

LitChat's

BOOKS ARE GREAT GIFTS

benefit auction takes place through Twitter on
December 18, 2009
At 6 p.m. EST

All proceeds to benefit

The Reading Tree

A literacy charity that recycles used books
and places them into schools in disadvantaged
communities across the globe.

www.litchat.net/books-are-great-gifts



LitChat's

Books Are Great Gifts

A Campaign to Promote Books Sales and Support Literacy

Is there a better time than the holiday season to promote reading and support the literary community? LitChat has gathered a group of readers, authors and publishing professionals to join in a month-long celebration of giving and receiving, all wrapped around the things that tie us together: Books.

Phase one of LitChat's multi-faceted BOOKS ARE GREAT GIFTS (#BAGG) campaign began with the creation of a "twibbon" (www.twibbon.com/join/Books-Are-Great-Gifts) created especially for Twitter users to adorn their avatar as a show of support for book sales. LitChat has issued a challenge to this phase: For every Twitter user who wraps the #BAGG ribbon on their avatar, LitChat will personally give \$1 to its adopted literacy charity, The Reading Tree (up to \$250).

Phase two includes a section of the LitChat website devoted to book recommendations with links to book publishers, bookstores, book blogs, and reader reviews.

Phase three brings everything together with an auction of books donated and signed by authors. The auction will take place through Twitter on December 18, 2009, beginning at 6 p.m. EST. All proceeds from the Twitter auction will go directly to LitChat's adopted charity, The Reading Tree.

After much search through literary charities, LitChat was pleased to find The Reading Tree (www.readingtree.org), a non-profit organization that collects donations of new and used books in communities all over North America. Books collected by The Reading Tree are either recycled or placed in schools throughout the US and Canada, as well as in third-world countries.

LitChat is a community of readers, writers and publishing professionals who meet for lively book chat three days a week through Twitter. Founded and moderated by Carolyn Burns Bass in January 2009, LitChat's first online chat occurred February 2, 2009. Our first author guest host, Eric Barnes, appeared for a #litchat on March 6, 2009. In subsequent months we have given the twit-mic to as many as 50 authors to promote their books and connect with readers through this extraordinary, quick-paced platform called Twitter.

We invite you to help us promote book sales, reading and literacy charity through LitChat's Books Are Great Gifts campaign throughout the month of December.

The Great Twitter Book Auction

When:

- Friday, December 18, 6 -10 p.m. EST

Where:

- On Twitter, using a hashtag assigned to each title. #BAGG-

What:

- Auction of books signed and donated by authors.

To Benefit:

- The Reading Tree (www.readingtree.org), a non-profit charity registered through Section 501(c)(3) of the US Internal Revenue Code. (www.readingtree.org)

Moderator:

- Carolyn Burns Bass, founder of LitChat.

How it Works:

- A list of books to be auctioned is included in this catalog.
- On day of auction @LitChat will open with presentation of the first book.
- Each book will have an opening bid price based on the retail value of the book.
- Each book auction will run through Twitter for approximately 10 minutes.
 - If interest in particular title stalls, bidding for that item may close early.
 - If interest in particular title is heavy, bidding for that item may remain open until activity slows.
 - Should any book not receive bids, they will be donated to The Reading Tree for placement through their global literacy efforts.
- Winner of each auction will be notified immediately and directed to the Reading Tree website to submit donation of winning amount through online CC transaction portal using PayPal.
(http://onlinedonations.charityadvantage.com/clients/Reading_TreeTRLWRM/DonationsForm.asp)
- Receipts of CC transaction will be issued through The Reading Tree. (For tax purposes, fair market value of item is not deductible.)
- All books will be mailed directly to auction winners from the author or publisher of the gift after donation has been cleared.

Auction Schedule

Each book auction will run through Twitter for approximately 10 minutes. If interest in particular title stalls, bidding for that item may close early. If interest in particular title is heavy, bidding for that item may remain open until activity slows.

When bidding on a book, please tag with the #BAGG- number listed below.

Time	#Tag-No	Author	Book Title
6:00 pm/et	#BAGG-1	Kristy Kiernan	Matters of Faith
6:10 pm/et	#BAGG-2	R.J. Anderson	Faery Rebels: Spell Hunter
6:20 pm/et	#BAGG-3	Carleen Brice	Collection of two books: Orange Mint and Honey Children of the Waters
6:30 pm/et	#BAGG-4	Trish Ryan	He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not
6:40 pm/et	#BAGG-5	Brooks Sigler	Five Finger Fiction
6:50 pm/et	#BAGG-6	Kristina Riggle	Real Life and Liars
7:00 pm/et	#BAGG-7	Candace Havens	Dragons Prefer Blondes
7:10 pm/et	#BAGG-8	Jag Bhalla	I'm Not Hanging Noodles from your Ears
7:20 pm/et	#BAGG-9	Peter H. Fogdtal	The Tsar's Dwarf
7:30 pm/et	#BAGG-10	Lynne Griffith	Life Without Summer
7:40 pm/et	#BAGG-11	Jill Amy Rosenblatt	For Better or Worse
7:50 pm/et	#BAGG-12	J.T. Ellison	Three Book Set: All the Pretty Girls 14 Judas Kiss
8:00 pm/et	#BAGG-13	Matthew Dicks	Something Missing
8:10 pm/et	#BAGG-14	Virginia DeBerry and Donna Grant	What Doesn't Kill You
8:20 pm/et	#BAGG-15	Elise Blackwell	Grub
8:30 pm/et	#BAGG-16	Teri Coyne	The Last Bridge

8:40 pm/et	#BAGG-17	Tilbury House Publishers	Collection of three children's picture books from Tilbury House Publishers
8:50 pm/et	#BAGG-18	Renni Browne	Self-Editing for Fiction Writers
9:00 pm/et	#BAGG-19	Lauren Baratz-Logsted	Crazy Beautiful
9:10 pm/et	#BAGG-20	Hyatt Bass	The Embers
9:20 pm/et	#BAGG-21	Eugenia Kim	The Calligrapher's Daughter w/set of 6 notecards painted by author's mother, on whom the book is based.
9:30 pm/et	#BAGG-22	Luis Alberto Urrea	Collection of Three Books: The Hummingbird's Daughter Into the Beautiful North In Search of Snow (hardback now out of print)

Auction Winners

Here's what to do if you are the lucky winner of a signed book from one of our generous authors:

1. When an item closes, you will be sent a link by @LitChat to the The Reading Tree's PayPal donation portal.
(http://onlinedonations.charityadvantage.com/clients/Reading_TreeTRLWRM/DonationsForm.asp)
2. When you submit your donation, you must add in the comments box on the form that you participated in the #BAGG auction and include the title of the book you won.
3. We must verify donations, so please forward a copy of your receipt, along with your shipping address to us at the following email address: twitchat@gmail.com.
4. LitChat will confirm your donation and send your shipping information to the author of the book you won.
5. Authors will sign and ship the books directly to the auction winners.

Extra Giveaway

During the auction, we will give away two \$25 gift cards to BookSwim (www.bookswim.com) the site for unlimited online book rentals.

