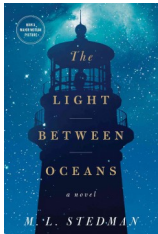


Historical

Light between Oceans



[view in catalog](#)

When we lived in Alaska, every summer we rode the Alaska state ferries past some islands--rocky, bird-filled--that had only one sign of civilization, the bright revolving lighthouse. Each time I wondered about this way of life that had almost faded. This wonderful novel fleshes out what life was like for a family in the 1920s off the east coast of Australia.

If you ever wondered about this vocation, Stedman captures the isolation and the magic of being far from the crowd, the joy certain light house workers found in a solitary working environment where the people you served--the sailors and merchant shipmen--relied totally upon you even though you would never meet.

The Light between Oceans begins with young Tom Sherbourne riding a boat to Partageuse on the east coast of Australia after having recently been discharged from the military. He'd won some medals in WWI and was now assigned to be a temporary lighthouse keeper on Janus Rock. While in town getting his papers processed, he meets Isabel, a girl of nineteen, who invites him to feed bread to the ducks at the dock. When he thanks her later, she says, it's just a silly thing, but he replies that he enjoyed it very much. Tom is scarred by the violence of the war and by his family life before when his mother abandoned him and his father and brother. In fact, Tom refuses to speak to his dad over what happened. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on May 8, 2013

[Light between Oceans : a novel](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Historical](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Information, Answers & Reviews](#)

[Dory L.'s blog](#) [Log in](#) to post comments

2013 Pulitzer Prize Winners



The Pulitzer Prize is an annual awards given to excellence in newspaper and online journalism, literature, and musical composition and are administered by Columbia University in New York City. The 2013 awards were announced yesterday. For books, the following awards were given.

Fiction - *The Orphan Master's Son* by Adam Johnson

Ambitious and inventive, this novel is set in an orphanage in North Korea. Protagonist Pak Jun Do is forced to become a fighting tunnel expert and a kidnapper before he takes his fate into his own hands. Johnson is able to tell the tale of touching humanity set within the backdrop of a brutal regime. [Read more](#)

Posted by sbowman on April 16, 2013

[Award Winner](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Historical](#)

[Nonfiction](#)

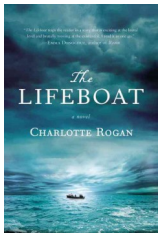
[Poetry](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Information, Answers & Reviews](#)

[sbowman's blog](#) [Log in](#) to post comments

The Lifeboat



[view in catalog](#)

Charlotte Rogan's debut novel *The Lifeboat* restores your faith in 21st century writing. In this historical novel, two narratives intertwine: the more dramatic one being the story of the shipwreck of the *Princess Alexandria* during the first months of WWI on a voyage from England to America. The second story is about Grace, a young woman whose family has suffered a financial collapse. Suddenly, needing to make her own way in the world, Grace's choices are narrow: to become a governess or find a rich husband, Grace being resourceful and not wanted to be tied down by a job with long hours and little pay chooses the latter.

She finds her husband material in an unlikely place: the engagement listings of a London society paper. Henry Winter, an American financier, is handsome and rich and works for a company rapidly increasing in power and influence. Amazingly, this part of the plan works. They marry and set off for America. On the ship, as a sign of her newly altered status, Grace and Henry are invited to sit at the captain's table.

But there Grace's good luck ends. For one thing, Henry has not cabled his parents about the marriage, and seems reluctant to do so. His parents send him telegrams about his former fiancée but does she even know that she's become history to him? In the middle of the night the *Empress* mysteriously explodes and the new bride finds herself the last person squeezed onto a lifeboat, and without her husband. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on January 30, 2013

[The Lifeboat](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Historical](#)

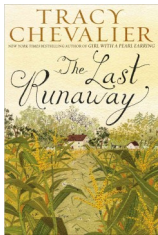
[World War I](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Information, Answers & Reviews](#)

[Dory L.'s blog](#)[Log in to post comments](#)

The Last Runaway



[view in catalog](#)

In *The Last Runaway* (as in all Tracy Chevalier's historical novels), you feel as though you are living exactly in the time period that she is describing. Her combination of research, realistic dialogue, characters true to the day, plus her skill at capturing the myriad details of daily life make her writing very believable. In this novel, Chevalier transports us back to 1850s Ohio to a small town at the edge of the wilderness. But first, we experience a grueling ocean voyage from Quaker Honor Bright's perspective.

