

<p><i>Artichoke's Heart</i> by Suzanne Supplee Dutton Books, 2008, 276 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Rosemary Goode grapples with her weight through sarcastic wit, Pounds-Away diet drinks, and constant haranguing from her mother, Aunt Mary, and the spiteful Bluebirds clique in this tale set in Spring Hill, Tennessee.</p> <p>Her mother purchases a \$700 treadmill for her, and her aunt delivers a ticket to a <i>Healing the Fat Girl Writin'</i> conference. Neither one motivates Rosemary to stop overeating. They only make her resent her family. The only gift she treasures is a collection of Emily Dickinson poems.</p> <p>Through Supplee's Southern style of humor, lyrical language, and gifted storytelling, readers witness the day-to-day problems that Rosemary faces with her obesity. Misty, the head honcho of the Bluebirds, bestows the menacing moniker Artichoke to Rosemary and teases her during every opportunity that she has an audience. Think <i>Mean Girls</i> reloaded.</p> <p>The heart of this story is the strained relationship between Rosemary and her mother. When her mother is diagnosed with cancer, Rosemary must make amends before it's too late. Readers will also enjoy Supplee's descript rendering of beauty shop culture.</p> <p>Anjeanette C. Alexander-Smith Tallahassee, FLA</p>	<p><i>The Boy Who Dared</i> by Susan Campbell Bartoletti Scholastic Press, 2008, 202 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>ISBN-13: 978-0-439-68013-4 ISBN-10: 0-439-68013-4</p> <p><i>The Boy Who Dared</i> tells the story of Helmuth Hübener, a young man growing up in Nazi Germany. Although he enters the Hitler Youth, and he has family members serving in the German army, Helmuth's conscience will not allow him to be swept up in the nationalistic fervor of the times. Rather, Helmuth begins listening to the BBC with an illegal radio, and he ultimately recruits a couple of like-minded friends to help him circulate a crude newsletter based on the British broadcasts.</p> <p>Soon they are caught by the authorities, and when Helmuth and his friends are on trial, Helmuth deliberately antagonizes the judge in order to attract attention to himself and lessen the punishment his friends will face.</p> <p>The novel is told in flashbacks as Helmuth sits in his jail cell awaiting execution for his crimes.</p> <p><i>The Boy Who Dared</i> is a compelling, well-told story that will appeal to students interested in historical fiction, World War II, or stories of individuals defying a corrupt government.</p> <p>F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>
<p><i>The Brothers Torres</i> by Coert Voorhees Hyperion Books for Children, 2008, 316 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Frankie and Steve Towers are very different brothers. Steve is older, popular, and a jock. Frankie is younger and doesn't have much going on in his life. According to Steve, it is time for Frankie to be a man. But Frankie is not so sure. After all, Frankie feels, Steve is a man, by age, but does he act like one? The boys have always been close growing up, and now that is threatening their relationship. This book is an honest and very realistic look at the Mexican youth culture in Borges, New Mexico, with a good mix of violence and romance that will satisfy both guys and girls.</p> <p>This is first novel by Coert Voorhees is wonderfully written. It is obvious that he grew up in New Mexico. It deals with a number of gritty subjects dealt with by the youth of today no matter the state or culture.</p> <p>Teri Walton Topeka, KS</p>	<p><i>The Calder Game</i> by Blue Balliett Illustrations by Brett Helquist Scholastic Press, 2008, 379 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>ISBN-10: 0-439-85207-2 ISBN-13: 978-0-439-85207-4</p> <p>Calder Pillay and his father are off to England on a business trip. Calder is fascinated because they will be staying near Blenheim Park, home to a famous maze. Calder loves making and figuring out mazes. Calder likes using these to solve puzzles. His friends, Petra and Tommy, each have their own fascinations. Petra is a word whiz, while Tommy was a collector. They kids also love mobiles inspired by Alexander Calder.</p> <p>In England, Calder disappears the exact same moment that the new town sculpture disappears. Petra and Tommy rush off to help find their friend. Who would want to take an American boy visiting England? Why do the townspeople detest a piece of sculpture that was given out of admiration? Playing with words, shapes, and numbers, the kids just might find their way out of a maze.</p> <p>Mary Schmutz Junction City, KS</p>