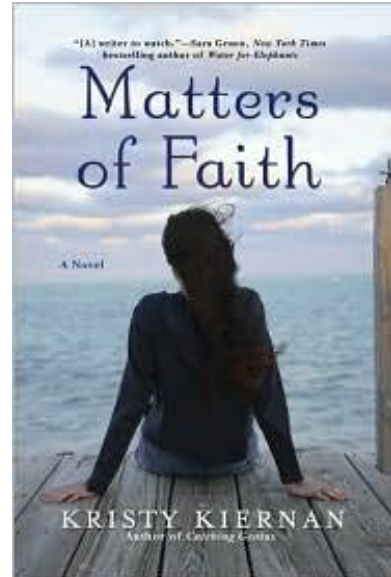
Matters of Faith

Kristy Kiernan

Womens Fiction, Paperback, retail value: \$14

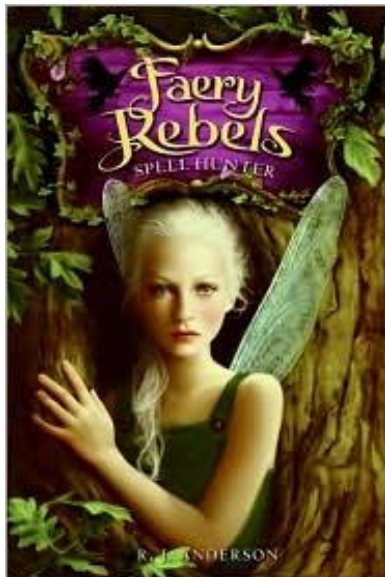
Item No: #BAGG-1

At age twelve, Marshall Tobias saw his best friend killed by a train. It was then that he began his search for faith—delving into one tradition, then discarding it for another. His parents, however, have little time for spiritual contemplation. Their focus has been on his little sister Megan, who suffers from severe food allergies. Now Marshall is home from college with his first real girlfriend, but there is more to Ada than meets the eye—including her beliefs about the evils of medical intervention. What follows is a crisis that tests not only faith, but the limits of family, forgiveness, and our need to believe.



In this tense, well-paced novel about belief, Kiernan explores what happens when faith and love test the limits of family fealty. In southwest Florida, college student Marshall Tobias is in search of something to believe in. He thinks he's found God and the woman he's always dreamed of when he falls in love with fundamentalist believer Ada Sparks. But Ada's against medical intervention for illness, and tragedy results when she sets out to "help" Marshall's 12-year-old sister, Meghan, overcome her life-threatening allergies. Switching points-of-view between Marshall and his mother, Chloe, Kiernan (*Catching Genius*) movingly portrays a 20-year-old marriage gone flat and torn apart by crisis, a troubled son, a daughter hovering between life and death, and the hard-to-discern boundaries between true faith and unhealthy fanaticism. She handles her difficult material respectfully. Most interesting is her portrayal of the well-meaning traps parents fall into when encouraging open-ended exploration of faith without context, or choosing to remain silent. The thoughtful themes, interesting characters and page-turning drama of this novel will likely make it a book club favorite.--*Publishers Weekly*, copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Kristy Kiernan was born in Tennessee and raised on the beaches of southwest Florida.



Faery Rebels: Spell Hunter

R.J. Anderson

YA/Fantasy, Hardcover, retail value: \$16.99

Item No: #BAGG-2

Deep inside the great Oak lies a dying faery realm, bursting with secrets instead of magic. Long ago the faeries mysteriously lost their magic. Robbed of their powers, they have become selfish and dull-witted. Now their numbers are dwindling and their very survival is at stake.

Only one young faery—Knife—is determined to find out where her people's magic has gone and try to get it back. Unlike her sisters, Knife is fierce and independent. She's not afraid of anything—not the vicious crows, the strict Faery Queen, or the fascinating humans living

nearby. But when Knife disobeys the Faery Queen and befriends a human named Paul, her quest becomes more dangerous than she realizes. Can Knife trust Paul to help, or has she brought the faeries even closer to the brink of destruction?

Talented newcomer **R. J. Anderson** creates an extraordinary new fantasy world and weaves a gripping tale of lost magic, high adventure, and surprising friendship in which the fate of an entire realm rests on the shoulders of one brave faery rebel.

Two book set:

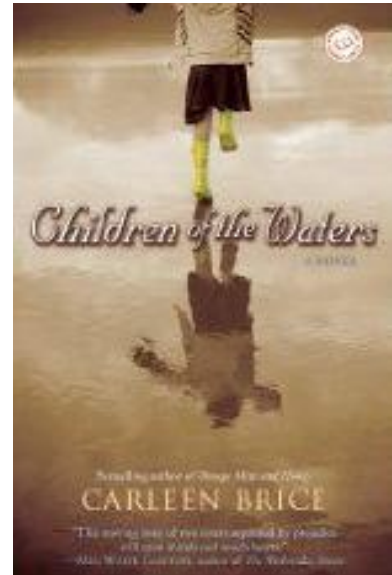
Orange Mint and Honey Children of the Waters

Carleen Brice

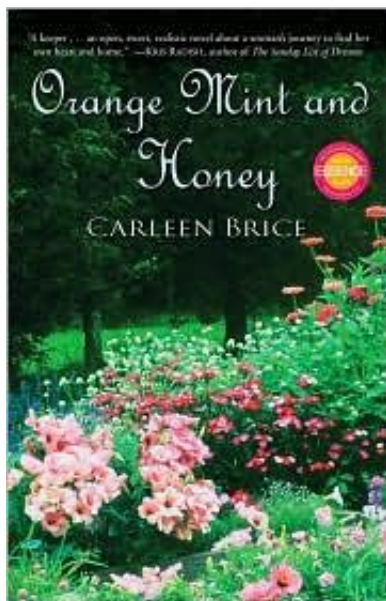
General Fiction, Paperback, total retail value: \$28.00 each

Item No: #BAGG-3

Children of the Waters (paperback, retail value \$14) Still reeling from divorce and feeling estranged from her teenage son, Trish Taylor is in the midst of salvaging the remnants of her life when she uncovers a shocking secret: her sister is alive. For years Trish believed that her mother and infant sister had died in a car accident. But the truth is that her mother fatally overdosed and that Trish's grandparents put the baby girl up for adoption because her father was black.



After years of drawing on the strength of her black ancestors, Billie Cousins is shocked to discover that she was adopted. Just as surprising, after finally overcoming a series of health struggles, she is pregnant—a dream come true for Billie but a nightmare for her sweetie, Nick, and for her mother, both determined to protect Billie from anything that may disrupt her well-being.



Orange Mint & Honey (paperback, retail value \$14) Broke and burned-out from grad school, Shay Dixon does the unthinkable after receiving a "vision" from her de facto spiritual adviser, blues singer Nina Simone. She phones Nona, the mother she had all but written off, asking if she can come home for a while. When Shay was growing up, Nona was either drunk, hungover, or out with her latest low-life guy. So Shay barely recognizes the new Nona, now sober and with a positive outlook on life, a love of gardening, and a toddler named Sunny. Though reconciliation seems a hard proposition for Shay, something unmistakable is taking root inside her, waiting to blossom like the morning glories opening up in Nona's garden sanctuary. Soon Shay finds herself facing exciting possibilities and even her first real romantic relationship. But when an unexpected crisis hits, even the wise words and soulful melodies of Nina Simone may not be enough for solace. Shay begins to realize that, like orange mint and honey, sometimes life tastes better when bitter is followed by sweet.

