

Bookbites

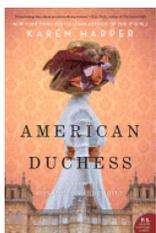
Bookends on Main

Is It Spring Yet?

It's hard not to talk about the weather, full winter having packed itself into three weeks of February. There were 8 or 9 school snow days, downtown often rolled up early or never opened at all and oddly, in between storms lots of sunny days. Some hearty (foolhardy?) students insist on wearing shorts, sans heavy jacket in practically all temperatures. Flip flops are not far behind.

So, the upside for us, it's good reading weather. For Pat's & Heather's recent reading, see their reviews on

pages 2-3.



Mine includes *American Duchess*, a novel about Consuelo Vanderbilt by Karen Harper. The Vanderbilts seem to have been a

complicated family whose fabulous wealth did not necessarily include a satisfying personal and family life. As history buffs know, Consuelo was forced to marry the Duke of Marlborough whose motive was the Vanderbilt money to shore up the assets of his estate and Blenheim Castle.

The novel counts as historical fiction with plenty of detail and interesting people on both sides of the Atlantic.



After finally getting enough copies of *Becoming* to claim one for myself, I feel it's well-worth the wait. This

is a wonderful book. Mrs. Obama's personal story from childhood on is presented in an open, engaging, accessible way. I've loved every page.

March 2019

Inside this issue:

Lots of short reviews

A winter poem

Looking forward

Keep calm

Turn it off

Read a book

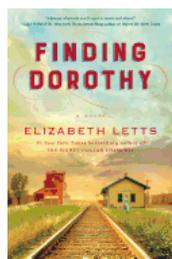
Midwest Connections Picks for March



The Raven Tower is a Y/A fantasy/sci-fi novel described as a thrilling epic about

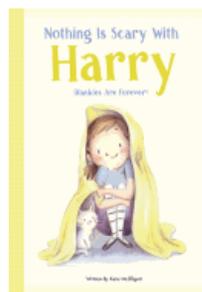
humans and gods at war. The author has won numerous awards for previous books.

Finding Dorothy is a story of love, loss, inspiration, and perseverance, set in

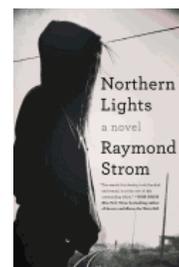


America's heartland. This novel captures the pioneering spirit of the Baum

family settling in South Dakota in the 1880s and, later, Chicago. The people they meet and the places they visit help inspire L. Frank Baum's classic *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*—which many consider to be America's first homegrown fairytale.



Nothing Is Scary with Harry is about a little girl's attachment to her blanket and the more adult idea of the connection we have with objects of comfort.



The author of *Northern Lights* is from Hibbing MN, his

novel is a grim, coming-of-age story that includes drug-fueled characters and crushing debt.

All MCPs are discounted 10%.

Within These Lines rev. by Pat Trotter



Within These Lines by Stephanie Morrill

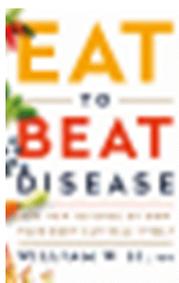
So many of us really have no idea what it was like to live through the World

Wars. Stephanie Morrill brings to life what it was like for young people after Pearl Harbor through the

eyes of Evalina, an Italian-American, and Taichi, a Japanese-American. They have fallen love with each other but their worlds are torn apart when Taichi's family is put into an internment camp for Japanese during the war. How can these two find a way to keep in touch? How can their love grow? Will they remain true to each other through all the hardships they both must endure for years? When the war finally comes to an end, will they have a future

together? This may be a novel, but it reads like a memoir written by two young people, two American young people, one of whom is treated like an enemy. This is a book that you don't want to put down once you begin it. Written for young adults, it is not only a good story, it helps to share that time in our history in a compelling way.

Eat to Beat Disease rev. by Pat Trotter



Eat to Beat Disease by William W. Li, MD

We have been told that we are what we eat. Dr. Li has spent many years researching which

foods actually help our body heal itself and fight off diseases. While this is a scholarly book, it is not written just for those who want to slog their way through a lot of tech-

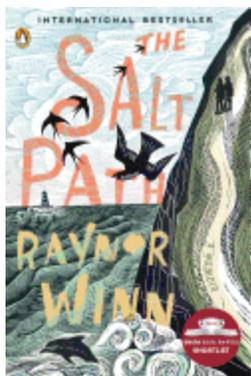
nical language. He writes in a very straight forward manner and uses language all can understand. He tells which foods perform different

“For the person who wants to improve their life through food, this is a masterpiece ...”

functions in the body, including foods that form new red blood cells, foods that regenerate the more than

750,000 stem cells in our body, foods that boost our microbiome which defends our health, foods which protect our DNA, and foods which activate our immune system. Foods that we eat every day and are readily available. Not a hard-to-follow or strict diet. Simply, choose one food from each of the five categories each day and add to your diet to achieve better health. Many of the foods we are already eating. For the person who wants to improve their life through food, this is a masterpiece and a must read

The Salt Path rev. by Pat Trotter



The Salt Path by Raynor Winn

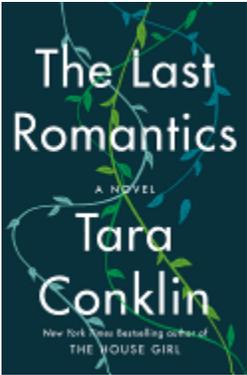
This is the true story of a British couple's struggles to maintain their sanity

and equilibrium after having their

home and farm and livelihood taken away from them and then discovering that the husband is terminally ill. They are in their fifties and have nowhere to go with only a tiny income. They decide to walk the "salt path," a 630 mile journey along the Bristol Channel and English Channel. They set out, carrying everything on their back: cooking supplies, food, tent, sleeping bags, a change of clothes. It is an

amazing tale of two amazing people who find that they are not alone; they are not down and out. They have each other and the discoveries they make about themselves and each other along the way only serve to strengthen them.