Honor Bright accompanies her sister to America where Grace plans to wed someone from their English hometown. After Honor suffers terrible seasickness on the journey, she refuses to take the lake route to Ohio, so they proceed by train and carriage. However Grace comes down with yellow fever and dies on the trip. Not knowing what else to do, Honor continues the journey to Faithwell, Ohio.

She catches yellow fever also and stops in Wellington at a local milliner's shop. Belle Mills takes her in. Unfortunately, she's already met Belle's brother on the journey. Donovan is a slave hunter and he has stolen the key to Honor's trunk after ransacking the carriage while searching for runaway slaves. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on January 23, 2013

[The Last Runaway](#)

[African American](#)

[Fiction](#)

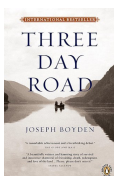
[Historical](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Information, Answers & Reviews](#)

[Dory L.'s blog](#)[Log in to post comments](#)

Three Day Road



I read a review of *Three Day Road*, Joseph Boyden's first novel of World War I, which mentions that this isn't necessarily an anti-war novel. I had to read the sentence in that review

several times to make sure I wasn't misreading or misunderstanding. Does a war novel have to come out and specifically declare a stance?

Really, Boyden includes anti-war elements right up to the breathtaking ending: senseless killings, madness, morphine addiction, shortsighted military leadership, dehumanization, and the day to day terror. The characters in this book do seemingly impossible and horrible things in the name of combat. Is that not stance enough? Is it even important?

It is true that this book is about more than the descent into the hell of trench warfare. It is a really poetic story of Xavier Bird and Elijah Whiskeyjack, Cree Indians who have grown up in Canada near Hudson Bay. They have spent their childhood patiently hunting, skills which serve them well as snipers in some of the worst battles of World War I, including around Vimy Ridge and the Somme. Maybe it needs to be said, but being good at killing moose to survive the winter is different than being good at killing Germans. Xavier and Elijah react differently, but equally destructively, to war. [Read more](#)

Posted by sbowman on December 31, 2012

[Three-day road : a novel](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Historical](#)

[Multicultural](#)

[War & Military](#)

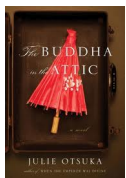
[World War I](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Information, Answers & Reviews](#)

[sbowman's blog](#) [Log in](#) to post comments

Buddha in the Attic and Narrative Mode



"On the boat we were mostly virgins" begins Julie Otsuka's gem of a book, *The Buddha*

in the Attic. One of the noticeable things from that first sentence is the unique narrative mode. The whole book is written in the first person plural style. This type of narration can be awkward -- most fiction is written in either first person or third person. Convention can be comforting, we know immediately how to read the story and relate to those characters. In first person plural, the story is told from the group's perspective, and with no main character, the rules are different.

Otsuka said in an interview that she wanted to tell the story of Japanese picture brides -- not just one bride, but that as a group. And in this case, the narrative mode makes perfect sense. Between 1908 and the 1920s, thousands of young Japanese women came over to the United States after an arranged marriage agreement. Instead of focusing on one story, this book introduces the reader to many stories, some devastatingly sad, some happier, but all of them are sympathetic. And by not focusing on just one story, we read the book with a fuller picture and are moved by their collective experiences and struggles. The stories begin on the boat, and follow them through marriage, manual labor, child raising and the heart wrenching internment following the attacks on Pearl Harbor. I can imagine that this book might appeal to a wide range of fiction readers -- fans of historical fiction, women's fiction, immigrant stories, Asian-American experiences, World War II home front, and readers of fiction set in California and the West. [Read more](#)

Posted by sbowman on October 17, 2012

[The Buddha in the attic](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Historical](#)

[Marriage](#)

[World War II](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Information, Answers & Reviews](#)

[sbowman's blog](#)[Log in to post comments](#)

Helen Keller in Love



[view in catalog](#)

Just after college I worked as a social worker at an agency for the blind in New Orleans. I remember one client particularly well. He was totally blind and deaf--an older fellow who spoke in a modified sign language and by spelling letters lightning-fast into your palm. Pat, who had worked there for years, was his favorite person to communicate with, but when she was gone, he'd come to me. Occasionally, while biking home from work, I'd see him from a distance crossing four lanes of traffic on St. Charles Ave.--usually against the light--his white cane held like a sword before him. He was always too far away for me to help, but my stomach would clench, and I'd hope that he'd make it across safely another time.