Carleen Brice is author of the novels *Orange Mint and Honey* (which was optioned by the Lifetime Movie Network)- a #1 Denver Post best-seller and Essence Magazine Recommended Read - and *Children of the Waters*, which One World/Ballantine released in June 2009. She also wrote *Lead Me Home: An African American's Guide Through*

the Grief Journey (HarperCollins), and edited the anthology *Age Ain't Nothing but a Number: Black Women Explore Midlife* (Beacon Press, Souvenir Press). Her book *Walk Tall: Affirmations for People of Color* sold over 100,000 copies and was in print with traditional publishers for 10 years. It is now available from iUniverse. She lives in Colorado with her husband and two cats, where she gardens and works on her third novel, *Calling Every Good Wish Home*.

He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not

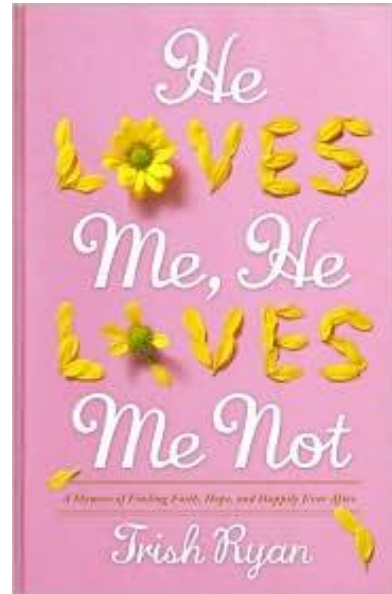
Trish Ryan

Memoir, Paperback, retail value: \$13.99

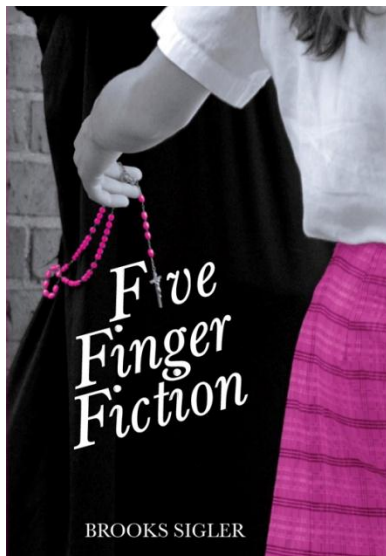
Item No: #BAGG-4

Trish Ryan was the quintessential successful thirtysomething woman — she had a career as an attorney, a nice car, and a succession of men clamoring for her affection. But despite all her accomplishments, the things by which she defined her life continually left her disappointed, especially when it came to dating.

Like the heroines of chick-lit novels and *Sex and the City*, she couldn't escape her bad luck with men: men who cheated, who left her, who made her a lesser version of herself. After years of trying everything out there to make love work — new age philosophy, feminist empowerment, myriads of self-help programs — she finally, hesitantly, decided to give Jesus a try.



Trish Ryan lives in Boston, Massachusetts. Visit her online at trishryanonline.blogspot.com and trishryanonline.com.



Five Finger Fiction

Brooks Sigler

General, Hardback, retail value: \$21.95

Item No: #BAGG-5

In *Five Finger Fiction*, Lila committed her first crime in the sixth grade. It started out with a simple ring clipped by this quintessential Catholic schoolgirl. From that defining moment when she began her collection, she was hooked. In *Five Finger Fiction*, Brooks Sigler draws us into her world of petty theft and juvenile rebellion as a way of dealing with her colorful, yet dysfunctional family, including her peeping tom father, and overbearing and clueless mother. What results is edgy and pushes the boundaries of adolescent delinquency.

Brooks Sigler is a long-time resident of New England where she teaches English. Over the years her students have shown her many things including, but not limited to, the following: how to shop and do school work while the teacher is looking, how to make the teacher laugh about a destroyed text to avoid reprisal, and how to convince a parent that a teacher lost all one's "completed" assignments.

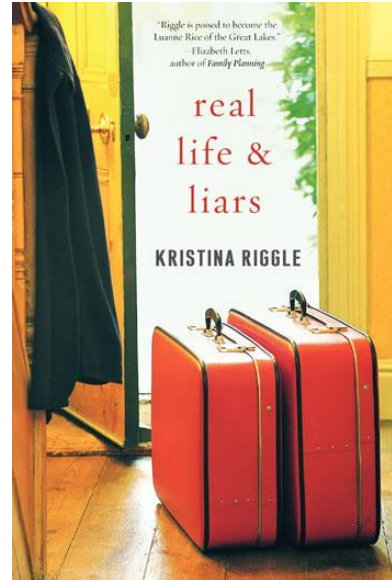
Real Life and Liars

Kristina Riggle

Womens Fiction, Paperback, retail value: \$13.99

Item No: #BAGG-6

Sometimes you find happiness where, and when, you least expect it. For Mirabelle Zielinski's children, happiness always seems to be just out of reach. Her polished oldest daughter, Katya, clings to a stale marriage with a workaholic husband and three spoiled children. Her son, Ivan, so creative, is a down-in-the-dumps songwriter with the worst taste in women. And the "baby," impulsive Irina, who lives life on a whim, is now reluctantly pregnant and hitched to a man who is twice her age. On the weekend of their parents' anniversary party, lies will be revealed, hearts will be broken...but love will also be found. And the biggest shock may come from Mirabelle herself, because she has a secret that will change everything.



Kristina Riggle lives and writes in West Michigan. Besides her debut novel, *Real Life & Liars*, she has published short stories in the *Cimarron Review*, *Literary Mama*, *Espresso Fiction*, and elsewhere. She is also a freelance journalist writing primarily for *The Grand Rapids Press*, and co-editor for fiction at *Literary Mama*.



Dragons Prefer Blondes

Candace Havens

Urban Fantasy Romance, Paperback, retail value: \$14

Item No: #BAGG-7

Alex Caruthers is a sassy socialite who knows when it's time to turn in her dancing shoes and kick some serious dragon booty. But when Ginjin-the dragon warrior who's tried to kill her numerous times-chooses her as his mate, Alex finds herself in a situation that's too hot to handle. For help she turns to Jake, head of Caruthers security-and a total hottie in a suit-and asks him to pose as her boyfriend. Their relationship might be fake, but Alex can't deny that one touch from Jake makes her burn hotter than any dragon could. *Dragons Prefer Blondes* is the second in the paranormal series featuring the Caruthers sisters, party girls who save the world-between cocktails.