<p><i>Conception</i> by Kalisha Buckhanon St. Martin's Press, 2008, 277 pp., \$21.95</p> <p>True to Life/Teen Pregnancy ISBN-13: 978-0-312-33270-9</p> <p><i>Conception</i> is the second novel written by Kalisha Buckhanon, a notable young author who has won several distinguished awards. This novel alternates between two narrators, Shivana Montgomery and her unborn child. The unborn child narrates her experiences as an unborn child in different mothers' wombs across different time periods. Each mother loses her, which causes her return to a metaphysical realm where she waits for another. She is really connected to her latest mother-to-be, who happens to be fifteen years old.</p> <p>Shivana is a product of a cycle of single mothers raising children on their own. Her mother rears her through a type of tough love that displays anger toward Shivana, instead of communicating her fear that she will repeat her path. Shivana searches for love in an older married man and ends up pregnant.</p> <p>This book is recommended for 11th- and 12th-grade students. There are some instances of profanity and sexual scenes. It would be an excellent selection for independent reading because of its raw portrait of urban life from an urban female adolescent's point-of-view.</p> <p>Anjeanette C. Alexander-Smith Tallahassee, FLA</p>	<p><i>The Dead and the Gone</i> by Susan Beth Pfeffer Harcourt Books, 2008, 336 pp., \$17.00</p> <p>Fiction/Apocalyptic/Survival ISBN: 978-0-15-206311-5</p> <p>Seventeen-year-old Alex Morales and his family live in New York City. His mom has started a new job at the hospital, his older brother Carlos has gone off to the Marines, and his father is in Puerto Rico for a funeral. Alex and his two younger sisters are alone at home when it happens: the moon is hit by an asteroid, which knocks it out of its normal orbit. The moon rolls closer to Earth, and that is where the story really takes off.</p> <p>Sure, the moon may not seem very important. At least that's what Alex thinks at first. But when the tsunamis hit and the Statue of Liberty is washed away, readers know things aren't going to get better any time soon. It's one disaster after another, and Alex needs to take care of himself, as well as his sisters. If you liked Pfeffer's <i>Life As We Knew It</i>, this book is a companion to it, although not a sequel. Volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, food shortages, and epidemics: this book has it all.</p> <p>Jennifer Lee Louisville, KY</p>
<p><i>The Diamond of Drury Lane</i> by Julia Golding Roaring Brook Press, 2008, 432 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Adventure/Historical Fiction ISBN-13: 978-1-59643-351-9 ISBN-10: 1-59643-351-5</p> <p>Catherine (Cat) Royal is on the hunt for a diamond hidden somewhere in her home, The Royal Theatre. Cat's guardian has entrusted her with keeping the secret about the jewel of the theater. But can a young, poor orphan be trusted with anything?</p> <p>This first of the Cat Royal Adventure series takes the reader to the turn of the 19th century London with phrases, maps, and specific settings from that time period. Golding allows her Cat to have many lives by moving her in and out of many societies in London. Golding blends racism, slavery, and the differences between the haves and the have-nots seamlessly, along with a touch of humor. Cat proves to the reader that young people can keep their word and help anyone regardless of sex, race, or class.</p> <p>This novel was a joy to read just to see what trouble Cat would get into next.</p> <p>Mary Schmutz Junction City, KS</p>	<p><i>Diamond Willow</i> by Helen Frost Frances Foster Books, 2008, 128 pp., \$16.00</p> <p>Poetry ISBN: 978-0-374-31776-8 0-374-31776-3</p> <p>An interesting combination of poetry and prose, this book tells the story of a Diamond, a 12-year-old girl growing up in central Alaska. Each poem is in the shape of a diamond, and Frost uses bold words in each poem to reveal the hidden feelings of Diamond. The form and depth of each poem is striking and stirring. The prose sections are told from the perspective of Diamond's animal ancestors, who periodically intervene in Diamond's life.</p> <p>Diamond shares her deepest fears, longings, and adventures with the reader. The greatest of these adventures occurs when Diamond convinces her family to let her mush alone to her grandparents' home. Along the way Diamond has an accident that will eventually lead her on a dangerous adventure.</p> <p>Frost's book sparkles with the beauty of nature, realization of truth, and surprising twists in both form and plot. <i>Diamond Willow</i> is ideal for middle school students and/or as a complement to any poetry unit.</p> <p>Lauren Marston Fayetteville, AR</p>

