her husband and son in McLean, Virginia.



Photo © Dylan Fawcett





## ALL UNQUIET THINGS

{ A NOVEL }

*Anna Jarzab*

## All Unquiet Things

by Anna Jarzab

Edited by Françoise Bui

ISBN: 978-0-385-73835-4

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Young Adult Fiction

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Delacorte  
Press

### from the editor



The title alone—*All Unquiet Things*—had me very intrigued when I brought the manuscript home to read. It led me to expect something sinister beneath a seemingly tranquil surface. And that’s exactly what Anna Jarzab’s impressive first novel delivers: it’s a transfixing thriller, with a murder mystery at its core. I couldn’t put it down!

I love the private school setting, which gives us an intimate look at the world of privileged teens (always fascinating to an outsider); the authentic voices of Neily and Audrey, our antagonistic alternating narrators, who are trying to find their friend’s killer; and how Carly, the dead girl, is as palpable as anyone still roaming the school campus. You *want* to know who killed her and why—as much as Neily and Audrey do. And as they probe for the truth, dark secrets are, of course, revealed. With every page, *All Unquiet Things* lures you into a web of suspense. It’s definitely a compulsive read.—**Françoise Bui**

from **ALL UNQUIET THINGS**

**SENIOR YEAR**

**I**t was the end of summer, when the hills were bone dry and brown; the sun beating down and shimmering up off the pavement was enough to give you heatstroke. Once winter came, Empire Valley would be compensated for five months of hot misery with three months of torrential rain, the kind of downpours that make the freeways slick and send cars sliding into one another on ribbons of oil. On the bright side, the hills would turn a green so lustrous they would look as if they had been spray painted, and in the morning the fog would transform the valley into an Arthurian landscape. But before the days got shorter and the rain came, there was the heat and the dust and the sun, conspiring to drive the whole town crazy.

**My mother wanted to take me  
to a doctor for the insomnia, so  
the night before school started  
I didn't go home.**

School was starting on Monday. I had two more days of freedom. I hadn't slept very much since Wednesday night; my palms were sweating, and everything ached with the ache that comes after a long hike and a couple of rough falls. My mother wanted to take me to a doctor for the insomnia,

so the night before school started I didn't go home. Instead, I went to Empire Creek Bridge, where I thought I could clear my head. The bridge was a small, overgrown stone arch, a mimicry of ancient Roman architecture that was more about form than function and could only accommodate one car at a time going one direction on its carefully placed cobblestones. A narrow, slow-moving body of water ran beneath it, and clumps of oak trees rose up near its banks. The bridge was almost useless, but very picturesque. Along one side of it was a small ledge meant for pedestrians, and this was where I lay down so that I wouldn't get run over, and closed my eyes. I needn't have bothered. All night, not one car passed. I could have died on that bridge and no one would have known.

There was another reason I had come to Empire Creek Bridge. The year before, almost to the day, a girl I loved had died on this bridge, shot in cold blood. The police considered the matter solved—there had been an arrest, a trial, a guilty verdict—but Carly’s murder retained an air of mystery for me and so did the place where she died. I had so many questions, but nobody except Carly seemed capable of answering them, and by the time I had found her body she was already dead.

**The year before, almost to the day, a girl I loved had died on this bridge, shot in cold blood.**

Despite all the effort I had put into blocking that night from my mind and trying to forget, the murder still haunted me. I didn’t know what help spending time at the bridge would be, but I had been drawn there throughout that boiling summer, and I thought it was best to go with my instincts, even though they never seemed to do me any good.

**Anna Jarzab** grew up entirely in the suburbs, first outside Chicago and then in San Francisco’s East Bay area, where *All Unquiet Things* is set. She graduated from Santa Clara University, earned her master’s degree from the University of Chicago, and currently lives in New York City. Visit Anna online at [www.annajarzab.com](http://www.annajarzab.com).



Photo © Marisa Emralino



## Nature Girl

by Jane Kelley

Edited by Shana Corey

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### from the editor

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I first read *Nature Girl* on the subway and it made me laugh out loud. Not in a polite Internet “I’m-vaguely-amused-but-I’ll-type-LOL” way, but in loud, unattractive snorts that had my fellow commuters looking around for other seats.

*Nature Girl* tells the story of eleven-year-old city kid Megan, who’s stuck in Vermont for the summer with no TV, no cell phone, and no best friend. Megan’s so miserable that, when she gets lost on the Appalachian Trail, she decides to hike all the way to Massachusetts where her best friend is spending the summer.

I love that *Nature Girl* is such a fresh twist on a survival story (if Gary Paulsen wrote chicklit, this would be it!). I love that it’s not only deliciously funny and compulsively readable, but that it’s also a beautifully layered story of growing up and friendship and figuring out who you are. Most of all, I *love* the voice. Jane Kelley has an amazing ear for dialogue and she totally nails her characters. Megan’s journey left me inspired and exhilarated and feeling like I could climb a mountain or two myself—a feeling I can’t wait to share with readers!—**Shana Corey**



from *Nature Girl*

**T**he strangest thing happens as I watch Arp run along the top of the ridge. This blaze of light makes him glow.

“Look what the sun’s doing.” It seems kind of cool—until I realize—“Oh no. Look what the sun’s doing!”

The sun isn’t above me anymore. It’s way off to my right, sitting on top of the trees. And it isn’t yellow either. It’s bright orange. That’s when I discover the real reason for sunsets. It isn’t about how pretty the clouds look. Those colors aren’t trying to inspire Dad to broaden his palette. They’re warning you that DARK IS COMING! You better find whatever you need because pretty soon you won’t be able to see it.

I jump off the boulder. DARK is already spreading out from the trees. As it spreads, it will erase the Woods and the Trail and eventually even me.

“Come on, Arp. We’ve got to find that shelter.”

**I jump off the boulder. DARK is already spreading out from the trees. As it spreads, it will erase the Woods and the Trail and eventually even me.**

I start running along the Trail.

