

*A*fter working with books all day, many of our librarians like nothing more than to relax with a good book of their own. Here are some recommendations from a list compiled annually by the UW-Madison Librarians' Assembly. Many of these books can be found in campus libraries or your local public library.

Airth, Rennie. **River of Darkness**. London: Macmillan, 1999.

Powerful debut novel set just after World War I. Sent by Scotland Yard to investigate a murderous attack in a small English village, Inspector John Madden sets out to identify and capture the killer — a demented former soldier with a bloody past.

Aycliffe, Jonathan. **The Vanishment**. London: Harper Collins, 1993.

Trying to repair their marriage, Peter and Sarah rent an old house in rural Cornwall. The house harbors an evil past that emerges the moment they arrive. A wonderful page turner that makes you jump at every sound and sleep with the lights on.

Bryson, Bill. **In a Sunburned Country**. New York: Broadway Books, 2000.

Traveling around Australia, the author discovers sights ranging from outrageously tacky to awe-inspiring. Very entertaining and funny.

Cameron, Julia. **The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity**. New York: Putnam, 1995.

A workbook that helps improve creativity through several proven techniques, including an effective journaling process and some wonderful ideas like the "artist's date" as a way to refill the reader's creative reserve.

Cornwell, Bernard. **The Winter King: A Novel of Arthur (The Warlord Chronicles I)**. London: Michael Joseph, 1995.

— **Enemy of God: A Novel of Arthur (The Warlord Chronicles II)**. London: Michael Joseph, 1996.

— **Excalibur: A Novel of Arthur (The Warlord Chronicles III)**. London: Michael Joseph, 1997.

The Arthur stories based on the historical Arthur, a Celtic warlord, during the time when the Romans had abandoned Britain and the native Celts were battling the invading Saxons and each other. Well-written historical fiction with no fantasy or New Age mystical elements.

Crace, Jim. **Being Dead**. London: Viking, 1999.

"Few novels are as unsparing as this one in presenting the ephemerality of love given the implacability of death, and few are as moving in depicting the undiminished achievement love nevertheless represents." (New York Times Book Review)

Dalby, Andrew. **Dangerous Tastes: The Story of Spices**. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

A cultural history of the spice trade from ancient times. Answers the question about why my favorite cookies have nutmeg in them.

Dobson, Joanne. **Cold and Pure and Very Dead**. New York: Doubleday, 2001.

— **The Northbury Papers**. New York: Doubleday, 1998.

— **Quieter Than Sleep**. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

A series featuring sleuth Karen Pelletier, an English professor at an upper crust New England college. Each mystery has a literary theme or connection.

Drabble, Margaret. **The Millstone**. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965.

The story of Rosamund, an unmarried doctoral student in English literature at Cambridge, who has a baby while completing her degree. A funny, touching book.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. **Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America**. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001.

Ehrenreich tries three low-wage jobs to see if she can survive: waitress, house cleaner, and Wal-Mart sales clerk. Her sardonic wit enlivens an ultimately sad account of what too many hard-working people in this country are up against.

Elliott, William. **Tying Rocks to Clouds**. Quest Books, 1995.

The author attempts to nail down the meaning of life and death by traveling across the globe to interview "spiritual people" — including Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Ram Dass, Mother Teresa, and the Dalai Lama.

Franzen, Jonathan. **The Corrections**. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001.

"Ferociously detailed, gratifyingly mind-expanding, and daringly complex and unhurried, *New Yorker* writer Franzen's third and best-yet novel aligns the spectacular dysfunctions of one Midwest family with the explosive malfunctions of society-at-large." (Booklist Review)

George, Elizabeth. **A Great Deliverance**. Toronto; New York: Bantam, 1988.

First in a set of mystery novels that introduces Scotland Yard's Inspector Thomas Lynley and his assistant, Barbara Havers, as they investigate a brutal murder in contemporary England.

Gopnik, Adam. **Paris to the Moon**. New York: Random House, 2000.

New Yorker essayist writes about the five years he, his wife, and young son lived in Paris in the late 1990s. Great descriptions of contemporary, domestic, and political life in Paris.

Gorenberg, Gershom. **End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount**. New York: Free Press, 2000.

Very interesting and informative. Provides background behind the current religious violence in the middle east. The book is centered around the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the piece of religious real estate most coveted by the three major world religions: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

Holm, Bill. **The Heart Can Be Filled Anywhere on Earth**. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 1996.

Essays about "what community means to us and the rigid definitions we give to 'success' and 'failure'." Includes wonderful stories and recipes.

Hornby, Nick. **How to be Good**. London: Viking, 2001.

Hornby's hilarious novel addresses the question "What does it mean to be truly good anyway?" After 20 years of marriage, Dr. Katie Carr wishes her husband, David, would turn into a different person . . . then he does.

Kingsolver, Barbara. **Prodigal Summer**. New York: Harper Collins, 2000.

