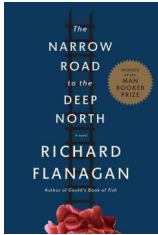


For the Love of Reading

Man Booker Prize Awarded to Australian Novelist



[view in catalog](#)

The Man Booker Prize winner for 2014 was announced on Tuesday. Richard Flanagan, a popular and highly-regarded Australian novelist, won it for his book *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, a historical novel set during WWII.

It's about the construction of the Thai-Burma railroad, known as the Death Railway. For an odd bit of symmetry, Flanagan's father, who worked on this railway during World War II, died on the very day that Flanagan finished his book.

If you follow book news, you already know that this is the first year that American authors have been allowed to compete for the Booker, and two Americans made the short list: Karen Joy Fowler (*We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*) and Joshua Ferris (*To Rise Again at a Decent Hour*). [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on October 16, 2014

[The Narrow Road to the Deep North](#)
[Award Winner](#)

[Fiction](#)

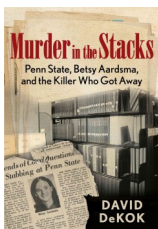
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Murder in the Stacks



[view in catalog](#)

If one single event stands out in the memory of my first semester in State College, Pa., it's the murder of an English graduate student that happened in the library. Before reading this book, I would have guessed it occurred just a week or two into term, rather than toward its end?so much

did it color life for the rest of my college experience in Happy Valley, Pa. Yes, this remote mountain valley in almost the exact center of Pa. is actually named that.

Most of my dorm-mates felt absolute terror after the murder. They literally would not leave the building alone after dark. I remember big gangs of young women walking together in a phalanx toward the library to study. I joined them one night, but that was it. I could not time my departures and arrivals and function in such a timid, emotionally-wrought group.

And though this horrible crime happened decades ago, it still has not been officially ?solved.? But the author, a Harrisburg journalist, has come up with some compelling facts that point to a specific fellow grad student. A student in fact that went on to continue his PhD studies and remained on campus for four or five more years. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on October 13, 2014

[Murder in the stacks : Penn State, Betsy Aardsma, and the killer who got away](#)

[Crime](#)

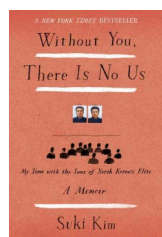
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Without You, There is No Us: My Time with the Sons of North Korea's Elite



[view in catalog](#)

This well-written memoir about teaching in a college in North Korea the year Kim Jong-il died sent shivers up my spine. The author, Suki Kim, an American writer, who spent part of her childhood in South Korea and is fluent in the language, had visited North Korea several times. Each time she felt divorced from the people and prevented by her ?minders? (they were actually called that) from getting a true understanding of what contemporary life was like in the country. Emotionally, Kim felt connected to the country because part of her family lived there. Kim?s mother had often told her stories about how her eldest brother disappeared and was never seen again when he was taken from a truck during the Korean War. The family was divided from other aunts and uncles and cousins who lived across the divide.

Kim, primarily a journalist, had taught at a college in the states and sometime around 2010 heard that a Bible college, financed by Americans, was soon to open near Pyongyang. The very idea sounded strange?a culture that scorned religion was allowing westerners to open a bible college by the capital? [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on October 7, 2014

[Without You, There is No Us: My Time with the Sons of North Korea's Elite](#)

[Memoir](#)

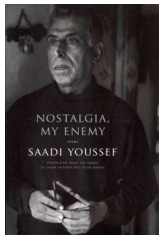
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Nostalgia, My Enemy



[view in catalog](#)

A great way to explore another culture is through poetry. This book, by one of the best living writers in Arabic, Saadi Youssef, does just that. It also provides beautiful poetry.

Youssef writes about all the traditional topics: love, nature, the changing seasons, and daily activities but he also describes his pain and anger at seeing the damage to his home country. In "A Difficult Variation" he describes his wishes for his native country, "Peace be upon Iraq's hills, its two rivers, the bank and the bend, / upon the palm trees / and the English hamlet gently dragging its clouds."

He writes deeply poignant poems about Iraq. In one he asks, "Is it your fault that once you were born in that country? / Three quarters of a century / and you still pay from your ebbing blood / its tax." [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on September 30, 2014

[Nostalgia](#)

[My Enemy](#)

[Poetry](#)

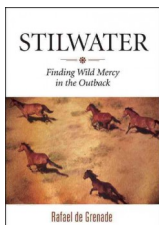
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Stilwater: Finding Wild Mercy in the Outback



[view in catalog](#)

De Grenade brings to vivid life a remote cattle range in the far reaches of Australia, just a boat journey away on the Coral Sea from the Indonesian island of Papua New Guinea. Stilwater, this remote ranch bounded by seas on two sides and by the curvy Solomon and Powder Rivers, was until a year before the author's arrival mostly uncared for, its cows and bulls, unbranded and roaming free. Not only free but feral on this ranch of a thousand square miles.

De Grenade, adventurous and stubborn, and an excellent horsewoman left school at age twelve to cattle ranch in Arizona. There she buffed up her horse and animal skills. In her young twenties she asked family members for contacts in Australia, and through them found a distant

connection who offered her free room and boarding in exchange for work. At the end of her gig, they gave her an airline ticket and as she wandered around ?this island between two oceans? as she calls Australia, she found a notice to work on Stilwater. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on September 18, 2014

[Stilwater: Finding Wild Mercy in the Outback](#)

[Animals](#)

[Memoir](#)

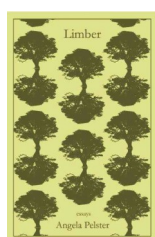
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Limber



[view in catalog](#)

Nature, particularly trees are central to this lovely book of essays. Several of the narratives were unusual enough that I wondered if they had been fictionalized. They seemed more like creative nonfiction than essays. For instance, ?Moon Trees? begins with this sentence, ?There are cinnabar trees growing on the moon. ? But soon the world of facts?and interesting ones?becomes paramount.

Did you know that astronaut Stuart Roosa brought lots of tree seeds?katsura, loblolly pine, sycamore, sweet gum, and redbud onto Apollo 14?s moon expedition? Unfortunately, he did not get chosen to land on the moon so he brought these seeds back, and 450 of them were planted and studied by scientists. But they just grew normally like tree seeds that had never left Earth. However, for a brief while, Roosa got to combine his early career as a forest service Smoke Jumper (saving beautiful trees) and an astronaut whirling through space. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on September 10, 2014

[Limber](#)

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