I HATE the DARK! The night sky in New York City doesn’t get black; it turns kind of purple because of all the streetlights and lights in buildings. So I didn’t even know DARK crept me out until I got to Vermont.

I hurry so much that I run right past the shelter!

I’m all the way down one hill and halfway up the next before it hits me. That pathetic pile of boards back there on the side of the hill—that’s the shelter?

I walk back to it.

The shelter has a wooden floor and a wooden roof. But it doesn’t have four walls, it only has two.

from *Nature Girl* *continued*

“What’s the problem here? Did whoever built it forget to put up the other two walls?”

The more I stare at it, the worse I feel. It’s such a rip-off. In fact, this whole summer is the biggest rip-off ever. And I WANT MY MONEY BACK!

Only I won’t get it. And there isn’t anything I can do about it except—you guessed it—cry.

Arp comes over to see what I’m doing. I try to snuffle up my tears because I’m supposed to be his leader and leaders don’t cry. Only he knows. He cocks his head to one side and looks at me really sadly.

“Oh Arp. How are we ever going to make it to Mount Greylock?”

Then the most amazing thing happens.

I see a monarch butterfly.

Okay, I know you’re thinking, so what. Everybody sees butterflies.

But have you ever really looked at a butterfly? They’re the most rinky-dink contraptions. They aren’t streamlined like birds. They can’t even fly in a straight line. But that little thing flies all the way from Mexico to Vermont. They don’t have maps or trails or food or shelters. But they do it. Every single year. Then, like that wasn’t hard enough, they fly back again. And they don’t have bathrooms either.

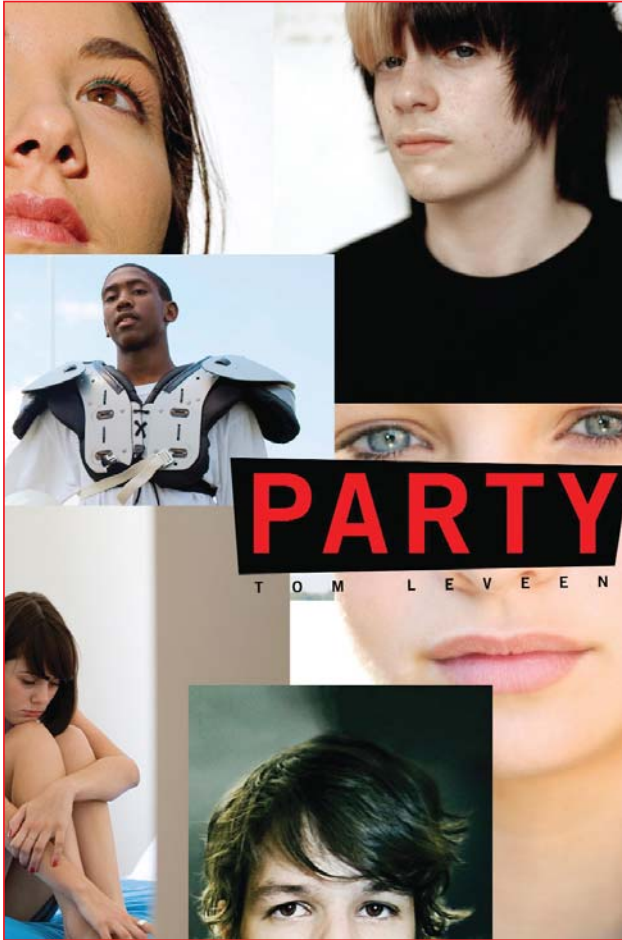
**Jane Kelley** lives in Brooklyn, New York, with her husband and daughter. She has enjoyed many summers in Vermont. This is her first book.

“Jane Kelley uses the light touch of humor to let in the sunlight. Bravo!”—Sid Fleischman

“A tale of survival and self-discovery; a laugh-out-loud funny, modern-day *My Side of the Mountain*”—Megan McDonald



Photo © Keith Weber.



## Party

by Tom Leveen

Edited by Suzy Capozzi

ISBN: 978-0-375-86436-0

\$16.99/\$21.99 Can.

GLB ISBN: 978-0-375-96436-7

\$19.99/\$24.99 Can.

Young Adult Fiction

On Sale: 4/27/2010



## from the editor



*Voice* is one of those words editors use. A lot. We talk how a truly memorable voice can make you fall a little bit in love, make you see red, or even haunt you for days. How the way a character speaks—the words he or she uses—shows so much. And we revel in that moment when, reading a manuscript for the first time, a character's voice echoes so clearly that you find yourself looking around to see if anyone else “hears” it as well. At least that's what happens to me. And it happened many times over when I read *Party*. Because in *Party* readers spend time with eleven different characters as they converge on a end-of-the-school-year party one Saturday night in Santa Barbara.

Tom Leveen's many years of working in the theater have given him such a keen sense of voice. And he uses it deftly; pulling you into the sometimes messy, heartbreakingly relatable lives of these eleven teens. While hearing voices isn't generally a good thing, spending time with these eleven unique voices is something I highly recommend.

Enjoy!—*Suzy Capozzi*

from

# PARTY

I can't sit on the pier anymore, so I get up and wander off. Part of me knows where I'm headed, while the other part tells me not to do it. I do it anyway.

The tide is ebbing when I reach Shoreline Beach. The ocean is magnetic, tempting me to fling myself into the waves and float away, wherever the tide takes me. I won't do it, though, not really. I don't want to die. It's the absolute last thing I want. Seen enough of it up close.

But I still wonder if anyone would notice if I did.

I hunker and stare out at the water, debating the possibilities of the party. Out in the Pacific, a boat bobs on the waves, its white lights arching back and forth as the boat cruises along. Behind me, a high cliff blocks any sound from the rest of the city, making this solitary spot on the beach my own domain.

It's one of the reasons I spread Mom's ashes here.