<p><i>The Disappeared</i> by Gloria Whelan Dial, 2008, 137 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>The military regime of 1970s Argentina comes eerily alive in this new novel by Gloria Whelan (<i>Homeless Bird</i>). Eduardo Díaz is arrested for his peaceful demonstrations against the generals' abuse of power, and his younger sister Silvia will stop at nothing to set him free.</p> <p>The presentation as a series of undelivered letters between siblings quickly immerses the reader in the emotional tension and heartbreak of the "Dirty War." Like ever-widening ripples in a pond, the reader sees the agony of mothers missing their children and the indiscriminate, callous torturing of people from all walks of life. Eduardo and Silvia beautifully portray both the arrogance of youth and its potential for good in a world gone crazy.</p> <p>Melissa Moore Jackson, TN</p>	<p><i>The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks</i> by E. Lockhart Hyperion, 2008, 352 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Frankie Landau-Banks, a sophomore at Alabaster, a prestigious boarding school, is tired of being taken for granted by everyone. Dad calls her "bunny rabbit" and her family and friends don't really think she's capable of much. But she suddenly finds herself the girlfriend of Matthew, one of the hottest seniors on campus.</p> <p>Frankie finds out that Matthew is a member of the school's secret all-male society, the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds. Frankie is determined to find out what the Bassets do and how to become a Basset herself, so she follows Matthew and his Basset friends. In her own way, she is able to infiltrate the all-male society and send its members on many errands, setting up schoolwide pranks. The best part is that no one suspects the adorable Frankie as having a hand in it.</p> <p>A funny book that will leave you cheering for Frankie, you definitely won't want to put this one down before she's through.</p> <p>Jennifer Lee Louisville, KY</p>
<p><i>Feathered</i> by Laura Kasischke Harper Teen (HarperCollins), 2008, 261 pp., \$17.89</p> <p>Terri, Anne, and Michelle, childhood friends and seniors at Glendale High, are off to Cancun for spring break. Armed with sunscreen, bikinis, and their mothers' admonitions in their heads, they plan on having the time of their lives. The only things on their minds are boys, tans, and sky blue drinks. Kasischke places the girls between the raucous beach party of modern Cancun and the deep green jungle where ancient mysteries still live. Like tourists themselves, readers follow the girls as they experience both worlds.</p> <p>Kasischke writes a story we see too often in the headlines, using characters developed through her artful dialogue and strong imagery. Appropriate for the more mature adolescent literature reader, <i>Feathered</i> teaches an important lesson about danger and the disguises it wears.</p> <p>Jane Kenyon Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>The House of Djinn</i> by Susan Fisher Staples Frances Foster Books, 2008, 207 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>A continuation of Susan Fisher Staples's tale first told in her book <i>Shabazzu</i>, readers are introduced to Mumtaz, Shabanu's daughter, who still does not know that her mother is not really dead. Mumtaz has been living with relatives who treat her poorly, and her only friends are Jameel, her American cousin, and her Baba (grandfather).</p> <p>When Baba passes away, the family is turned upside down. Together, Jameel, successor of Baba as the local tribe leader, and Mumtaz, Jameel's selected wife, must choose between following their Islamic values and pursuing their own modern views of love. The American/Pakistani identity conflict that Jameel faces and Mumtaz's reunion with her mother are events that teens of varying cultures and backgrounds will be able to identify with.</p> <p>A glossary is provided to help potential readers, eighth- through 10th-grade students, with unfamiliar terms. I would recommend this book for small group instruction to foster text-to-text and text-to-world connections and as a great addition to a school and classroom library.</p> <p>Nicole Avery Hot Springs, AR</p>