Interwoven stories dealing with relationships explored through the accounts of

three people and their place in natural and man-made communities. Set in the Appalachian Mountains.

Lewis, Sydney. **Help Wanted: Tales From the First Job Front.** New York: New Press, 2000.

Oral history of the world of work in the tradition of Studs Terkel's *Working*. Good for students, those who have recently started careers or switched jobs, and supervisors.

Little, Constance and Gwyneth Little. **The Black Gloves.** Garden City: Doubleday, Doran, 1939.

One in a series of period mysteries. For those willing to suspend disbelief these are amusing, frivolous romps of mystery usually involving a plucky young girl who first finds a body—then it disappears—and reappears—and disappears.

Marshall, Paule. **The Fisher King: A Novel.** New York: Scribner, 2000.

A moving story of jazz, love, family and an artist's struggles in society set in 1949. Decades later his eight-year-old grandson attends a memorial concert in his honor revealing the persistent family and community rivalries that drove his grandfather into exile.

Mones, Nicole. **Lost in Translation.** New York: Delacorte Press, 1998.

In her first novel, Mones tells of an American woman working as a translator on an archeological expedition in China. A complex portrait of a woman in search of herself. Reveals as much about character and cultural differences as it does about a search for priceless fossils.

Parry, Owen. **Faded Coat of Blue.** New York: Avon, 1999.

— . **Shadows of Glory.** New York: William Morrow, 2000.

Very good Civil War mystery novels.

Pratchett, Terry. **Last Hero: A Discworld Fable.** New York: Harper Collins, 2001.

This is a really fun and goofy book. The latest in a long series of funny, satiric fantasies about a world not completely unlike our own. Illustrated throughout in sumptuous color.

Quammen, David. **The Song of the Dodo: Island Biogeography in an Age of Extinctions.** New York: Scribner, 1996.

Combines personal observation, scientific theory, and history. Takes readers on a worldwide tour of wild places, ideas, and creatures, including dragons of Komodo, elephant birds of Madagascar, and giant tortoises of the Galapagos.

Quindlen, Anna. **Object Lessons.** New York: Random House, 1991.

A coming-of-age book about an Irish-Italian girl growing up in New York as she struggles to deal with the realities of the adult world and wrestles with the approaching death of her grandfather.

Ringler, Dick. **Bard of Iceland: Jónas Hallgrímsson: Poet and Scientist.**

Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002.

Makes available for the first time in any language other than Icelandic, an extensive collection of works by Jónas Hallgrímsson, considered the most important poet of modern Iceland.

Roem, Ned. **Lies: A Diary 1986-1999.** Washington, D.C: Counterpoint, 2000.

Roem has been publishing his name-dropping, opinionated, and entertaining diaries for five decades. This one includes the harrowing narrative of his longtime lover's death from AIDS.

Royte, Elizabeth. **The Tapir's Morning Bath: Mysteries of the Tropical Rain Forest and the Scientists Who Are Trying to Solve Them.** Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

An introduction to tropical ecology and theoretical biology, as well as original and thoroughly engaging travel writing.

Sandemose, Aksel. Translated by Gustaf Lannestock. **The Werewolf = Varulven.**

Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966.

A boldly drawn novel of the tyranny of love over men and women and the unending trials of strength between good and evil in human nature set against the backdrop of Norwegian society from World War I to the 1960s.

Sapolsky, Robert M. **A Primate's Memoir.** New York: Scribner, 2001.

"A witty concoction blending field biology, history, hilarious cross-cultural mishaps, and hair-raising adventure....brilliant." (Kirkus Review)

Suri, Manil. **Death of Vishnu: A Novel.** New York: Norton, 2001.

A story that hinges on the dying alcoholic Vishnu lying on the first floor landing of a Bombay apartment building. Vishnu is used as the conduit to all of the characters and their intertwined comic, tragic, and melodramatic stories. "A remarkable first novel." (Publishers Weekly)

Tennant, Emma. **Burnt Diaries.** Edinburgh: Canongate, 1999.

A lively, gossipy memoir of Tennant's experiences as editor of *Banana*, an avant-garde literary magazine in London, and her contacts with writers like Philip Roth, Andy Warhol, and Ted Hughes, Sylvia Plath's husband, with whom Tennant had an off-again, on-again affair.

Tyler, Ann. **Back When We were Grownups.** New York: A.A. Knopf, 2001.

At 53, saddled with a huge, contentious family and running a business not entirely of her choosing, widowed Rebecca Davitch wonders if she would not have been happier with her old college flame, so she looks him up to find out. A humorous, wise look at aging.

Wilson, Barbara Jaye. **Death Brims Over.** New York: Avon Books, 1997.

Brenda Midnight is a savvy young designer with her own hat shop, who never thought of chasing crooks. But when crime invades her Greenwich Village neighborhood, and the cops do not have a clue, Brenda drops everything to catch a thief and a killer.