All I have to do is walk up the steps behind me, to Shoreline Park, and up the street to the party. It's easy. I could just do it.

But why? I mean, what's the point? Some pointless exercise in validation? "Notice me, notice me, show me I'm alive!" Meet a guy, have a passionate romance during my non-senior senior year?

Ridiculous.

Even if there is a guy out there for me somewhere, I'll never know it.

This is dumb.

**The ocean is magnetic,  
tempting me to fling  
myself into the waves  
and float away, wherever  
the tide takes me.**

It's like I'm *already* dead. If a tree falls in the forest, does it make any sound? If a girl doesn't speak, if no one knows her name, does she really exist?

But I have to know. Does anyone know who I am anymore?

This becomes my new motivation: go to the party. Walk around. See if anyone, just one person, says my name. Says "Hi!" Says "I had Spanish with you sophomore year."

If no one does . . . then case closed. My high school career, my existence, will be proven invisible.

I force myself up the stairs built into the cliff face, and down Beachfront to the party. I regret my decision the moment I open the door.

**It's like I'm already dead.**

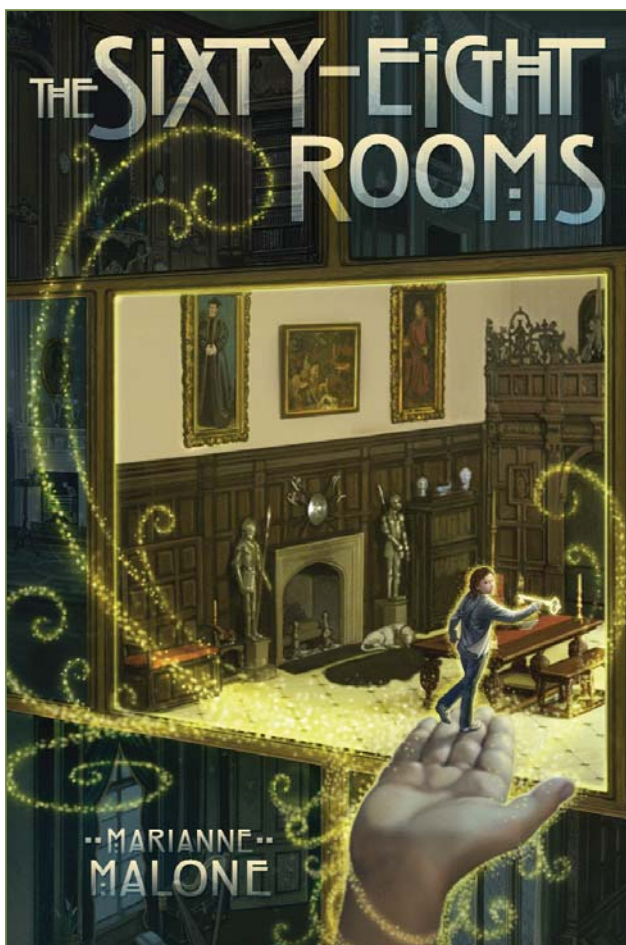
**If a tree falls in the forest,  
does it make any sound?**

**Tom Leveen** is the artistic director and co-founder of Chyro Arts Venue—an all-ages, nonprofit visual and performing arts space in Scottsdale, Arizona. *Party* is his first novel.



Photo © John Groseclose





## The Sixty-Eight Rooms

by Marianne Malone

Illustrated by Greg Call

Edited by Shana Corey

ISBN: 978-0-375-85710-2

\$16.99/\$21.99 Can.

GLB ISBN: 978-0-375-95710-9

\$19.99/\$24.99 Can.

Middle-Grade Fiction

On Sale: 2/23/2010



## from the editor



*The Sixty-Eight Rooms* is just the kind of book I loved growing up, and if you've ever looked for secret passageways in your attic or treasure in your backyard, than it's probably your kind of book, too. It's that perfect combination of magic and realism that let's you think maybe . . . just maybe that could really happen. Maybe it could even happen to me.

The story's set in the Thorne miniature rooms in the Art Institute of Chicago. Imagine—what if on a field trip one day, you discovered a key that allowed you to shrink so that you were small enough to sneak inside and explore the rooms' secrets? What if you discovered that others had done so before you? And that someone had left something important behind?

Ooh, goosebumps! This book has so much packed into it—magic, mystery, miniatures, art, adventure, history! It's incredibly fun and kid-friendly, and I hope you and the kids in your world will find it as magical as I do!—**Shana Corey**

# from THE SIXTY-EIGHT ROOMS

Jack handed her the key. It was the first time she had actually touched it. She was surprised by how heavy it felt. Then something very strange happened: her hand began to feel warm under the key and the warmth spread to her fingertips.

“Ruthie?” Jack looked at her oddly.

Then something even stranger happened: as she stood there in the corridor with no windows, her hair started to blow as if by a gentle breeze. Ruthie couldn’t take her eyes off the key. She had the sensation that her shoes were beginning to get too big for her feet and her collar started pushing up into her ears.

**Then something even stranger happened: as she stood there in the corridor with no windows, her hair started to blow as if by a gentle breeze.**

“Ruthie!” Jack sounded scared. She broke her gaze away from the key and looked at Jack. Normally, being the same height, they saw eye to eye; but now, looking straight ahead, she was looking at his neck!

“Ruthie! Drop it . . . drop it now!” he said, a touch of panic in his voice.

She dropped the key to the ground. It made the oddest sort of clinking sound and then all the strange sensations stopped; her toes touched the ends of her shoes again, her collar sat at her neck, her hair rested calmly on her shoulders and she could look Jack straight in the eyes.

“What happened?” she asked, a bit dazed. Her muscles felt funny, like the day after you’ve done too many sit-ups in gym class.

“I don’t know.” He reached down to pick up the key.

“Don’t Jack. . . .”

But he picked it up anyway—and absolutely nothing happened.