<p><i>In Mozart's Shadow: His Sister's Story</i> by Carolyn Meyer Harcourt, 2008, 350 pp., \$17.00 ISBN: 9778-0-15-205594-3</p> <p>Historical Fiction/Sibling Rivalry</p> <p>Carolyn Meyer, acclaimed author of numerous historical novels for young readers, now wonders: What must it have been like to be the sister of the bratty child prodigy Wolfgang Mozart? <i>In Mozart's Shadow</i> is her imaginative but research-based response.</p> <p>A musical genius in her own right, Nannerl Mozart repeatedly finds herself in her brother's shadow as her father insists she subordinate her own career and even her hopes for marriage in order to serve the Family Mozart.</p> <p>Meyer capably brings eighteenth-century European life into the reach of younger adolescents. Those who enjoy classical music will appreciate an "inside view" of Wolfgang's pranks and escapades. Girls will enjoy the touches of romance in Nannerl's life but perhaps may flinch at the domination females endured during the 1700s.</p> <p>Judy Beemer Milford, KS</p>	<p><i>Juliet's Moon</i> by Ann Rinaldi Harcourt, 2008, 245 pp., \$17.00 ISBN: 978-0-15-206170-8</p> <p>Historical Fiction</p> <p>This installment of Ann Rinaldi's <i>Great Episodes</i> series tells the story of Juliet Bradshaw, a 12-year-old girl growing up in the midst of the Civil War. Her only living family—her father and brother Seth—wholly support the Confederacy, and Seth leaves the family's Missouri farm to join Quantrell's Raiders. As a result, the Yankees arrive on the farm and shoot Juliet's father and burn her home to the ground.</p> <p>Soon afterward, Juliet is captured, along with Seth's fiancée Martha and Martha's sisters. Thus begins the girls' long journey home and Juliet's personal quest to reconcile the good side of herself with her newly discovered dark side.</p> <p>While the prose of <i>Juliet's Moon</i> is easily accessible to both low- and high-level readers, some of the content may be too graphic for younger students. It would be best for mature readers in eighth to 10th grade.</p> <p>Katie Pearson Junction City, KS</p>
<p><i>A Little Friendly Advice</i> by Siobhan Vivian Push (Scholastic), 2008, 248 pp., \$16.99 ISBN: 978-0-545-00404-6</p> <p>Friendship/Divorce/Romance</p> <p>Ruby's sixteenth birthday celebration with three friends takes an unexpected turn when her dad crashes the party after a ten-year absence. Ruby only wants to play with her vintage Polaroid and maybe experience her first hook-up, but her plans keep getting interrupted by stale memories of her dad and the best intentions of her closest friend, Beth.</p> <p>This first novel expertly captures the authentic voices of teen girls. Vivian sets up a beautiful contrast between the clean, still moments of life, captured in a white Polaroid frame, and its ongoing complexities and flow. The tension between the girls is tenderly captured, and Ruby's fears of abandonment produce empathy rather than pity. The given reality of teen smoking and drinking might limit the book to a high school audience.</p> <p>Melissa Moore Jackson, TN</p>	<p><i>Lockdown</i> by Diane Tullson Orca Book Publishers, 2008, 103 pp., \$9.95 ISBN: 978-1-55143-916-7</p> <p>Realistic Fiction/School Shooting</p> <p>As a former public school educator who has lived through bomb and shooting threats, I was not, at first excited about reading a book about an ostracized boy named Josh who, after experiencing yet <i>another</i> humiliating and defeating incident in a classroom, takes matters into his own hands. However, Tullson creates much depth and complexity in Josh's character, so, while readers will wince at his actions, they should also wince at how fellow students treat him.</p> <p>Readers are also introduced to Adam, a slacker with a heart; his romantic interest, Zoe; and the tennis-shoe wearing, young principal, Mr. Connor. They, along with other intriguing minor characters, find themselves in the middle of a lockdown—trapped in their own school without a clue as to who is shooting and why. Not only will the ending create much discussion, reluctant readers will also appreciate the book size, pacing, and colorful characters.</p> <p>Jacob Stratman Siloam Springs, AR</p>