Candace Havens is a sixteen-year veteran of the entertainment industry. In addition to writing countless columns on everything Hollywood, she recently published a biography of Joss Whedon, creator of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

LitChat conversation happens every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 4-5 pm/et. Find us through Twitter using the hashtag, #LitChat. Become a follower of us in Twitter at @LitChat. Visit our blog, updated weekly with new discussion topics and chatscripts of our guest author hosts: www.litchat.net

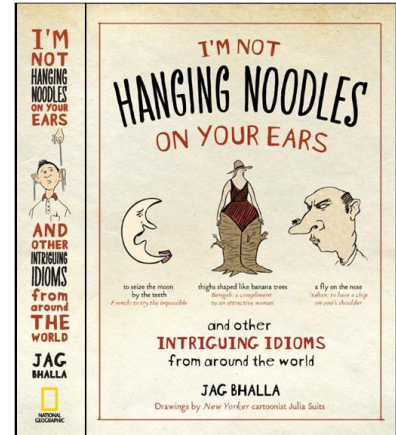
I'm Not Hanging Noodles from your Ears

Jag Bhalla

Non-fiction, Paperback, retail value: \$12.95

Item No: #BAGG-8

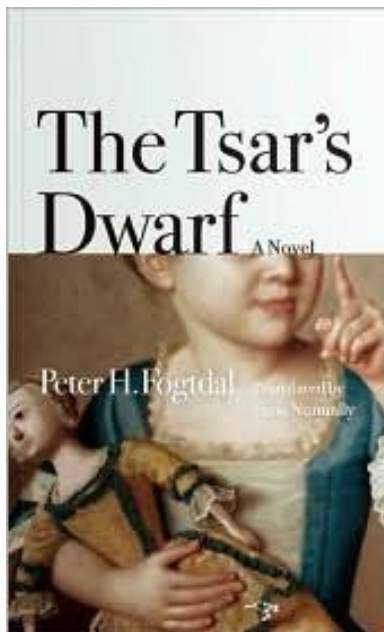
"I'm not hanging noodles on your ears." In Moscow, this curious, engagingly colorful assertion is common parlance, but unless you're Russian your reaction is probably "Say what?" The same idea in English is equally odd: "I'm not pulling your leg." Both mean: Believe me.



As author Jag Bhalla demonstrates, these amusing, often hilarious phrases provide a unique perspective on how different cultures perceive and describe the world. Organized by theme—food, love, romance, and many more—they embody cultural traditions and attitudes, capture linguistic nuance, and shed fascinating light on "the whole ball of wax." For example, when English-speakers are hard at work, we're "nose to the grindstone," but industrious Chinese toil "with liver and brains spilled on the ground" and busy Indians have "no time to die."

If you're already fluent in 10 languages, you probably won't need this book, but you'll "get a kick out of it" anyhow; for the rest of us, it's a must. Either way, this surprising, often thought-provoking little tome is gift-friendly in appearance, a perfect impulse buy for word lovers, travelers, and anyone else who enjoys looking at life in a riotous, unusual way. And we're not hanging noodles from your ear.

Jag Bhalla is an amateur idiomologist, amateur inventor, amateur entrepreneur, amateur filmmaker, and now amateur author.



The Tsar's Dwarf

Peter H. Fogtdal

Historical Fiction, Paperback, retail value: \$15.95

Item No: #BAGG-9

Soerine, a deformed female dwarf from Denmark, is given as a gift to Tsar Peter the Great, who is smitten by her freakishness and intellect. Against her will, the Tsar takes Soerine to St. Petersburg, where she becomes a jester in his court. There, she lives a life that both compels and repels her. Soerine eventually gives in to the attentions of Lukas, the Tsar's favorite dwarf, and carves out an existence for herself amidst the squalor and lice-ridden world of dwarfs in the early 18th century. In this inhospitable milieu, Soerine's intelligence and detached wit provide her some small measure of protection — until disaster strikes in the shape of a priest who wants to "save" her.

The Tsar's Dwarf is a masterfully told and brilliantly translated novel about aberration, endurance, and the human condition. The Tsar's Dwarf, by Danish novelist Peter H. Fogtdal, is translated into English by Tiina Nunnally.

Peter H. Fogtdal has written 12 novels in Danish. Three are translated into French, two into Portuguese, one into English (*The Tsar's Dwarf*, see below). Shares his time between Portland, Oregon and Copenhagen, Denmark.

Life Without Summer

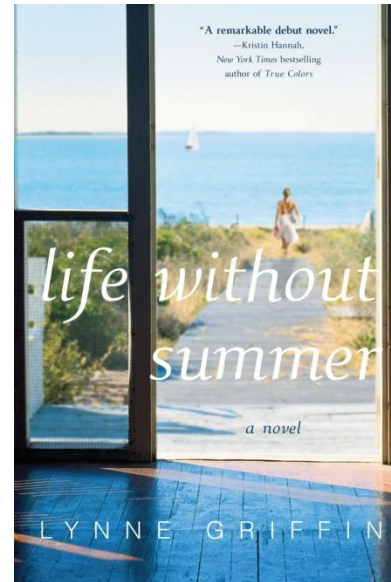
Lynne Griffith

Womens Fiction, Hardback, retail value: \$23.95

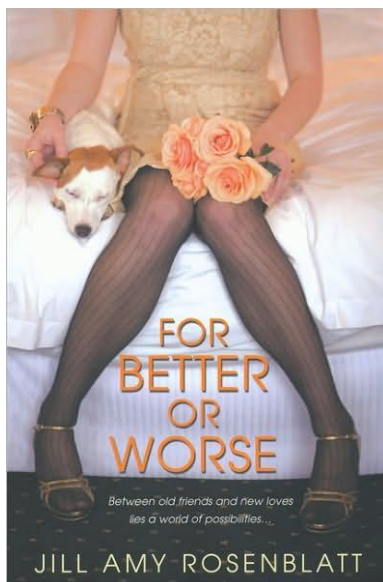
Item No: #BAGG-10

The story of a mother who has just lost her four year old daughter in a hit and run accident and the grief counselor who tries to help her to put her life back together. Their lives converge when the answers one needs, turns out to be the other woman's only chance for peace.

Griffin's fiction debut is a spellbinding tale of loss and hard-won redemption. When Tessa Gray's four-year-old daughter, Abby, is killed by a hit and run driver, there are no witnesses. From first meeting, Tessa distrusts the detective assigned to the case and, with her journalism background and ties to newspapers in nearby Boston, she begins to dig for her own answers to the identity of Abby's killer. Meanwhile, she vents her grief with Celia, a compassionate but reserved therapist. Celia's story, with its tragic undertones, unfolds parallel to Tessa's: Celia has a second marriage, a secretive teenage son and an ex-husband who makes her current family circle impossibly tense. At the office, Celia is practical and pulled together, but her home life buzzes with strife. Outside therapy, Celia's and Tessa's narratives remain separate until they shockingly intersect and lead the way to hard-won healing for both. Griffin's carefully crafted characters ring heartbreakingly true and her finely wrought plot will snare readers from the first page.--*Publishers Weekly*, copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.



Lynne Griffin has spent more than 20 years as a child development and behavior management consultant. She is the author of *Negotiation Generation: Take Back Your Parental Authority Without Punishment* (Berkley/Penguin, 2007). She is the parenting contributor for Boston's Fox 25 Morning News where she regularly appears in the segments Family Works and Parenting and the News. Her writers' group has been featured in the Boston Globe and the Patriot Ledger. She lives in Scituate, Massachusetts with her family.