“That’s weird. Here, you hold it again.”

from **THE SIXTY-EIGHT ROOMS** *continued*

“What are you crazy? No way.”

“Look Ruthie, I’m holding it and nothing is happening. Either we both *imagined* that something just happened to you when you held the key or it happened for sure. If you don’t touch the key, we’ll never know.” He waited for a moment before adding, “Don’t you want to know?”

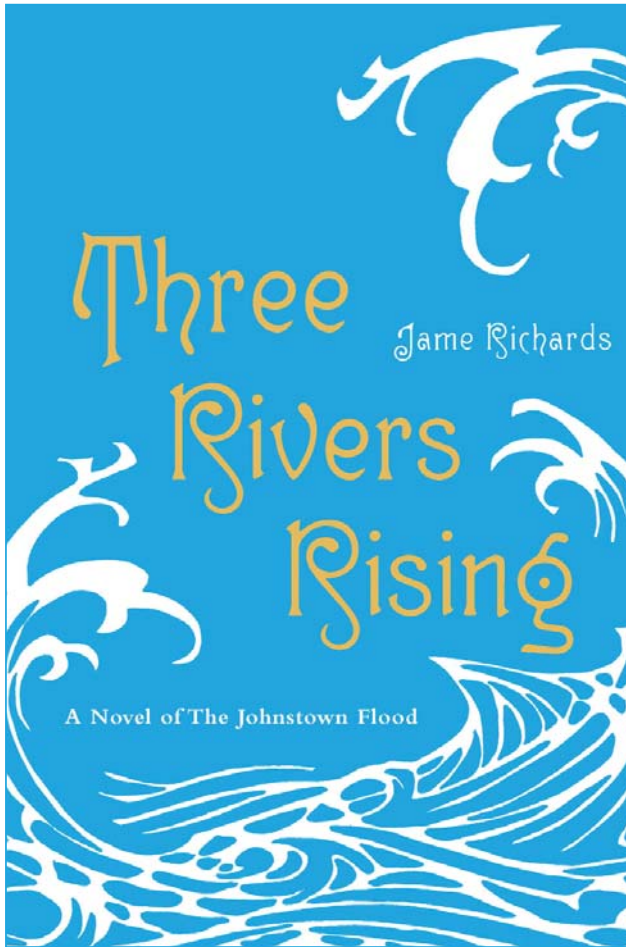
She stared at the key in his open palm. And then something came over her. She made a decision to *not* think. “Okay, okay!” she said, grabbing the key from him.

The minute she held it she felt all the things she had felt before. First she felt the strange breeze again. Then she could see Jack getting taller and the room around her growing. She couldn’t exactly feel herself shrinking, but she noticed that her clothes kept readjusting themselves on her body; for an instant they would feel too large, then they would catch up to her smaller size. This happened about a dozen times over the course of a few seconds. Not knowing how small she would become—or if she would disappear altogether—she was about to drop the key when the process came to a halt. She stood about five inches tall. Oddly enough, she felt fine.

Jack was down on all fours immediately, with his huge face looming over her. His hair and eyelashes were the size of ropes and she could see all the variation in his giant eyes that normally just looked greenish. “Ruthie, Ruthie! Are you okay?”

**Marianne Malone** is a former art teacher and the co-founder of the Campus School Middle School for Girls in Urbana, Illinois. She and her husband live in Urbana and Washington, D.C. They have three grown children.





## Three Rivers Rising: A Novel of the Johnstown Flood

by Jame Richards  
Edited by Joan Slattery

ISBN: 978-0-375-85885-7  
\$16.99/\$21.99 Can.  
GLB ISBN: 978-0-375-95885-4  
\$19.99/\$24.99 Can.  
Young Adult Fiction  
On Sale: 4/13/2010



### from the editor

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Here's a debut author who has the talent and ambition to take on an indelible event in U.S. history: the Johnstown flood. I'm so impressed, and I know young readers will be completely enthralled by this swift, suspenseful novel.

Jame Richards combines poetry, action, and disaster as she propels her characters—and readers—toward a forbidding moment. In 1889, in the Allegheny Mountains of Pennsylvania, a seventy-foot earthen dam held back twenty million tons of water to create a shimmering reservoir, the centerpiece of a luxurious mountain retreat for Pittsburgh's wealthy. Then, on a May day after heavy rains, that dam broke—and unleashed a torrent of water onto the working class Johnstown in the valley below. More than two thousand people died as a result.

Jame transports us to the year of the flood and draws us into a troubled cross-class romance (Celestia, a privileged girl at the mountain resort and Peter, a hired boy), one that becomes all the more wrenching the day the dam gives way. And, amazingly, from this searing American tragedy—violent, sudden, impossibly sad—Jame Richards weaves a story of hope.—*Joan Slattery*

from

# Three Rivers Rising

## A Novel of the Johnstown Flood

### CELESTIA

Estrella shines—  
glossy dark eyelashes  
and smooth pink cheeks.  
My parents' favorite,  
and, at nineteen, my senior by  
three years.  
She starts each day in a steamer chair  
with plaid blankets and a book.  
She plays the part of the lovesick  
sweetheart—  
her beau, Charles, learns the family  
business  
back home in Pittsburgh—  
but her natural buoyancy is not  
long repressed.  
Fun always knows where to find her.  
Just now, an errant croquet ball rolls  
under her chair.  
She laughs and runs to the game,  
the dappled sunlight,  
and the jovial golden boys.  
Handsome Frederick  
meets her halfway,  
extending his arm.  
Frederick with his shock of  
blond hair,  
broad shoulders,  
and skin glowing with health . . .  
Poor old Charles

with his consumptive cough  
better arrive soon  
if he wants to find his intended still  
betrothed.  
He cannot compete with the gaiety  
and romance of our sparkling little  
lake in the mountains.