<p><i>The Lucky Place</i> by Zu Vincent Front Street, 2008, 232 pp., \$17.95</p> <p>The reader follows Cassie from two to twelve years old in this tale of how family situations affect children.</p> <p>Cassie's alcoholic father Sikes leaves her at the horse races at a young age, which prompts her mother to divorce him. Cassie's "New Daddy," Ellis, is much more stable and caring, and eventually Cassie thinks of him as her father, much to the dismay of her brother Jamie. As the new family develops and adjusts to life in their new home for which the book is named, Ellis develops cancer and eventually dies. Cassie's mother falls apart, and the story ends as she pulls her mother together, makes peace with her "Old Daddy," and manages the family as a seventh-grader.</p> <p>The book is recommended for ages 12 and up, and it could be used in classrooms as a read aloud or just an engaging, personal tale of a dysfunctional functional family.</p> <p>Christian Goering Fayetteville, AR</p>	<p><i>The Night I Freed John Brown</i> by John Michael Cummings Philmore Books, 2008, 251 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>ISBN: 978-0-399-25054-5</p> <p>Mystery</p> <p>In his first novel, <i>The Night I Freed John Brown</i>, John Michael Cummings shares with us the story of Josh, the youngest of three boys growing up in historical Harpers Ferry. With rich detail, Cummings draws on his personal experiences to transport the reader into the historic setting of Harpers Ferry — the tourist destination in West Virginia that celebrates the life of abolitionist John Brown. Unlike his two older brothers, Josh is an artist. He spends many sleepless nights drawing in his sketchbook, dreaming of the day he can leave his creatively oppressive family. Josh is all too often misunderstood by his father and coddled by his mother, and Josh desperately searches for clues that might explain the distance between him and his father.</p> <p><i>The Night I Freed John Brown</i> will appeal to a wide range of young adult readers. It is a fast-paced story that addresses themes like familial relationships, identity development and brotherhood.</p> <p>Matthew Skillen Manhattan, KS</p>
<p><i>121 Express</i> by Monique Polak Orca Book Publishers, 2008, 106 pp., \$9.95</p> <p>The novel begins with a letter from the Montreal Transit Corporation to Principal John Mallard stating that the 121 Express will be discontinued if student behavior does not improve. Not only is Lucas Samson the new kid at school, he's also the new kid on the rowdiest bus in the district, the 121 Express. Branded a "braniac" at his previous school, Lucas attempts to become popular by befriending the trouble-makers who sit at the back of the bus: Pierce, Jake, Georgie, Kellie, and Pierre. However, that means he must help the "cool kids" by ridiculing the "nerds" at the front of the bus.</p> <p>Reluctant readers will enjoy the characters' antics on the bus, the quick-witted dialogue, and the narrative pacing; yet, teachers will appreciate Polak's desire to create characters who must tackle issues like prejudice, respect, acceptance, and integrity on a daily basis.</p> <p>Jacob Stratman, Siloam Springs, AR</p>	<p><i>Paper Towns</i> by John Green Dutton, 2008, 320 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>ISBN: 978-0-525-47818-8</p> <p>Friendship/Relationships/Self-Discovery</p> <p>Quentin Jacobsen believes everyone gets one miracle in life, and his is living next door to Margo Roth Spiegelman. Margo is the epitome of Quentin's dreams, and he will do anything for her. When she appears in his room in the middle of the night, dressed all in black, and asks him to go on a top secret mission with her, Quentin ignores his better judgment and goes. What follows is a night full of escapades, revenge, dead smelly fish, and the creation of a bond between the two friends. When Margo mysteriously disappears and leaves enigmatic clues for Quentin, he feels he must drop everything and find her.</p> <p>In his best book date, John Green provides original, quirky dialogue and enough twists, turns, and mystery to keep the reader turning the page. Once again John captures the essence of a geeky high-school boy who is pining for the out-of-reach girl, and fully develops the supporting cast of characters – Quentin's friends and the elusive Margo Roth Spiegelman.</p> <p>Melanie Koss Chicago, IL</p>

