

November 2017 Wayne Readers' Recommendations

CARY MEMORIAL LIBRARY BLOG

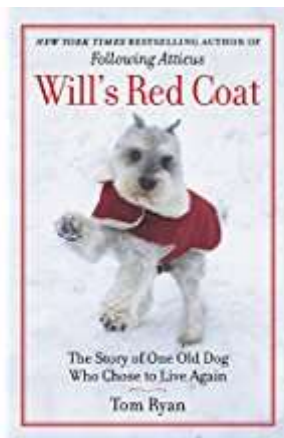


We want to hear from you. Please send a blurb about something you've read and want to share with CML. Postings will be published monthly except over the summer. Next posting will be in December 2017. Send your recommendations to

jadelbergCML@gmail.com

This month's blog has **11** entries from enthusiastic readers. Try some of these selections now that the lights are on and there is no generator whine.

Non-Fiction

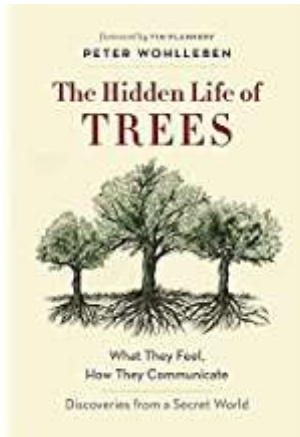


Will's Red Coat by Tom Ryan (Non-Fiction)

"Old Age is not a disease." Ralph Waldo Emerson said "Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist." Tom Ryan believes that if a person's individuality could be respected and celebrated, why not an animal's? Tom adopts Will, a near-blind, deaf, abused, 15 year old Schnauzer. You will cry, learn to smell the roses and celebrate with them. This is a book filled with all of life's lessons. A must read for everyone.

Reviewed by Steve Dodge

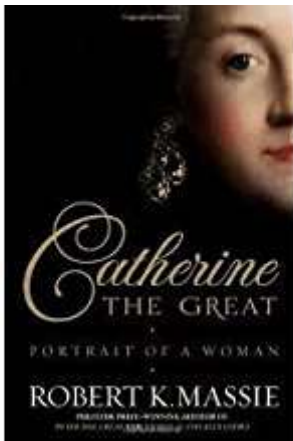
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The Hidden Life of Trees, What they feel, How they communicate, Discoveries from a Secret World by Peter Wohlleben (Science)

This non-fiction book was a surprising delight. He convinced me that the forest is a social network. Who knew that mother trees took care of their babies, or that a seemingly dead tree trunk is fed by surrounding trees for many years as it slowly dies. After reading the chapter, "Street kids" I want to rescue the spindly sickly trees on the median in the middle of Western Ave. in Augusta. I like the fact that the older trees are much more productive than their younger offspring. We could learn some social lessons from trees, it seems. As it says in the cover, after you read Wohlleben's book, a walk in the woods will never be the same again." I certainly look at them differently and feel less self-conscious hugging them.

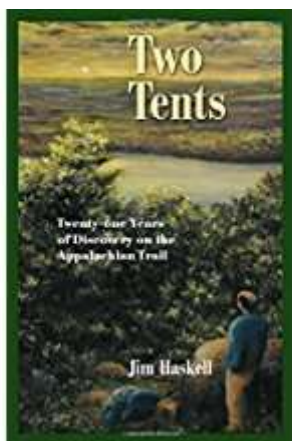
Reviewed by Barrie Colbath



Catherine the Great, Portrait of a Woman by Robert K. Massie (Biography)

I have subtitled this large-print 881 page book "*NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART*". Set in the 1700's and the story follows the life of Sophia who is brought to Russia from Germany as a young girl by Russian Empress Elizabeth to become the bride of her son Peter and provide an heir to rule the country. Sophia is renamed Catherine. The book follows the court and romantic intrigues of the time and if the Russian names don't wear you out, the wars and love affairs just might. Surprisingly (to me at least) I read the entire book and, although please don't make me take a test, I found it mostly interesting and some parts quite enlightening.

Reviewed by Connie Locashio



Two Tents by Jim Haskell (Autobiography)

I finished the Appalachian Trail at the top of Mt Katahdin. Of course, I started that hike at Katahdin Stream at the bottom of the mountain, so I didn't hike the entire AT!