Now about me—  
if I am not the fun-loving beauty,  
then I must be the serious one,  
the one who would toss the croquet  
ball back,  
wave and sigh,  
but be infinitely more fascinated  
with my book  
than with the superficial cheer  
of the society crowd.  
The one who gets the joke  
but does not tolerate it.  
The one who baits the hook  
and guts the fish  
with Peter,  
the hired boy.

### PETER

Papa says, "It's unnatural—  
lakes weren't meant to be  
so high in the mountains,  
up over all our heads.



Rich folks think  
they know better than God  
where a lake oughta be.”

He’s talking about South  
Fork Reservoir,  
miles of icy creek water  
held in place above our valley  
by a seventy-foot earthen dam.

The owners call it Lake Conemaugh.  
They raised it up from a puddle,  
built fancy-trim houses all in a row  
and a big clubhouse on the shore,  
stocked it with fish,  
and now they bring their families in  
from Pittsburgh  
every summer season.  
Most of them stay in the clubhouse,  
like an oversized hotel  
with wide hallways,  
a huge dining room,  
and a long front porch  
across the whole thing.

Dozens of windows, too,  
so every room has a view  
of the reservoir . . .  
I mean, the lake.

Papa says, “They can’t stack up  
enough money  
against all that water.”

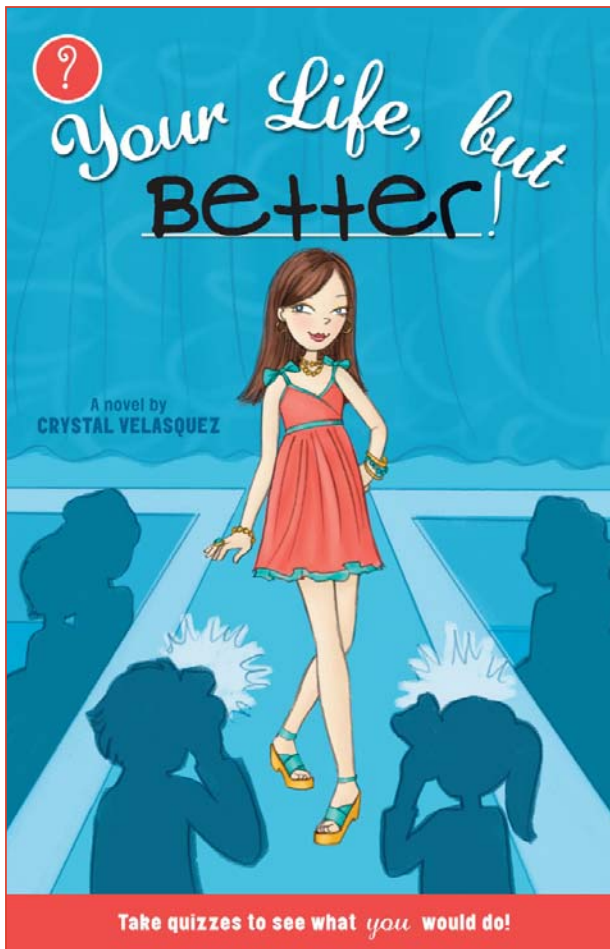
“Oh, Papa,” I wave off the idea.  
Everybody in Johnstown  
kids each other about the dam  
breaking.  
We laugh because it always holds.  
Papa says we’re laughing off our fear.  
Folks think he’s something of a crank  
for always bringing it up.

I don’t say anything more—  
at least until I can think how  
to tell him  
the sportsman’s club  
up at the reservoir  
is my new boss.

**Jame Richards’s** *Three Rivers Rising* won the PEN New England Children’s Book Caucus Susan P. Bloom Discovery Award prior to publication. She lives with her family in Connecticut.



Photo © Jennifer May



## Your Life, But Better!

by Crystal Velasquez

Edited by Stephanie Elliott

ISBN: 978-0-375-85084-4

\$7.99/\$10.99 Can.

Middle-Grade Fiction

On Sale: 1/12/2010



Delacorte  
Press

## from the editor



*Your Life, But Better!* is a totally unique interactive series—the kind of books I would have jumped all over as a tween. In this book, *you* are the main character, so the narrator talks directly to you about everything that’s happening. At the end of each chapter, you take a quick personality quiz, and the results will help us show you what you would do in that exact situation. Just as in real life, the consequences of your decisions can be unpredictable. Some roads lead to love, fame, and fortune, while others lead to embarrassment, arguments, and rejection. Along the way, readers just might learn a little something about the kind of person they are and the kind of person they want to be. It’s their life—but better!

I think Crystal Velasquez has done an amazing job creating likable, quirky characters, and finding a voice that’s totally relatable and pitch perfect for middle-grade readers. We hope tweens will love finding out what *they* would do in this fun, personalized, kid-friendly series!—**Stephanie Elliott**

from

# *Your Life, but* Better!

“I’m a model scout,” the lady says, as if she had just read your mind. (And you hadn’t even put psychic on the list!) “Have you ever done any modeling?”

“Who, me?” you squeak. “Yeah, right.”

“Well, would you like to do some modeling today? Bebe LaRue is coming out with a young adult line of clothing and we really need a girl around your age for the photo shoot.” She’s smiling, but something about it seems fake, like she has to struggle to be nice and smiling kind of hurts her face.

“Are you serious?” you ask skeptically.

She abruptly drops the smile and sighs. “Look, I don’t normally troll the mall looking for untrained models. But Alexa’s agent called at the last minute to tell me she’d been double booked, which means I’m in a bind.” She looks you up and down quickly like she’s checking out a new refrigerator or something. She does a final once over and you apparently pass the test. “You’ll do in a pinch. So? In or out? Time is money.”

***She’s smiling, but something about it seems fake, like she has to struggle to be nice and smiling kind of hurts her face.***

*Most boring place on Earth, my eye! So far it looks like the mall is the place to be. It’s not even noon yet and already you’ve found out that you’re a big part of your friend’s secret blog, you’ve got a shot at scoring tickets to the party of the year, there has been a confirmed Jimmy Morehouse sighting, and you could be in an actual Bebe LaRue photo shoot! But are you really willing to risk it all in order to be part of the fun?*

from

# *Your Life, but* **Better!**

*continued*

## QUIZ TIME!

Circle your answers and tally up the score at the end.

