

For the Love of Reading

New to Me Only 3(+) Years Later!



I try to stay familiar with new books coming out, but also keep a list ([on goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com))

so I don't miss anything great either. I recently read two great books that either were published in 2010 or enjoyed a resurgence in 2010. These two books don't have too much in common, but I missed them then, maybe you did too!

A Visit From the Goon Squad by Jennifer Egan is a complicated contemporary novel that follows many different characters, but centers around Bennie and Sasha, who work in the music industry. We meet both of them at different points in their lives, from teenagers to older parents and the novel stretches from the Bay Area, to NYC, to Africa and Naples. Each chapter focuses on a particular character at a specific time and place with no real instruction to the reader on the how and why. Through the strength of Egan, this doesn't break down the narrative. I really enjoyed all of the voices, varied narrative structures, and cried during a chapter told as a powerpoint told by a 14 year old character previously un-introduced. This book is risky, edgy, intellectual, unafraid of emotion, and requires a lot from the reader. With all that said, it was also highly enjoyable!

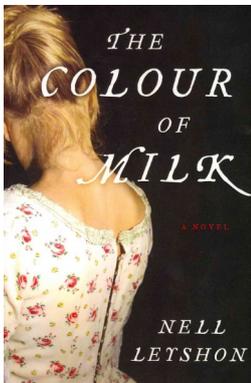
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Posted by Sarah B. on Feb 28, 2013 [Sarah B.'s blog](#) [Add new comment](#)



The Colour of Milk



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ISBN:

9780062245823

if missing capitals drive you crazy, this may not be the book for you. however, i hope you will try

it because *the colour of milk* brims with a young girl's voice. despite the fact that she lives on an english farm and does back-breaking labor from dawn to dusk under her brutal father's command, mary still possesses a sense of wonder at the world.

the time period covers the years of our lord, 1831 and -32. throughout this compelling novel, mary repeats over and over "this is my book and I am writing it in my own hand". you'll have to finish it to understand why these words resonate.

mary shares the harsh farm work with her mother and three sisters. violet sneaks off at night for sensual adventures in the hay loft. (mary discovers this when she goes out to press her head against the cow she loves dearly and almost the only creature who gives her any comfort). whenever she is not working, beatrice holds a bible in her hand, but when she recites what is inside it, mary notices that she's holding it upside down. hope suffers from the same bad temper as their father and dreams of living in her own house with a rich husband.

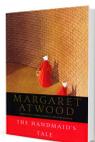
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Posted by Dory L. on Feb 25, 2013 [Dory L.'s blog](#) [Add new comment](#)



March Books Plus



Our March Books Plus will be special because Wendy Rubin will be leading a

discussion on the book so many Bloomingtonians are reading, *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. Not only is it our 2013 [One Book One Bloomington](#) selection but it's a dystopian novel that focuses on the treatment of women.

This novel offers so many interesting questions to discuss, what makes a theocratic society, can women really be revered when they are policed by men, and how does dividing women into hierarchies based on their domestic tasks affect society. It's basically a book about good and evil. In one passage, Margaret Atwood said, "The moment of betrayal is the worst, the moment when you know beyond any doubt that you've been betrayed: that some other human being has wished you that much evil."

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Your Voice in My Head



"Can I tell you what it's like to live inside Millais' painting of Ophelia"? asks Emma

Forrest in her memoir, *Your Voice in My Head*. Forrest is already a published author and

journalist when in her early 20s moves from London to New York. Her professional rise as a writer coincides with her extreme struggles with self-cutting, an eating disorder, mania, a suicide attempt, and depression.

Forrest credits a lot of her survival to psychiatrist, Dr. R. So when Dr. R dies suddenly, and then a famous Hollywood actor dumps her via text message shortly after, Forrest is left alone to pick up the pieces of her heartbreak and loss.

This isn't the type of memoir I usually read, but I'm glad I did. Forrest walks well the line of artistic genius and insanity. You care for her, even when the choices she makes are hard to understand. Rounding out the sympathetic characters are Dr. R, and Forrest's own parents who deal the best they can from London.

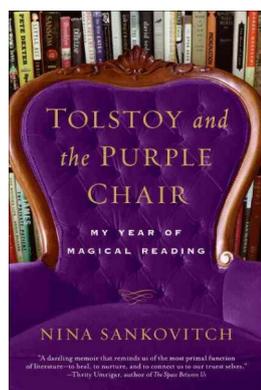
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[A Cornucopia of Books](#)



[view in catalog](#)

ISBN:

9780061999840

If you look back to those long summer afternoons of reading during your childhood with longing, this book is for you. Three years after losing her beautiful and talented older sister, Anne-Marie, to cancer, Nina Sankovitch decided to do something she had long dreamed of doing, making books central to her life again. Of course as the mother of three teens and one preteen - all boys - she didn't have much free time. But from Oct. 28, 2008 to the same date in 2009 Nina read and read and read some more.

In the intervening years after her sister's death, Nina had kept fiendishly busy, driving, cooking, cleaning, heading committees, and organizing literary projects--all the myriad duties of raising a family and being involved in her Connecticut community. But each day she felt guilty to be alive because her sister had died. This lovely book is both a tribute to a sister, and a memoir of their relationship. It's also a narrative about how concentrating on reading finally healed Nina, so that she was eager to go forward again.

Nina resurrected (reupholstered) the big purple chair that one of their cats had made its own by spraying on it. Here in this regal chair for two, three, even four hours a day, Nina both lost and found herself through books.

Besides telling Anne-Marie's story, *Tolstoy and the Purple Chair* also relates the story of her father, Anatole, who lost three aunts and uncles in a shooting during WW II. All were shot in his family's kitchen in Poland while their terrified mother lay upstairs in her sick bed. Anatole also

suffered from TB after WW II and spent over two years in a sanatorium in the mountains recovering after the war. Nina compares her year of reading to those years of rest and recuperation that her father experienced there.

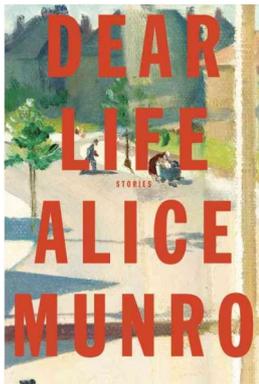
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Dear Life: Stories



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ISBN:

9780307596888

No other author manages to squeeze so much historical detail and under-the-surface emotion into her short stories as Canadian writer, Alice Munro. Her short fiction has enthralled me for years. Although she's written a novel or two, almost her whole output - 17 published books - is in the short story form.

In Munro's stories time is never strictly chronological. Munro artfully flits between the present and the past. She never loses control. Her transitions are seamless; the reader never has to search or root around for the correct time and place. Also, important to these stories is the emotional arc.

Dear Life is her most personal collection yet. To the ten stories included, Munro has added four memoir pieces that are not fiction, although Munro said that she fictionalized certain elements of them. If you've read the author's other collections, you'll recognize the farmland and small towns near Lake Huron, marked by poverty that Munro returns to again and again. There's also the young girl or woman breaking away from her family, seeking a better life. Sexuality often becomes a main theme and the endings are seldom happily-ever-after, but more like life, both good and bad, always complicated.

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