For Better or Worse

Jill Amy Rosenblatt

Womens Fiction, Paperback, retail value: \$14

Item No: #BAGG-11

Touching, funny, and remarkably true-to-life, Jill Amy Rosenblatt's latest novel explores how the friendships between women only grow stronger with time. . .even when life throws curveballs no one sees coming. Emily, Elizabeth, and Karen are as different as three women can be, but that hasn't stopped them from forging an unbreakable bond. Newlywed Emily, now half of a New York City power couple,

would love nothing more than to see her friends settled down with soul mates of their own. But Elizabeth still carries the sting of a past heartbreak, while Karen fears she's destined to repeat her parents' disastrous marriage. Yet even as Emily plays matchmaker, she must ultimately confront a secret truth about her own marriage. . .one that threatens the future she thought was secure. When she does, all three friends will discover that life's paths may turn out to be longer, and harder, than expected, but the twists and turns lead us where we're meant to be.

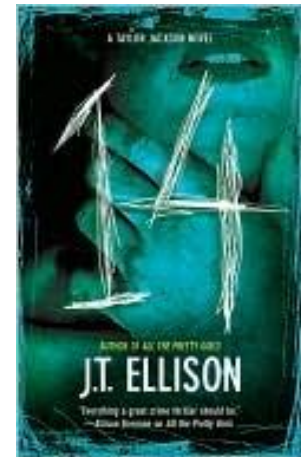
Jill Amy Rosenblatt is the author of Project Jennifer. She lives on Long Island. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Writing and Literature from Burlington College in Vermont. For Better or Worse is her second novel.

Three Book Set:
All the Pretty Girls
14
Judas Kiss

J.T. Ellison

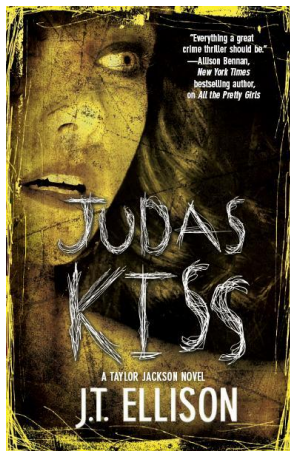
Thriller, Paperback, total retail value: \$20.88

Item No: #BAGG-12



14 (mass market paperback, retail value \$6.99) Ten victims, each with pale skin and long dark hair. All have been slashed across the throat, the same red lipstick smeared across their lips. In the mid-1980s the Snow White Killer terrorized the streets of Nashville, Tennessee. Then suddenly the murders stopped. A letter from the

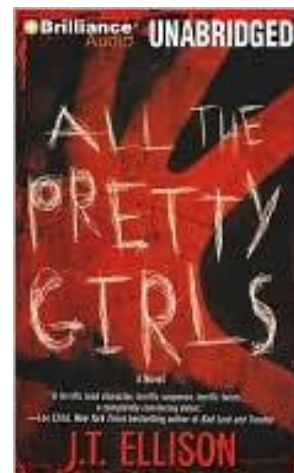
killer to the police stated that his work was done. Now four more bodies are found, marked with his fatal signature. The residents of Nashville fear a madman has returned, decades later, to finish his sick fairy tale. Homicide Lieutenant Taylor Jackson believes the killings are the work of a copycat killer who's even more terrifying. For this monster is meticulously honing his craft as he mimics famous serial murders -- proving that the past is not to be forgotten.



Judas Kiss (mass market paperback, retail value \$6.99) It was a murder made for TV: a trail of tiny bloody footprints. An innocent toddler playing beside her mother's bludgeoned body. Pretty young Corinne Wolff, seven months pregnant, brutally murdered in her own home.

The shock is magnified when an old adversary uses the sexy secret footage to implicate Taylor in a murder – an accusation that threatens her career, her reputation and her relationship. Both cases hinge on the evidence – real or manufactured – of crimes that go beyond passion, into the realm of obsessive vengeance and shocking betrayal. Just what the networks love.

All the Pretty Girls (mass market paperback, retail value \$6.99) When a local girl falls prey to a sadistic serial killer, Nashville Homicide Lieutenant Taylor Jackson and her lover, FBI profiler Dr. John Baldwin, find themselves in a joint investigation pursuing a vicious murderer. The Southern Strangler is slaughtering his way through the Southeast, leaving a gruesome memento at each crime scene -- the prior victim's severed hand. Ambitious TV reporter



Whitney Connolly is certain the Southern Strangler is her ticket out of Nashville; she's got a scoop that could break the case. She has no idea how close this story really is -- or what it will cost her. As the killer spirals out of control, everyone involved must face a horrible truth -- that the purest evil is born of private lies.

J.T. Ellison is the bestselling author of the critically acclaimed Taylor Jackson series, including *All The Pretty Girls*, *14*, *Judas Kiss* and *The Cold Room*. She is the bi-monthly Friday columnist at the Anthony Award nominated blog *Murderati*, and was named "Best Mystery/Thriller Writer of 2008" by the Nashville Scene.

Something Missing

Matthew Dicks

Thriller, Paperback, retail value: \$14

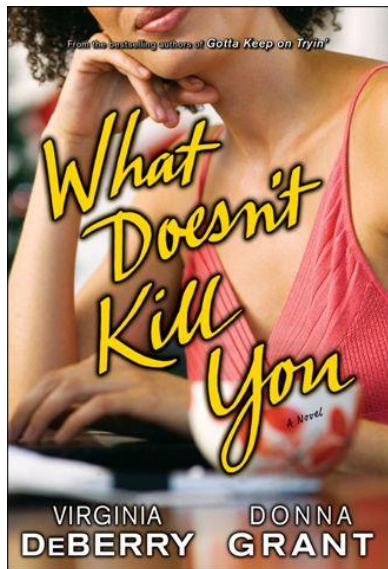
Item No: #BAGG-13

A career criminal with OCD tendencies and a savant-like genius for bringing order to his crime scenes, Martin considers himself one of the best in the biz. After all, he's been able to steal from the same people for years on end—virtually undetected. Of course, this could also be attributed to his unique business model—he takes only items that will go unnoticed by the homeowner. After all, who in their right mind would miss a roll of toilet paper here, a half-used bottle of maple syrup there, or even a rarely used piece of china buried deep within a dusty cabinet?



Even though he's never met these homeowners, he's spent hours in their houses, looking through their photo albums and reading their journals. In essence, Martin has developed a friendship of sorts with them and as such, he decides to interfere more in their lives—playing the part of a rather odd guardian angel—even though it means breaking many of his twitchy neurotic rules.

Along the way Martin not only improves the lives of others, but he also discovers love and finds that his own life is much better lived on the edge (at least some of the time) in this hilarious, suspenseful and often profound novel about a man used to planning every second of his life, suddenly forced to confront chaos and spontaneity.



Matthew Dicks lives in Newington, Connecticut. This is his first novel.

What Doesn't Kill You

Virginia DeBerry and Donna Grant

Womens Fiction, Hardback, retail value: \$24.95

Item No: #BAGG-14

Opinionated, straight-talking, and witty, Tee is a fly forty-something. Divorced since her daughter, Amber, was young, Tee has been "handling her business," supporting herself after her would-be songwriter husband took off for L.A., and she's done all right. Organized, responsible, hardworking, and loyal, Tee went from being

the first employee of a start-up purveyor of organic lotions to the right hand of the president of what became a major player in the home and personal fragrance market. But then everything changes. First, she's outplaced from her longtime job and doesn't tell anyone. Then she gives her daughter the wedding of her dreams and, after overindulging in champagne, Tee wakes up in bed with the younger best man.