Thankfully, I don't have to hike the entire trail because I experienced that in Jim Haskell's great book, *Two Tents*, published by Maine Authors Publishing. The title references a mistake Jim made on one of his hikes, logging two tents up into the mountains.

Jim, a Maine native, was not a "through hiker." He completed the 2200 mile hike in sections over a 21 year period. And he was inspired to do that at the

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age of 9, when he and his Dad and older siblings climbed Mount Katahdin. Yes, Mount Katahdin can be inspiring!

Jim's hiking adventures included some serious challenges, including falls, major storms, and an aggressive bear. I particularly enjoyed his stories of other hikers, some of whom joined him from time to time along the trail. And his descriptions of the hikes put you right out on the trail with him.

But this isn't just a hiking book, nor do you have to be a hiker to enjoy it. Jim's life story unfolds as the years progress, including two marriages and adoption of a baby from Guatemala. And all along the trail, Jim is discovering things about himself. I especially loved how he loved fatherhood, to the point that he decided to give up his dream of hiking the entire AT because he didn't want to leave his baby son.

It was Jim's wife who insisted he complete the hike, and she was so very right to do that. And we must also thank those who encouraged him to write this book. As it says on the back cover: *Two Tents is about making dreams come true.*

Reviewed by George Smith (Mount Vernon)



***My Island* by Patrisha McLean (Maine)**

From the stunning photos to the comments and stories from the kids, *My Island* by Patrisha McLean gives us wonderful portraits of Maine island children. This book is a real treasure.

Patrisha McLean has been leaving her Camden home for many years to photograph children living on the Maine islands of Isleboro, Vinalhaven, and North Haven. Her images capture these kids in all their glory. The powerful stare from the girl on the book's cover will draw you right into the book.

But even better, Patrisha presents the thoughts and stories of these amazing kids. Here's an example: "Me and my friend Joe made a restaurant. We found all kinds of seaweed and rocks and stuff. Rocks were money. Seaweed goes inside the burger and the sand is the bun."

Yup, island kids have great imaginations!

It's no surprise that this book was a finalist for the 2016 Maine Literary Awards.

When you see the photographs, you will know that these kids trusted Patrisha in a profound way. Wait 'til you see 3-year-old Anthony's photo with his pet South American squirrel. And 9-year-old Levi, all dressed up for a ferry ride.

And 16-year-old Virginia, who fishes alone on her own boat. "I like to fish alone," she says. "It works for me when there's no one in the way. I like to see what I'm catching and measure everything that comes on board, because I don't trust the stern man. I like that I'm my own boss. I can come in when I want, haul when I want. It's like a game you get paid to play."

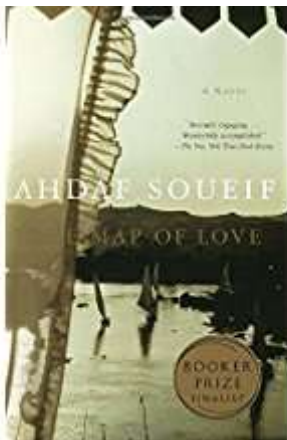
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12-year-old Mike's fishing stories are great too, about mackerel, Pollock, and big eels. He started working when he was 10, filling up bait bags, spending his money on Lego sets.

And I guarantee that when you see 7-year-old Sammy's goodbye wave at the end of the book, you'll lift your own arm to wave at her, and immediately go right back to page one and start your way through this book a second time.

Reviewed by George Smith (Mount Vernon)

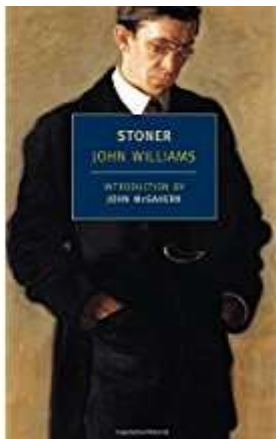
Fiction



The Map of Love by Ahdaf Soueif (Historical Fiction)

Published in 1999, this book caught me by surprise. It is an absolutely fascinating story that includes a lot of Egyptian history as well as romance and wonderful portrayals of both English and Egyptian individuals. I learned a lot about cultural nuance and various events from this past century. The story changes time period throughout, but was not hard to follow. Historical fiction at its best - and also a Booker Prize finalist from 1999.