1. You're at an amusement park with your friends and they're all dying to get on the most insane-looking roller-coaster in the place. You:
  - A. High-tail it to the skee ball lanes where it's safe. I mean, what are they, crazy?
  - B. Tell them you'd join them, but somebody has to stay behind and hold everybody's bags. Plus no one will believe they even got on the ride unless you snap a few pictures as they go whizzing by.
  - C. Agree to get on the ride, but only if one of your friends will let you clutch her arm in a vise grip the whole time. Hopefully she won't mind all the shrieking you'll be doing right in her ear.
  - D. Make sure you're the first in line so you can sit right up front. Danger is your middle name! It'll be scary, but if you live, it'll be worth the adrenaline rush.
2. You've had long hair since you were a kid and are kind of itching for a change. So when you go to the salon and the cool stylist with the blue hair suggests you cut it all off and go short, you:
  - A. Freak out. What if you cut off all your long locks and instead of looking like Victoria Beckham, you end up looking like Edward Scissorhands? No way. You leave without even letting her touch your precious tresses.
  - B. Tell her you would, but picture day is coming up at school and any beauty magazine worth its salt would say not to do anything extreme to your hair before an important event like that. You'll stick to your usual—a little trim, thank you very much.

C. Meet her more than halfway and opt for an edgy bob that hangs just below your ears. At least you'll still have long enough hair to pull it back into a ponytail in case it looks hideous.

D. Go for it. Angelina Jolie, Natalie Portman, and Halle Berry have all rocked the short look at some point. Why not you?

Give yourself 1 point for every time you answered A, 2 points for every B, 3 points for every C, and 4 points for every D.

—If you scored between 2 and 4, go to Chap. 2

—If you scored between 5 and 8, go to Chap. 3

**Most boring place on Earth,  
my eye! So far it looks like  
the mall is the place to be.**

**Crystal Velasquez** is the author of the children's books based on the PBS series *Maya and Miguel*, but these are her first books for older readers. She lives, writes, and obsessively takes personality quizzes in New York City.



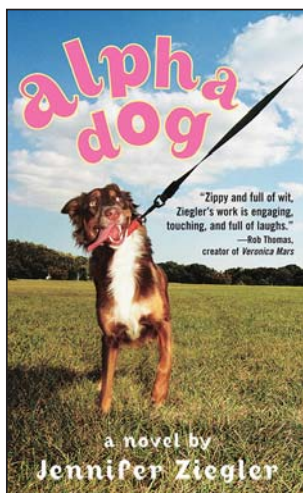
Photo © Dan Elliott



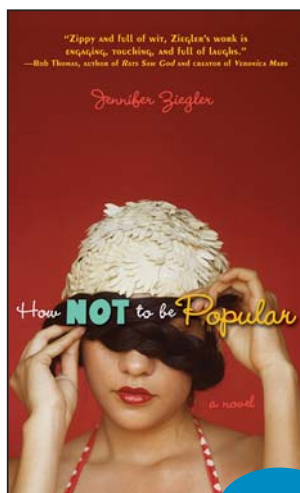
# IT'S A SECOND!

Find out what former “It’s a First” novelists have been up to.

## JENNIFER ZIEGLER



“It’s a First”

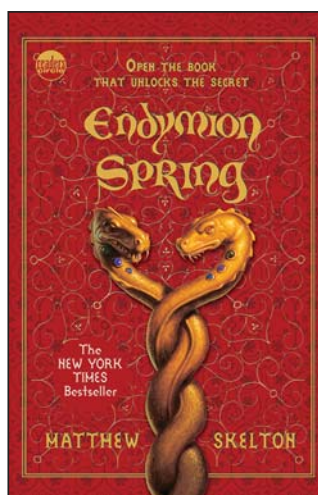


NEW!

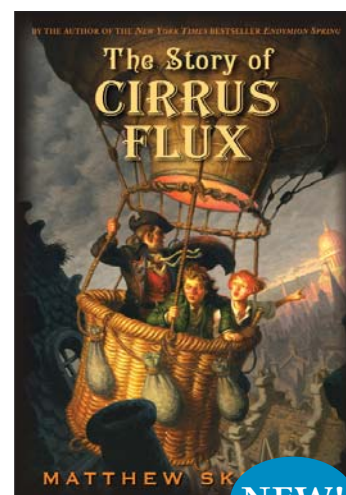
In Jennifer Ziegler’s newest novel, Maggie Dempsey is tired of moving all over the country. When she moved after her freshman year, she left behind good friends, and a real feeling of belonging. When she moved her sophomore year, she left behind a boyfriend, too. Now that they’ve moved to Austin, she’s not going to make friends. She’s not going to fit in. She’ll do her best not to be popular.

## MATTHEW SKELTON

Matthew Skelton’s first novel, *Endymion Spring* appeared on the *New York Times* bestseller list. In his second novel, orphan Cirrus Flux is being watched. Merciless villains are plotting to steal the world’s most divine power, which they believe Cirrus has inherited. Cirrus must escape them, but can he thwart his foes and survive a terrifying showdown?



“It’s a First”

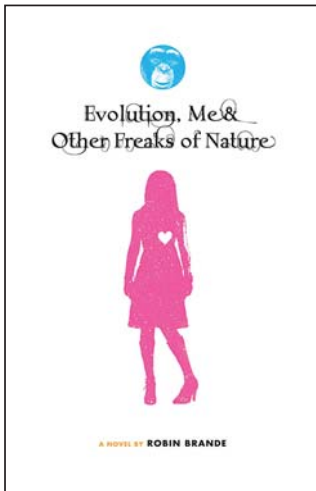


NEW!