For the first time in twenty-five years, Tee doesn't know who she is or what she's going to do every day. Deep in denial, she continues to live her life as if nothing has changed. After a series of financial mistakes, miscalculations, and missteps compound her already shaky situation, she's soon teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. That's when Tee decides that it's time for her to wake up and face reality. Beyond "making money," Tee never really decided what she wanted to do with her life. Then she just stopped thinking about it and invested her hopes in someone else's dream. Now it's her chance to invest in herself. Can she step out on faith to follow her own dream?

Co-authors **Virginia DeBerry and Donna Grant** met while working as models. Virginia went on to become editor in chief for Maxima, a fashion and lifestyle magazine for plus-size women, and Donna was the magazine's managing editor. They moved on together to become novelists. Virginia lives in New Jersey. Donna and her husband live in Brooklyn.

Grub

Elise Blackwell

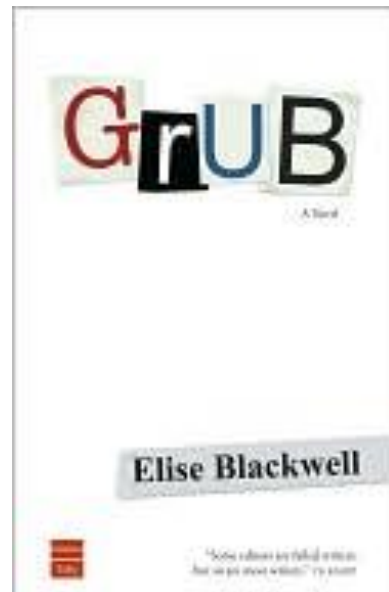
General Fiction, Hardcover, retail value: \$24.95

Item No: #BAGG-15

Michael Leone of the San Francisco Chronicle says this about Grub: With her third novel in four years, "Grub," Elise Blackwell moves into the front rank of American satirists. Author of "Hunger," a startling portrait of the siege of Leningrad, and "The Unnatural History of Cypress Parish," a haunting allegory of Hurricane Katrina, Blackwell expands her range with "Grub," an uproarious lampoon of the American drive for success.

An updating of George Gissing's Zola-esque novel "New Grub Street," "Grub," on its surface, is a story about writers, but Blackwell's triumph is that her novel works as a metaphorical drama of the American ethos itself. We require only the rhythm of our own dreams, and no special knowledge of the publishing industry, to fantasize receiving the phone call that comes halfway through the book: "Don't say anything, just listen to these words: Six figures." This is a piquant read for anyone who's ever nursed a career passion, a Wednesday hangover or the desire to nudge a feckless competitor into oncoming traffic.

Elise Blackwell is the author of the books *Hunger*, *The Unnatural History of Cypress Parish* and *Grub*. Her fourth book, *An Unfinished Score*, will be released in April 2010.



Coming up in #litchat in early 2010 are: Melanie Benjamin, author of *Alice I Have Been*; Peter H. Fogtdal, author of *The Tsar's Dwarf*; Elissa Stein, author of *Flow*; Tasha Alexander, author of the Lady Emily series of Victorian mysteries; Catherine McKenzie, author of *Spin*.

The Last Bridge

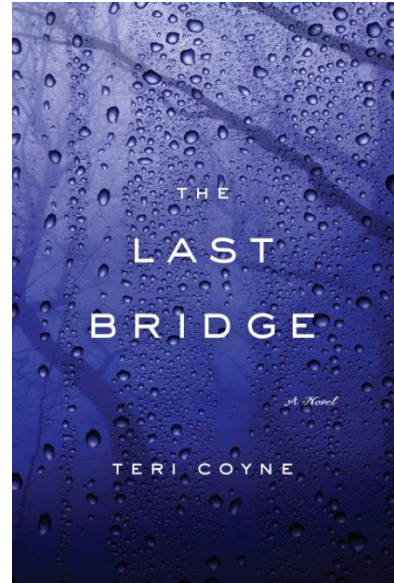
Teri Coyne

General, Hardcover, retail value: \$22

Item No: #BAGG-16

For ten years, Alexandra "Cat" Rucker has been on the run from her past. With an endless supply of bourbon and a series of meaningless jobs, Cat is struggling to forget her Ohio hometown and the rural farmhouse she once called home. But a sudden call from an old neighbor forces Cat to return to the home and family she never intended to see again. It seems that Cat's mother is dead.

What Cat finds at the old farmhouse is disturbing and confusing: a suicide note, written on lilac stationery and neatly sealed in a ziplock bag, that reads: "Cat, He isn't who you think he is. Mom xxxooo" One note, ten words—one for every year she has been gone—completely turns Cat's world upside down. Seeking to unravel the mystery of her mother's death, Cat must confront her past to discover who "he" might be: her tyrannical, abusive father, now in a coma after suffering a stroke? Her brother, Jared, named after her mother's true love (who is also her father's best friend)? The town coroner, Andrew Reilly, who seems to have known Cat's mother long before she landed on a slab in his morgue? Or Addison Watkins, Cat's first and only love?



Taut, gripping, and edgy, *The Last Bridge* is an intense novel of family secrets, darkest impulses, and deep-seated love. Teri Coyne has created a stunning tapestry of pain and passion where past and present are seamlessly interwoven to tell a story that sears and warms in equal measure.

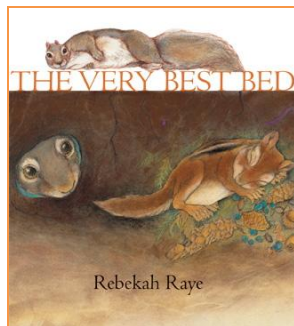
Teri Coyne is an alumna of New York University. In addition to writing fiction, Coyne wrote and performed stand-up comedy for many years. *The Last Bridge* is her first novel. She divides her time between New York City and the North Fork of Long Island.

Collection of three children's picture books from Tilbury House Publishers

Tilbury House Publishers

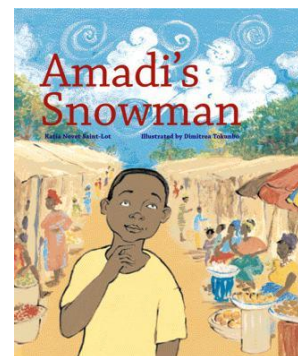
Childrens, Hardback, total retail value: \$49.95

Item No: #BAGG-17

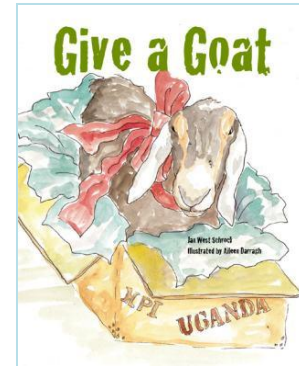


The Very Best Bed by **Rebekah Raye** (picture book, hardcover, retail value \$16.95)
Raye's beautiful watercolor paintings take us along on a little gray squirrel's search for the best place to sleep as the moon rises higher in the night sky.

Amadi's Snowman by **Katia Novet Saint-Lot** (picture book, hardcover, retail value \$16.95)
Amadi, a young boy in Nigeria, doesn't think he needs to learn how to read. But when he spots a book about a strange white creature with a carrot nose, he begins to discover the vast worlds that reading could open for him.