Reviewed by Judy Danielson

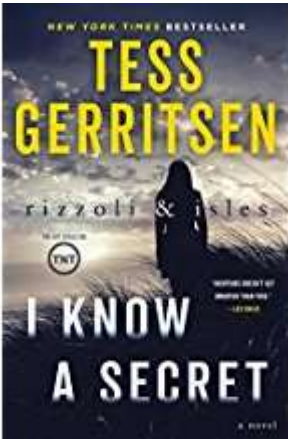


Stoner by John Williams (Fiction)

Stoner by John Williams, "the greatest novel you've never heard of" according to the *New Yorker*, has a cult following in the literary world for its clear, simple prose and solid characterization. Strangely, the same readers who call it "depressing" say "I couldn't stop reading the book." It's the story of a man who doggedly makes his way from dirt-poor Missouri farming to academia while suffering one personal or professional defeat after another with full-on Stoicism. Some see his teaching and love of literature as the author's tribute to the redemptive power of work. Others simply find him a melancholic, painfully passive and self-effacing. Your guess: how will Casey Affleck portray him in the upcoming movie?

Reviewed by Betsy Bowen

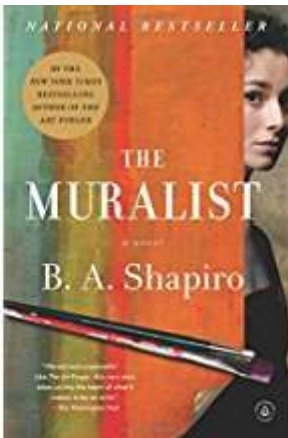
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I Know a Secret by Tess Gerritsen (Suspense)

This is a "Rizzoli & Isles" Mystery, which brings images of the TV series to my mind when I read it. The Boston police officer Rizzoli, and the medical examiner Isles are as different as night and day, but they manage to be good friends and to complement each other in the solving of these crimes. About a dastardly serial killer, the book draws you deeper into the plot as you go on. Complicated plot, some drama... an entertaining read.

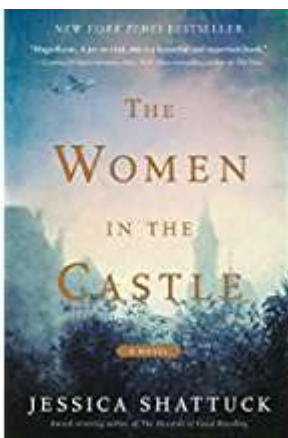
Reviewed by Pam Chenea



The Muralist by B. A. Shapiro (Historical Fiction)

A wonderfully engaging historical fiction novel rotating between the beginning of WWII and the present day. The story focuses on the art world and the WPA set up by FDR during the Great Depression, and follows one family in particular. It is part history, part romance and partly a detective story. I find it always fun afterwards to research and find out how much is fact and how much fiction. Informative, well written and fun reading.

Reviewed by Judy Danielson

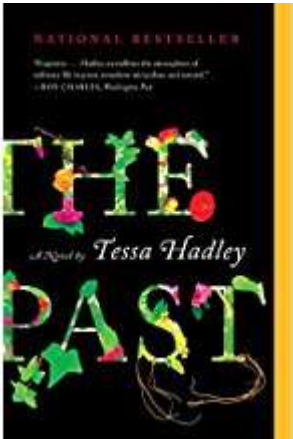


The Women in the Castle by Jessica Shattuck (Historical Fiction)

This excellent historical novel covers during and right after World War 11 in Germany. It's about a widow of resister in Hitler's regime who rescues a few other widows of the same ilk with children. Their stories are gripping, heartrending. She portrays the broken country so vividly. It's a viewpoint that I had not considered the devastating consequences for German women and children in a horrid time. It's a very good read, even though a tough subject. Each character is so human in their strengths and flaws. Personally, I feel less guilt and shame for the many Nazi relatives I had that I never chose to meet in Germany. This book I will not forget for a long time.

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Reviewed by Barrie Colbath



The Past by Tessa Hadley (Contemporary Fiction)

Four adult siblings and their families come to spend their final vacation at the dilapidated ancestral summer cottage. Set over three weeks, Hadley switches points of view seamlessly and the reader is drawn into the tension, sorrows, joys and ultimate --WELL, I won't tell you! It's a compelling story, beautifully written. I will be seeking out more titles by this author. She is a frequent contributor to the New Yorker.

Reviewed by Janet Adelberg