Last Romantics by Tara Conklin, rev. by Heather Obenberger



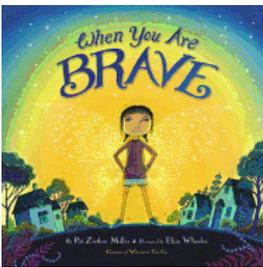
The Last Romantics is the newest book by Tara Conklin (the author of the previous best-selling novel The House Girl). In her

newest novel, the story centers on four siblings and the bonds and complex relationships that

form between them following a tragedy that occurs in their childhood that leaves them to essentially raise themselves and each other. The book explores how their relationships change, grow, and yet in some very fundamental ways stay the same as they each leave home, fall in and out of love, start careers, marry, raise children of their own, and face personal challenges and tragedies that cause them to reflect on

how they have helped and perhaps unintentionally hindered one another though the years. It was a very touching novel that brought tears to my eyes at times. I highly recommend this book.

When You Are Brave, illus. by Eliza Wheeler



A new children's picture book written by Pat Zietlow Miller and illustrated by Eliza

Wheeler, UW-Stout grad, begins with "Some days, when everything

seems scary ... you have to be brave."

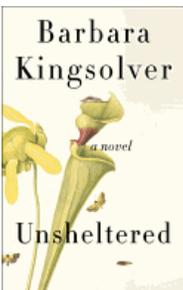
This is good counseling for people of all ages. Examples of scary experi-

"Some days, when everything seems scary ... you have to be brave"

ences are followed by ideas about how to manage and finally "No matter what happens, you'll be all right.

Miller writes a thoughtful and wonderfully common-sensical story and Wheeler's illustration are wonderful and capture the meaning of the text beautifully. There are echoes of Van Gogh in the cover, snapshot inserts and a blue-yellow-green palette, which fits the subject matter well.

Bookclub Picks: *Unsheltered* and *Cloud Atlas*



Our bookstore bookclub read *Unsheltered* for February and pretty much gave it an A rating. Our discussion was enthusiastic and intelligent. We shifted between the then-and-now stories, noted the

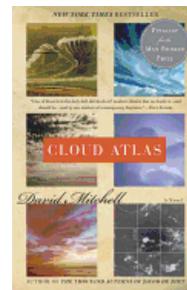
continuum in themes, the family stories and the "how things change but stay the same" ideas the book presents.

Most of us in the club rank Kingsolver as a favorite author so were pre-disposed

to appreciating *Unsheltered*. We weren't disappointed.

On a personal note, I am so impressed with the smart young women in the club, makes me feel society is in good hands.

March 14 we aim to discuss *Cloud Atlas*, maybe a more challenging read than *Unsheltered*, but also using then-and-now time sequences and paralleling ideas: A reluctant voyager crossing the Pacific in 1850; a disinherited composer eking out a precarious livelihood in be-



tween-the-wars Belgium; a high-minded journalist in Governor Reagan's California; a vanity publisher fleeing his gangland creditors; a genetically modified "dinery server" on death-row;

and Zachary, a young Pacific Islander witnessing the nightfall of science and civilization — the narrators of *Cloud Atlas* hear each other's echoes down the corridor of history.

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Living Winter

When the weather breaks, head north
to that place where the snow squalls stay,
and wait there by a wood fire
in the cabin on Lake Superior where hearfrost
glistens on the trees till May.

When snow geese find you, go further
into the land of permafrost
up where the muskoxen munch
on the woody arctic willows
that cling to the rocky outcrops.

When summer strands you in Nunavut,
harvest the sea while you can—
catch king crab, stock salmon
in the smokehouse, and wait
for the ice to come back to you.

When it does, follow the continental cold south,
past the muskoxen plateaus,
pause at the cabin in Grand Marais
just long enough to warm yourself by the fire
until glassine winter skins stretch over 10,000 lakes.

Then keep going—
your kids are waiting.



“Living Winter” by
Daniel Ruefman
from his book *Sleep
Bringer*

On to Mardi Gras, St. Patrick's Day, Spring and Thoughts of Summer



Alfonso, Winner
of our Valentine
Box and Grace
(not pictured).

March: Spring Break is the last week. Stout students are away and many local families take a break as well, traveling near or far, but a lot of people stay home, and to tell the truth, shop locally.

Future bookstore events:
April 25, Spring Fling (a Ladies Night Out event). Carla, whose line of Soak it up Cloths are in the bookstore, will be around to discuss her business venture.

AYAD AKHTAR, THE
AMERICAN NATION, AND
ITS OTHERS AFTER 9/11
HOWLAND NEEDHAM



In May we hope
to host a discus-
sion about
American-
Muslim topics
led by Dr. Lopa

Basu of UW-Stout. Her book, *Ayad Akhtar, the American Nation, and Its Others After 9/11: Homeland Insecurity*, about this playwright will be a basis for the discussion.

We also hope to host a poetry reading by Dr. Daniel Ruefman, also from UW-Stout. One of the poems from his new collection *Sleep Bringer* is quoted above.