<p><i>The Patron Saint of Butterflies</i> by Cecilia Galante Friendship/Communes/Abuse Bloomsbury, 2008, 292 pp., \$16.99 ISBN-10: 1-59990-249-4</p> <p>At fourteen, Agnes and Honey find their lifelong friendship increasingly strained. As Agnes immerses herself in the strictures and ideals of the religious commune where they have grown up, Honey grows more skeptical, questioning the values, norms, and hypocrisy of the only world she's ever known. When Agnes's visiting grandmother glimpses the dangers lurking behind closed doors, she takes both girls and Agnes' younger brother on an unexpected, unforgettable road trip. Along the way, Honey finds home by leaving it, while Agnes reluctantly trades moral certainty for devastating truth.</p> <p>Galante tells a poignant, compelling, and timely story through the alternating perspectives of Agnes and Honey. Her own childhood experiences of commune life allow her to engage its complexities with authenticity, insight, and sensitivity. Yet the novel remains, above all, a testament to the redemptive power of friendship and an exploration of the universal adolescent search for kinship and belonging.</p> <p>Helen Bittel Scranton, PA</p>	<p><i>Peeled</i> by Joan Bauer Mysteries/Farm Life/Journalism Penguin Young Readers Group, 2008, 248 pp., \$16.99 ISBN-10: 0399234756 ISBN-13: 978-0399234750</p> <p>Hildy Biddle, an aspiring journalist, lives in apple orchard country in upstate New York and writes for her school paper fittingly named <i>The Core</i>. When a dead body is found at the old Ludlow House, abandoned property thought to be haunted, apprehension in the sleepy town of Banesville builds. Uneasiness turns to hysteria when Pen Piedmont, editor of the local paper, sensationalizes the death and other mysterious occurrences around the property in an effort to sell more papers and draw more attention to the town's unrest. Determined to challenge Piedmont's scaremongering and unethical tactics, Hildy sets out to uncover the mystery surrounding the dead body and other strange occurrences.</p> <p>Hildy, aided by her friends and former professional journalist, Baker Polton, uncovers a shady plot to destroy the orchards and turn the town into a tourist trap. Hildy is courageous and relentless. She unpeels the truth about shady political doings and human greed in her small town and, in doing so, finds the core of her own moral fiber.</p> <p>Pam B. Cole Kennesaw, GA</p>
<p><i>The Possibilities of Sainthood</i> by Donna Freitas Teen Girls/Friendship/Love Frances Foster Books, 2008, 280 pp., \$16.95 ISBN 13: 978-0-374-36087-0 ISBN 10: 0-374-36087-1</p> <p>Fifteen-oh-so-close-to-16-year-old Antonia has been patiently praying to the many saints and writing to the Vatican about being named a living saint herself. She wants to be appointed the Patron Saint of Figs and Fig Trees. She also wouldn't mind kissing Andy Rotellini on her way to becoming the first living saint. Antonia writes every day in her Saints Diary, including thoughts and prayers about Andy, her widowed mother, her grandmother dealing with early dementia, and her trials about the famous fig tree that brings in money for her family. Hunky Michael McGinnis tries to show Antonia how she is already a saint in the community.</p> <p>Freitas' novel showed the many trials that teens go through in finding their own identity. Antonia is a privately strong female character for young girls to live through vicariously. She falls in love every day but still maintains her own reputation like any saint.</p> <p>Mary Schmutz Junction City, KS</p>	<p><i>Side by Side: New Poems Inspired by Art</i> Poetry and Art <i>From Around the World</i> Edited by Jan Greenberg Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2008, 88 pp., \$19.95 ISBN: 978-0-8109-9471-3</p> <p>In her previous anthology, <i>Heart to Heart</i>, Jan Greenberg collected American poems inspired by works of art. <i>Side by Side</i> continues this tradition from a global perspective. Works of art are reprinted and paired with poetry inspired by the art. The poems are printed both in their original language and in English translation. The poetry and art collected are grouped into chapters: Stories, Voices, Expressions, and Impressions. Additionally, the book contains brief biographies of the artists, authors, and translators, as well as a map of the world identifying the countries reflected in the collection</p> <p><i>Side by Side</i> is an excellent addition to any classroom or library. It is useful first as a book of fine poetry but also as a supplement to multicultural studies and as a model for the use of art as a prompt for writing.</p> <p>F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>