Reading *Helen Keller in Love* gave me a fresh awareness of what blind people endure especially the deaf and blind. When I was young, *The Miracle Worker* played in movie theaters (with Patty Duke and Anne Bancroft) and this movie painted Helen in saint-like tones. How refreshing and humanizing is this biographical novel. In her first novel, Rose [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on September 2, 2012

[Helen Keller in Love](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Historical](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Information, Answers & Reviews](#)

[Dory L.'s blog](#)[Log in to post comments](#)

The Sisters Brothers: A Most (Un)usual Western?



I've worked in libraries for years including a few in Texas, so it is a wonder that I've never read a western. Part of the problem then with reading your first book in a genre is that you lack the language to properly describe it or make comparisons. Now I wonder if I shall ever read

another for the fear that the next one won't hold up to *The Sisters Brothers* by Patrick deWitt. It is the gold rush years and the infamous Charlie and Eli Sisters are riding from Oregon City to San Francisco on orders from the Commodore to kill Hermann Kermit Warm. There is trouble with horses, whores, a red bear pelt, excessive brandy drinking, a man named Mayfield, a witch and a mysterious magical formula. Large sums of money come and go. The characters are unique, but without a lot of overall development. Is this usual for a western? Is the level of violence similar to other westerns? Is this a parody of the genre, a homage or both?

[Read more](#)

Posted by sbowman on August 28, 2012

[The sisters brothers](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Historical](#)

[Siblings](#)

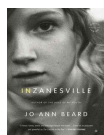
[Westerns](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Information, Answers & Reviews](#)

[sbowman's blog](#)[Log in](#) to post comments

What's an Alex Award?



Warning! Don't look for these books in the Young Adult section! These are "Adult Books,"

written for adults. Teens beware!

Ok, now that I've got your attention, let me also say that these books are just great for teens. So great, in fact, that the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) made an award just for them, and named them after a famous Baltimore librarian - sort of. Her name was Margaret A. Edwards, but her friends called her Alex, and that's where we get the Alex Awards. The [2012 Alex Awards](#) feature ten books written for adults, but with special appeal to teens. [Read more](#)

Posted by Chris H. on August 7, 2012

[Teens](#)

[Siblings](#)

[Science Fiction](#)

[Post-apocalyptic](#)

[Magic](#)

[Historical](#)

[Fantasy](#)

[Family Relationships](#)

[Coming of Age](#)

[Award Winner](#)

[Information, Answers & Reviews](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Adult & Teen Services News](#)

[Chris H.'s blog](#)[Log in](#) to post comments

Flygirl by Sherri L. Smith



Ida Mae Jones is a young African-American woman living with her family in Louisiana.

Her father who taught her to fly a small crop duster has passed away, and her brother has signed up to serve in World War II. It is not surprising that Ida Mae feels caught between her family obligations and her love of flying. She learns about the Women Airforce Service Pilots -- a civilian organization that served to fly airplanes under the military with the goal of freeing up qualified men to serve in combat. The WASP pilots transferred planes and equipment from assembly plants to military bases and often trailed targets in the air for anti-aircraft artillery practice.

Not only was the WASP a highly selective group that underwent rigorous training, but Ida Mae faces even more difficulty because she knows she can't sign up as a black woman. Her fair skin allows her to pass for white, but the stress of this combined with the training proves difficult. On the positive side, the friends Ida Mae makes in WASP training are fantastic and provide support for Ida Mae even if they don't know her secret for sure. [Read more](#)

Posted by sbowman on August 3, 2012

[Flygirl](#)

[African American](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Historical](#)

[Teens](#)

[World War II](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Information, Answers & Reviews](#)

[sbowman's blog](#)[Log in to post comments](#)

[« first](#) [previous](#) **12** **3** [456](#) [next](#) [?last](#) »