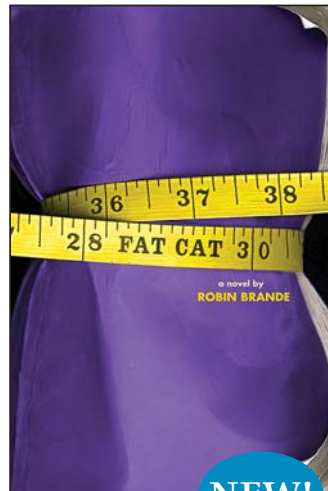
# IT'S A SECOND!

Find out what former “It’s a First” novelists have been up to.

## ROBIN BRANDE



“It’s a First”

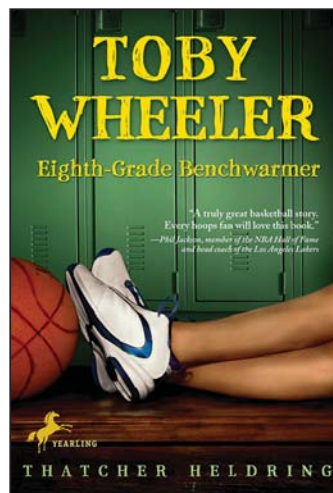


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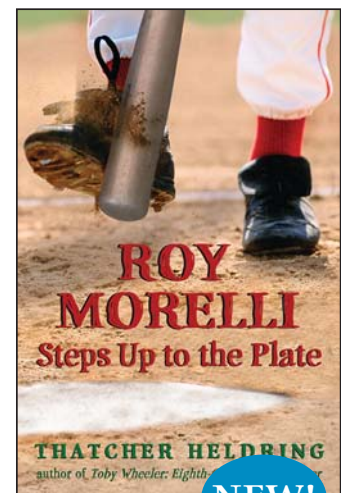
Robin Brande’s first novel was a page-turning debut. Her second novel, *Fat Cat*, is a funny and thoughtful novel that explores how girls feel about their bodies, and the ways they can best take care of their most precious resource: themselves.

## THATCHER HELDRING

Thatcher Heldring delivers another funny and thoughtful story about middle-school sports, friendship, and family life in his winning follow-up to *Toby Wheeler: Eighth-Grade Benchwarmer*. Meet Roy Morelli, an all-star baseball player who is relegated to the worst team in the league.



“It’s a First”

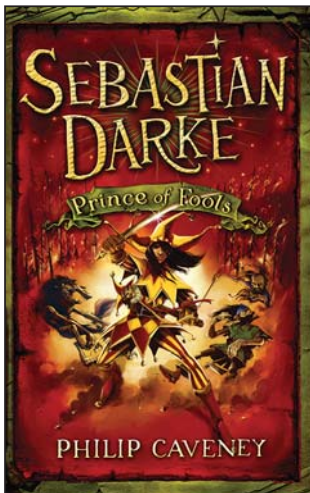


NEW!

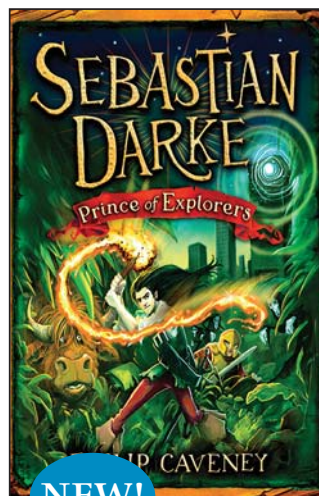
# IT'S A SECOND!

Find out what former “It’s a First” novelists have been up to.

PHILIP CAVENEY



“It’s a First”



The third book in Philip Caveney’s fantasy trilogy features Sebastian, a cute yet bumbling seventeen-year-old, half-human half-elf, and his companions,—Max, a talking buffalope, and Cornelius, a warrior dwarf. It’s a jungle out there for Sebastian and friends as they explore the unknown.





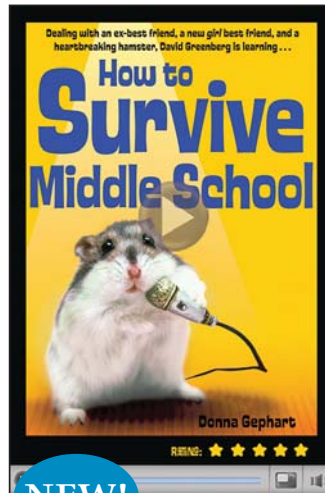
# IT'S A SECOND!

Find out what former “It’s a First” novelists have been up to.

## DONNA GEPHART



“It’s a First”



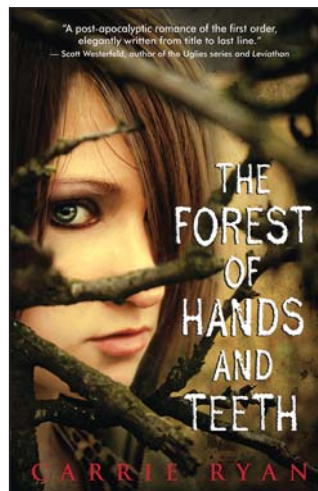
NEW!

David Greenberg dreams of becoming a TV superstar, but in real life, he’s just another kid terrified of starting his first year of junior high. When his friend Sophie starts sending out the links of his online videos to everyone she knows, David finds himself wondering: is he ready to become an Internet superstar?

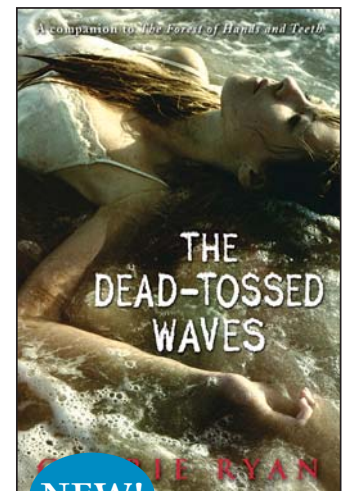
## CARRIE RYAN

*Eat. Prey. Love.*

In the follow up novel to *The Forest of Hands and Teeth*, Mary’s daughter, Gabry, lives a safe, secluded life by the ocean. A barrier separates her town from the undead on the other side. But when the barrier is breached, and the boy she loves is bitten, Gabry must face the forest of her mother’s past in order to save herself and the one she loves.