<p>Superior Saturday by Garth Nix Scholastic Press, 2008, 278 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>Science Fiction/Fantasy/Dystopia ISBN: 978-0-439-70089</p> <p>Sixth in Nix's <i>The Keys to the Kingdom</i> series, <i>Superior Saturday</i> continues the unlikely heroism of Arthur Penhaligan, formerly an asthmatic boy, now a golden-blooded Denizen. As he struggles to maintain his human compassion in the face of increasing magical powers, he must stop time and find the Sixth Key before his home city is nuked by Nothings.</p> <p><i>Superior Saturday</i> will keep young fantasy lovers in constant suspense as Nix combines adventure with a far-reaching imagination. The entire construct of the Upper House built from open cubicles of red iron reaching ever higher as Saturday attempts to break through the floor of the Incomparable Gardens suggests more than just a story. Nix definitely lives up to his reputation as winner of the Aurealis Awards for Best Fantasy Novel, Best Young Adult Novel, and Best Children's Novel.</p> <p>Judy Beemer Milford, KS</p>	<p>Three Million Acres of Flame by Valerie Sherrard Dundum, 2007, 200 pp., \$12.99</p> <p>Historical Fiction ISBN: 978-1-55002-727-3</p> <p>Skye Haverill is a fairly typical 14 year old in 19th century Newcastle, New Brunswick—gossips with her friends, dislikes her step-mother—when the largest land fire in North American history destroys her house, town, and leaves her family construed about the area. Skye's difficulties are, however, minor, compared to many around her, and she demonstrates courage and compassion in helping those less fortunate. As the community heals and rebuilds, Skye develops respect and fondness for her stepmother and a deep appreciation for the family she has.</p> <p>This book would be an excellent source for teaching about Canadian history, as it is easily accessible (ages 10-14 recommended) and contains factual details described through the intimacy of the people affected by the fire. I would not hesitate to recommend this book.</p> <p>Christian Goering Fayetteville, AR</p>
<p>Up All Night: A Short Story Collection by Abrahams, Bray, Levithan, McCormick, Weeks, and Yang HarperTeen (HarperCollins), 2008, 228 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Relationships/Identity/Mystery ISBN: 978-0-06-137076-2</p> <p><i>Up All Night</i> is a collection of six short stories that probe readers to find what drives their innermost thoughts, memories, or experiences that keep their minds ticking throughout night.</p> <p>For more mature readers, author Libba Bray's story, <i>Not Just for Breakfast Anymore</i>, portrays the main character struggling to find her family's identity when she is awakened to different perspectives on life after finding out that her father is gay. Author Peter Abrahams writes an emotional memoir-like story, <i>Phase 2</i>, of the unexpected loss of a military father and the toll it takes on the family he left behind. Gene Luen Yang's graphic short story, <i>The Motherless One</i>, advances the reader through a visual sequence of wanting to know the unknown.</p> <p>Other award-winning authors' stories included in the collection are David Levithan, Patricia McCormick, and Sarah Weeks. This collection of short stories is directed toward a more mature audience of middle and high school students.</p> <p>Melissa DeWitt Manhattan, KS</p>	<p>What I Saw and How I Lied by Judy Blundell Scholastic Press, 2008, 292 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Mystery/Romance/Anti-Semitism ISBN: 978-0-439-90346-2</p> <p>Judy Blundell creates a fast-paced, suspenseful look at the after-effects of World War II through the eyes of fifteen-year-old, wanna-be-eighteen, Evie. The war has ended; Evie's stepfather has returned home safely and takes Evie and her mother on an unexpected trip to Palm Beach, Fla. Evie falls in love with movie-star-handsome Peter, only to discover herself caught in a web of lies spun by her family. Suddenly, the protected and innocent teen stands to lose everything she holds dear, and anti-Jewish sentiments of the war become personal issues.</p> <p>Blundell deftly fashions Evie as an innocent but glamour-struck post-war teen who must almost instantly develop the integrity and self-reliance to make impossibly tough judgments. Evie is fascinatingly multifaceted as she approaches adulthood in ways she—and readers—never anticipated.</p> <p>Judy Beemer Milford, KS</p>