Give a Goat by **Jan West Schrock** (picture book, hardcover \$16.95)
Written by the daughter of the founder of Heifer International, this true story shows just how much kids can accomplish when they work together to help others in need around the world.



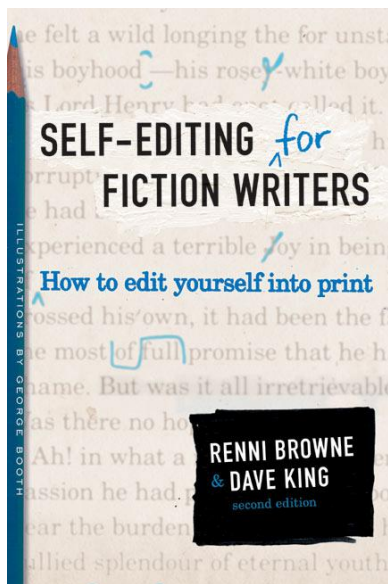
Self-Editing for Fiction Writers

Renni Browne and Dave King

(Donated by Renni Browne and The Editorial Department)

Non-fiction, Paperback, retail value: \$13.99

Item No: #BAGG-18



Hundreds of books have been written on the art of writing. Here at last is a book by two professional editors to teach writers the techniques of the editing trade that turn promising manuscripts into published novels and short stories.

In this completely revised and updated second edition, Renni Browne and Dave King teach you, the writer, how to apply the editing techniques they have developed to your own work. Chapters on dialogue, exposition, point of view, interior monologue, and other techniques take you through the same processes an expert editor would go through to perfect your manuscript. Each point is illustrated with examples, many drawn from the hundreds of books Browne and King have edited.

Renni Browne, once senior editor for William Morrow and other publishers, left mainstream publishing to found the Editorial Department in 1980. Founder of the Lost State Writer's Conference, and a regular commentator on writers and the writing life on local public radio, she lives in Greeneville, TN.

Crazy Beautiful

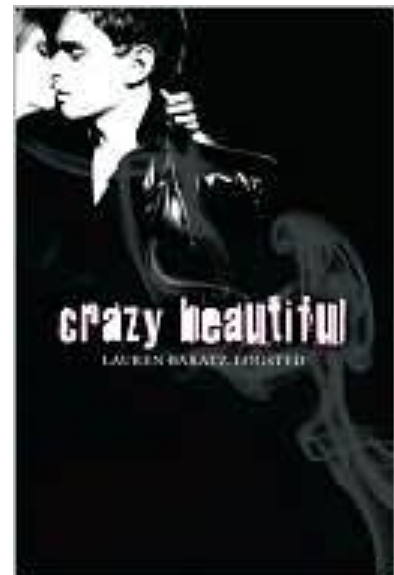
Lauren Baratz-Logsted

YA, Hardcover, retail value: \$16

Item No: #BAGG-19

In an explosion of his own making, Lucius blew his arms off. Now he has hooks. He chose hooks because they were cheaper. He chose hooks because he wouldn't outgrow them so quickly. He chose hooks so that everyone would know he was different, so he would scare even himself. Then he meets Aurora. The hooks don't scare her. They don't keep her away. In fact, they don't make any difference at all to her.

But to Lucius, they mean everything. They remind him of the beast he is inside. Perhaps Aurora is his Beauty, destined to set his soul free from its suffering. Or maybe she's just a girl who needs love just like he does.



Lauren Baratz-Logsted has also written *Angel's Choice* and *Secrets of My Suburban Life*. She lives with her family in Danbury, Connecticut.

The Embers

Hyatt Bass

General, Hardcover, retail value: \$25

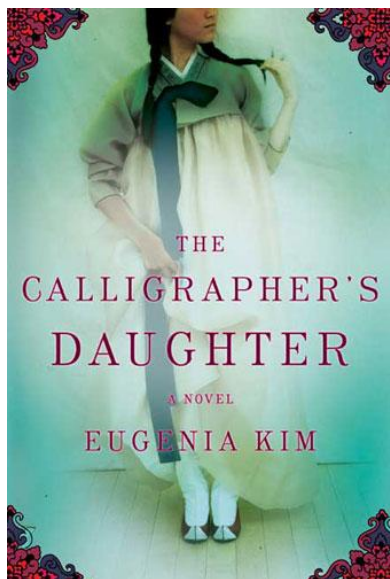
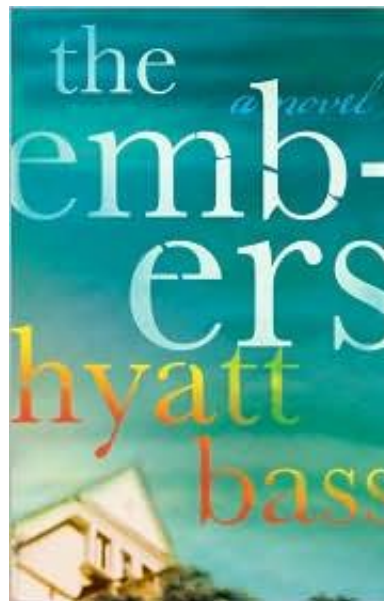
Item No: #BAGG-20

A once-charmed family is forced to confront the devastating tragedy that struck it years ago in this fiercely tender tale of betrayal and reconciliation.

It's the fall of 2007, and Emily Ascher should be celebrating: she just got engaged to the man she loves, her job is moving in new and fulfilling directions, and her once-rocky relationship with her mother, Laura, has finally mellowed into an easy give-and-take. But with the promise of new love settling into old comes a difficult look at how her family has been torn apart in the many years since her brother died. Her parents have long since divorced, and her father, Joe, a famous actor and playwright who has been paralyzed with grief since the tragedy, carries the blame for his son's death-but what really happened on that winter night? Why has he been unable to clear his name, or even discuss that evening with Laura and Emily?

As spring looms-and with it Emily's wedding in the Berkshires and an unveiling of Joe's new play-each Ascher begins to reevaluate the events of long ago, finally facing the truth of his or her own culpability in them. Moving between past and present over the course of sixteen years, *The Embers* is a skillfully structured debut novel of buried secrets and deep regrets that crush a family while bonding its members irrevocably.

Hyatt Bass wrote, directed, and produced the film *75 Degrees in July*, which was released in 2006. *The Embers* is her first novel.



The Calligrapher's Daughter w/set of 6 notecards painted by author's mother, on whom the book is based.

Eugenia Kim

General, Hardback, retail value: \$26

Item No: #BAGG-21

The Calligrapher's Daughter is a sweeping debut novel, inspired by the life of the author's mother, about a young woman who dares to fight for a brighter future in occupied Korea.

Kim's account acquires depth and immediacy as she draws vivid pictures of wartime poverty and hardship. Throughout the narrative,

she gradually reveals many facets of Korean identity, especially the role of religion, where devout Christianity exists in harmony with Confucian belief and ritual. As Najin begins to question Christian doctrine about the sanctity of suffering and sacrifice, her conflicting emotions add dimension to her character. In quietly recording the arc of a woman's experience from idyllic childhood through harrowing adulthood, Kim mirrors the changing nation. The ending of the book is somewhat rushed, as Kim tries to encapsulate events in the immediate postwar period, but overall this is a satisfying excursion into empathetically rendered lives.--*The Washington Post*, Sybil Steinberg

Eugenia Kim is the daughter of Korean immigrant parents who came to America shortly after the Pacific War. She has published short stories and essays in journals and anthologies, including *Echoes Upon Echoes: New Korean American Writings*, and is an MFA graduate of Bennington College. She lives in Washington, D.C., with her husband and son. *The Calligrapher's Daughter* is her first novel.

