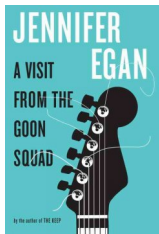


A Visit from the Goon Squad

New to Me Only 3(+) Years Later!



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I try to stay familiar with new books coming out, but also keep a list (on 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!

Originally published in 1968, *True Grit* by Charles Portis was republished recently after the 2010 Coen Brothers film adaptation. This short novel is narrated by Mattie Ross, a 14 year old who hires a notorious US Marshall, Rooster Cogburn, to track the man who shot and killed her father in Indian Territory in the 1870s. They are joined by LaBoeuf, a Texas Ranger who is looking for the same man for a different crime. Not enough can be said about the excellence of the narration. It pulls you in right from the start and the deadpan humor and wry observations make for a really fun read. Even though you know the outcome of the climax, the tone and pacing of the action at the end was perfect. Westerns usually aren't my thing, but these three memorable characters really will stay with you.

Posted by sbowman on February 28, 2013

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