<p><i>When the Black Girl Sings</i> by Bil Wright Simon and Schuster, 2008, 266 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Relationships/Identity ISBN: 978-1-4169-3995-5</p> <p>Lahni is adopted. She is black, and her parents are white. They are great parents who have always had a great relationship with her and with each other. She is the only black girl in her private school. None of this has ever been a problem, but now Lahni's life is full of problems.</p> <p>Her parents are divorcing, and it is turning her world upside down. For the first time, kids at school are making an issue of her race, especially one weird guy. All of this leaves Lahni wondering who she really is. When her music teacher enters her in a school talent competition, she has a chance to find out—and make new friends while she does.</p> <p>Today, there is a real need for books with interracial themes and situations. Bil Wright offers one that addresses the issue from a different angle and is a fun read.</p> <p>Teri Walton Topeka, KS</p>	<p><i>Where People Like Us Live</i> by Patricia Cumble Laura Geringer Books (Harper Teen), 2008, 210 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Friendship/Family Problems/Sexuality ISBN: 978-0-06-137597-2</p> <p>When Libby and her family move for the umpteenth, she's apprehensive about making more new friends before her first year in high school. However, it isn't long before Libby meets Angie, a girl who has all the qualities Libby wishes she had, and they quickly become best friends. As best friends, the two girls share tons—hiding spots, clothes, the love of horses, a taste in music, and unspoken deep secrets.</p> <p>Although Libby had noticed Angie and her stepfather Kevin had a different relationship than Libby and her father, it took witnessing an act to confirm her suspicions. Now, Libby faces a totally new problem—ruin her only true friendship and tell, or keep the secret she promised never to reveal.</p> <p><i>Where People Like Us Live</i> is a story that exposes the harsh reality some teens face in dealing with sexual abuse and the impact it has on others. The story leads into some graphic images and is intended for more mature audiences.</p> <p>Amanda Graham Manhattan, KS</p>
<p><i>Writing Naked</i> by Peter Gould Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008, 256 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Identity/Friendship/Environment ISBN: 978-0-374-38483-8</p> <p>Victor is a kid who likes to fly under the radar. At sixteen he admits he is still in “my-trying-to-figure-it-all-out phase.” When Victor finds an old typewriter at a garage sale, he's sure there is a story in it. Lugging the typewriter to an abandoned cabin in the Vermont woods, Victor begins his journey of self-discovery. With the old Royal acting as friend and talisman, Victor sets out to test the theory that you have to be “naked to write.” A curly-haired nature lover, Rose Anna, and her dog Dash surprise Victor one day. He has been detected! Using her grandmother's gold-plated fountain pen, Rose Anna joins Victor in writing their way to a special friendship, determining the meaning of “writing naked,” and experiencing the wonder of first love.</p> <p><i>Writing Naked</i> is a thoughtful novel exploring the idea of how writing can be self-defining. We hear Victor's voice as he narrates the novel, and we hear Rose Anna's story as she shares her writing with Victor.</p> <p>Jane Kenyon Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Publishers who wish to submit a book for possible review should send a copy of the book to:</i> Lori Goodson 409 Cherry Circle Manhattan, KS 66503</p> <p><i>To submit a review for possible publication or to become a reviewer, contact Lori Goodson at lagoodson@cox.net</i></p>

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