Collection of Three Books:

The Hummingbird's Daughter

Into the Beautiful North

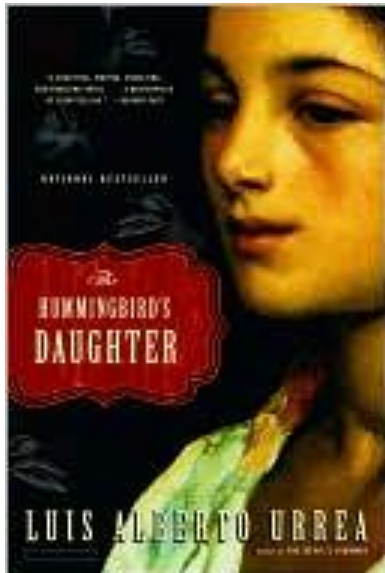
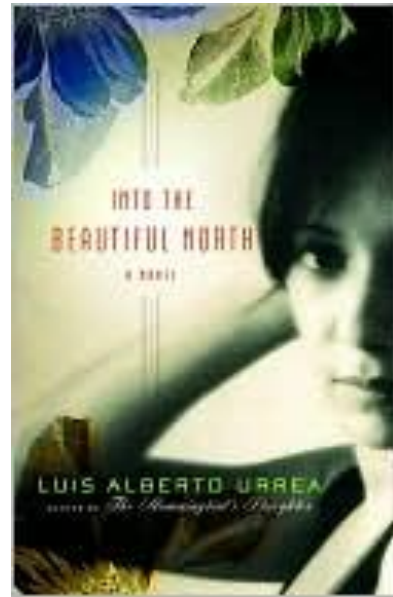
In Search of Snow (hardback now out of print)

Luis Alberto Urrea

General, Hardback, combined retail value: \$33.94

Item No: #BAGG-22

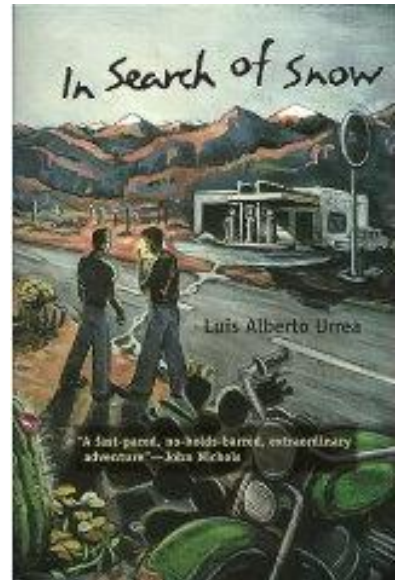
Into the Beautiful North (hardback, retail value \$24.99) Beloved bestselling author Luis Alberto Urrea returns with a brilliant, ebullient, and timely road novel about a young woman's journey north, to America. Nayeli, the Taqueria worker of Urrea's fine new novel (after *The Hummingbird's Daughter*), is a young woman in the poor but tight-knit coastal Mexican town of Tres Camarones who spends her days serving tacos and helping her feisty aunt Irma get elected as the town's first female mayor. Abandoned by her father who headed north for work years before, Nayeli is hit with the realization that her hometown is all but abandoned by men, leaving it at the mercy of drug gangsters. So Nayeli hatches an elaborate scheme inspired by *The Magnificent Seven* : with three friends, she heads north to find seven Mexican men and smuggle them back into Mexico to protect the town. What she discovers along the way, of course, surprises her. Urrea's poetic sensibility and journalistic eye for detail in painting the Mexican landscape and sociological complexities create vivid, memorable scenes. Though the Spanglish can be tough for the uninitiated to detangle, the colorful characters, strong narrative and humor carry this surprisingly uplifting and very human story. --*Publishers Weekly*, copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.



The Hummingbird's Daughter (trade paperback, retail value \$15.99) This historical novel is based on Urrea's real great-aunt Teresita, who had healing powers and was acclaimed as a saint. Urrea has researched historical accounts and family records for years to get an accurate story. To the very end, *The Hummingbird's Daughter* is a book of surprises and savory treasures. Urrea's much-praised recent work, *The Devil's Highway* , was a journalistic re-creation of the deaths

of 14 Mexicans who crossed illegally into the U.S. southern desert in 2001. He has loosened his expressive reportorial skills to write lyrical fiction, and we can only be grateful.-- *The Washington Post*, Joanne Omang

In Search of Snow (hardback, retail value 17.95) Urrea wrests strange, beautiful poetry out of a mean, lean desert terrain--Arizona, mid-1950s--in this impressive first novel, a blend of deadpan humor, picaresque adventure and search for self. Home for Mike McGurk is a gas station run by his widower father, Wallace (aka Texaco Turk) McGurk, an ornery bigot whose glory days as bare-knuckles boxing champ and WW II hero are behind him. Mike, age 27, is adrift; haunted by the memory of his mother, who died when he was seven, he has a guilt-ridden affair with his college-bound cousin Lily and then gets mixed up with Ramses Castro, a roughneck Apache gang leader. When Texaco Turk dies, Mike is rescued by Bobo Garcia, the Mexican-American mechanic. Their peripatetic adventures end in Bobo's hometown, where Mike, informally adopted into the Garcia family, comes to terms with his feelings about his macho father. Some of the novel's strongest scenes are the early depictions of Mike and his father, whose bluster is a veneer to hide his own sense of failure. Equally moving are Bobo's flashbacks to Buchenwald, where he helped liberate inmates of the Nazi concentration camp. Author of a nonfiction book on the Mexican border (*Across the Wire*), Urrea brings the glint of truth to his fictional characters and settings. Author tour.--*Publishers Weekly*, copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.



Luis Alberto Urrea is the author of *The Devil's Highway*, winner of a Lannan Literary Award; *Across the Wire*, winner of the Christopher Award; and the incredibly acclaimed *The Hummingbird's Daughter*. He is also the recipient of an American Book Award, a Western States Book Award, and a Colorado Book Award, and he has been inducted into the Latino Literary Hall of Fame. He lives in Chicago.

Thank You for Your Support

If you have any questions about LitChat, the BOOKS ARE GREAT GIFTS campaign, or the #BAGG auction, please contact:

Carolyn Burns Bass
twitchat@gmail.com

If you have questions about The Reading Tree, please contact:

John Barger
Executive Director, The Reading Tree
john@readingtree.org

We wish to thank everyone who has participated in supporting LitChat's BOOKS ARE GREAT GIFTS campaign through the 2009 holiday season. Those who RT'd tweets, to those who adorned their Twitter avatar with a "Twibbon," to anyone who made a comment on the LitChat blog, and to everyone who bid on books during the auction, LitChat is enormously grateful. You are the rocks that keep LitChat rolling.

Here's to a happy and healthy holiday season and prosperous new year.