“It’s a First”



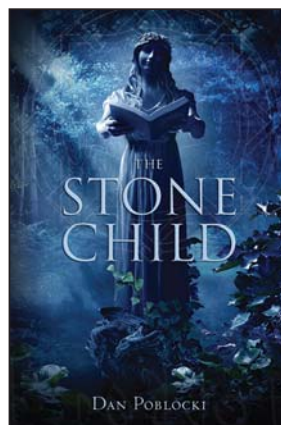
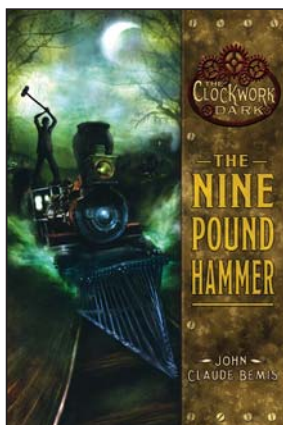
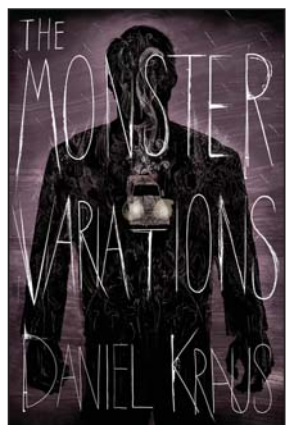
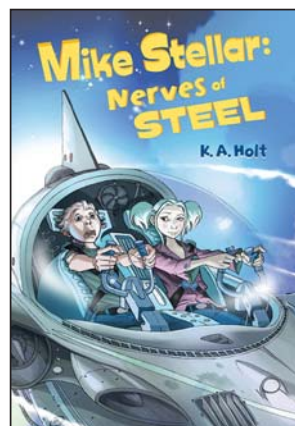
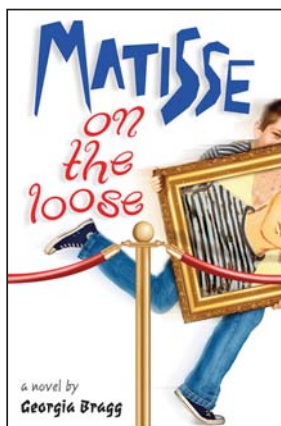
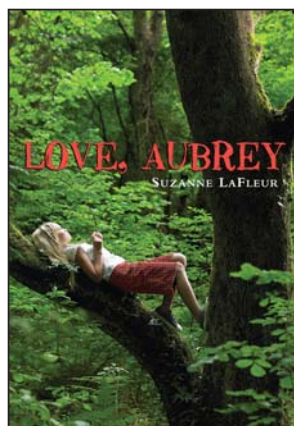
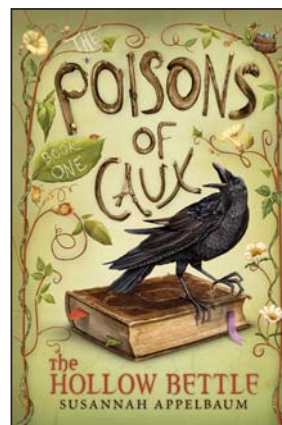
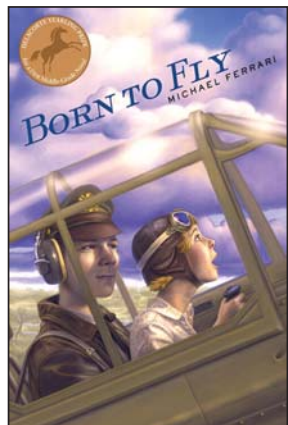
NEW!

WHERE STRONG VOICES  
BECOME BESTSELLERS!

Fresh Fiction  
from New Voices

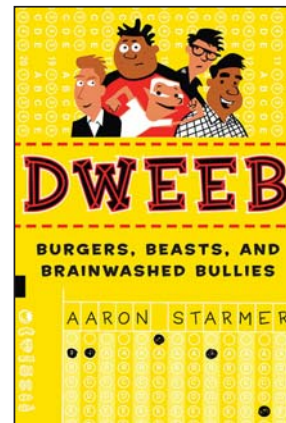
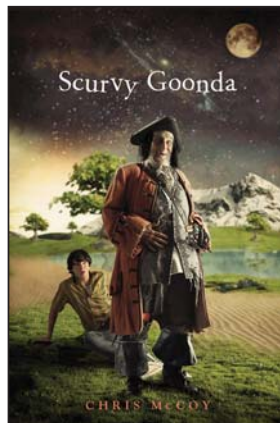
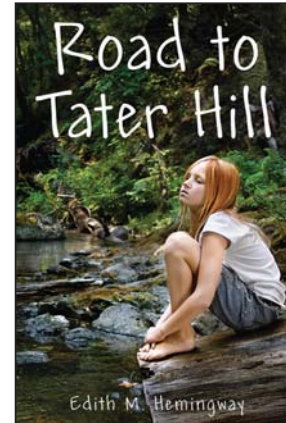
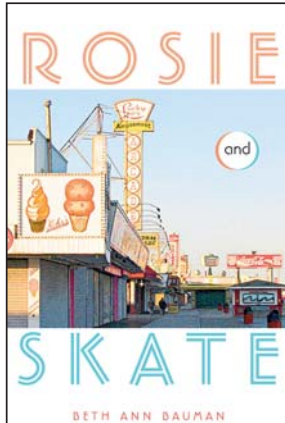


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