

## STAFF PICKS

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### ***Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*** **by Jamie Ford**

#### Staff Review:

"This is a gentle and kind story of a friendship that spans 40 years. It's a friendship between a Chinese boy and a Japanese girl that starts prior to and continues after the bombing of Pearl Harbor."

#### From *Publishers Weekly*:

"Ford's strained debut concerns Henry Lee, a Chinese-American in Seattle who, in 1986, has just lost his wife to cancer. After Henry hears that the belongings of Japanese immigrants interned during WWII have been found in the basement of the Panama Hotel, the narrative shuttles between 1986 and the 1940s in a predictable story that chronicles the losses of old age and the bewilderment of youth. Henry recalls the difficulties of life in America during WWII, when he and his Japanese-American school friend, Keiko, wandered through wartime Seattle. Keiko and her family are later interned in a camp, and Henry, horrified by America's anti-Japanese hysteria, is further conflicted because of his Chinese father's anti-Japanese sentiment."

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### ***Murder in the Sentier*** **by Cara Black**

#### Staff Review:

"This is a title in a series of mysteries, each one set in a different quarter of Paris. The main character is a female private detective, Aimee Leduc. In the course of solving mysteries that often involve international intrigue and political extremists, she is also searching for her mother who disappeared when she was a little girl. It is arm-chair travel, mystery solving, and vicarious experience of the main character's PI lifestyle all rolled into one."

#### From *Publishers Weekly*:

"After completing Anthony Award-nominee Black's third Aimee Leduc mystery, those who haven't read the first two in the series *Murder in Belleville* and *Murder in the Marais* won't rest easy until they've devoured the earlier volumes as well. One of the best new writers in the field today, Black sets her novels in a Paris so real one can hear and smell the street."

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### ***The Year the Music Changed*** **by Diane Thomas**

**Staff Review:**

"This is about a young girl who wrote a letter in 1955 to a new singer—Elvis-- saying she knew he would become a star! They become friends through letters in which they share their hopes, fears and dreams. It's fiction, but I would like to believe it could be true."

**From *Publishers Weekly*:**

"Fictional letters between the up-and-coming Elvis Presley and Achsa J. McEachern, a precocious 14-year-old fan, make up Thomas's fanciful debut novel...Thomas has delved into Presley biographies, communed with his fans on the Internet and produced a warm, lively and immensely readable novel that will especially touch fans of "the King."  
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***Made in the USA*  
by Billie Letts**

**Staff Review:**

"A story about an orphaned brother and sister trying to survive on the streets of Las Vegas. It is sad at times, but has a good ending."

**From *Publishers Weekly*:**

"Starred Review. Letts's tale of two children who set out on a voyage to find their father after his hefty ex-girlfriend, the children's guardian, falls dead in a Wal-Mart, is a moving coming-of-age tale."  
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***Shoot the Moon*  
by Billie Letts**

**Staff Review:**

"Great story about a small town with a little mystery thrown in."

**From *Publishers Weekly*:**

"A man's desperate search for his identity drives this riveting offering from the author of best-sellers *Where the Heart Is* (1995) and *The Honk and Holler Opening Soon* (1998). No one in sleepy DeClare, Oklahoma, has forgotten the 1972 murder of pretty Cherokee Gaylene Harjo and the abduction of her infant son, Nicky Jack...Readers of Sue Miller and Wally Lamb are sure to embrace this memorable tale of love, loss, humanity, and hope."  
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***Knockemstiff: Stories*  
by Donald Ray Pollock**

**Staff Review:**

"Great short stories, but they're not for the faint of heart. These characters are not exactly refined! This author reminds me of Mississippi writer Larry Brown."

**From *Publishers Weekly*:**

“A native of Knockemstiff, Ohio, Pollock delivers poignant and raunchy accounts of his hometown’s sad and stagnant residents in his debut story collection that may remind readers of its thematic grand-daddy, *Winesburg, Ohio*. The works span 50 years of violence, failure, lust and depravity...The most startling thing about these stories is they have an aura of truth.”

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***In the Shadow of the Master*  
Edited by Michael Connelly**

**Staff Review:**

“This was very interesting to me because I am a fan of Edgar Allan Poe. He led such a sad, pathetic life. Too bad he didn’t live to see what tremendous influence he had on other writers.”

**From *Publishers Weekly*:**

“The Mystery Writers of America presents a collection of Poe tales with afterwords by 20 distinguished writers who honor Poe’s powerful influence on the modern crime story. Stephen King, reflecting on *The Tell-tale Heart*, credits Poe with writing the first tale of criminal sociopathy...Contributions from Lawrence Sanders, Sue Grafton, Sara Paretsky, Tess Gerritsen and others—many of them Edgar winners—vary in their appreciation from the deeply personal to the respectfully analytical, and from the lightly humorous to the deadly earnest.”

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