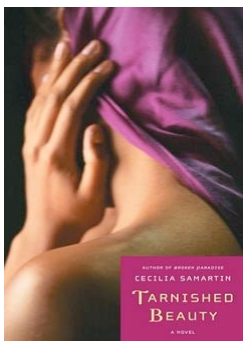


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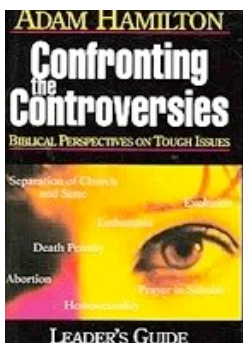
Now Reading: August 2008

From lost coats to a dog in the night-time, this month's Now Reading list recommends the fiction, nonfiction and poetry titles that have Literary Mama Editors and Columnists turning the pages.



Fiction Co-Editor, Suzanne Kamata, writes "I'm reading *Tarnished Beauty* by Cecilia Samartin, which tells the story of Jamilet, a beautiful young woman born with a birthmark covering her back. In her native Mexican village, she is shunned due to this 'mark of the devil.' After the death of her mother, she sets out for Los Angeles in search of a cure for her disfigurement and, while working at a mental hospital, meets an elderly man from Spain who tells her stories. In lyrical prose, Samartin explores the true meaning of beauty and the enduring power of love."

Nicole Stellan O'Donnell, Columns Co-Editor, writes "I'm reading *Famous*, Kathleen Flenniken's debut collection of poems, a winner of the Prairie Schooner Book Prize. Her images are graceful, surprising, and full of humor. In 'LOST COAT, PLS CALL' she writes, 'Even in sporting goods, even as my son / grinned at it in the three-way mirror / the coat started disappearing.' That lost coat, and the other lost coats, become markers for all the losses, small and large, that motherhood presents. I've been savoring these, reading them one at a time, over and over."



Kathy Moran, Literary Reflections Co-Editor, is currently reading *Confronting the Controversies: A Christian Look at the Tough Issues* by Adam Hamilton, pastor at the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas. Kathy writes, "Originally a sermon series, the chapters cover complex issues like abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, prayer in school, and homosexuality. Hamilton considers two or more sides 'in light of the Bible and Christian beliefs.' He then closes each chapter with the reasons for his personal position and "Questions for Reflection" (useful for book clubs or Bible studies, but also for personal application). In a culture where people can be so vehement and judgmental towards those with opposing opinions, Hamilton's sensitive and respectful approach provoke thought and encourage civility. While I may not agree with all he says, I appreciate that he invites an intelligent debate, rather than a vitriolic argument."

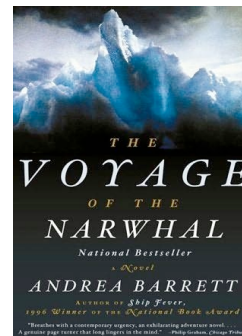
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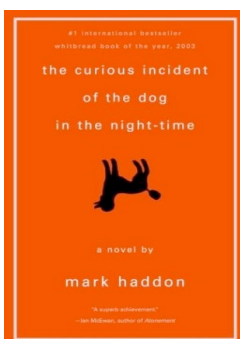
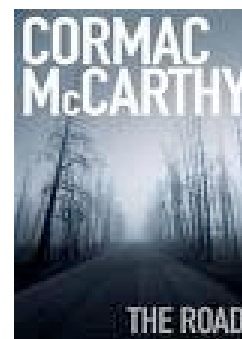
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From lost coats to a dog in the night-time, this month's Now Reading list recommends the fiction, nonfiction and poetry titles that have Literary Mama Editors and Columnists turning the pages.

About the latest title on her reading list, Caroline Grant, Senior Editor and Columnist, writes, "I was halfway through Andrea Barrett's *Voyage of the Narwhal* when -- not wanting the story to end-- I stopped and started over from the beginning. I've never done that before! This is a fascinating, richly-detailed novel; the relationships are complicated and true, and I appreciated how the story is tightly, subtly rooted in the political issues (abolition, women's rights) of the early 19th century. Barrett's writing about arctic exploration brought an unfamiliar world vividly to life for me, and when the novel settles, in the 2nd half, on domestic life in Philadelphia, it resonates both with the tradition of 19th century novels and speaks powerfully to contemporary thinking about story-telling, writing, and artistic expression."



Creative Nonfiction Co-Editor and Columnist, Susan Ito, recently finished *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy, about which she writes, "It is terribly dark, grim, and horrifying; and yet it is also one of the greatest parental love stories I've ever read. Extremely moving and an utter page-turner."



Alissa McElreath, Columns Co-Editor, writes, "I just finished reading *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon--a book that's been waiting on my reading list for some time! Part mystery, part coming-of-age novel, Haddon's book is narrated by a fifteen-year old autistic boy who sets out to solve the gruesome murder of a neighbor's dog. The pursuit of the answer to this mystery leads him to another deeper one--one which he struggles to understand as he attempts to negotiate the chaos and disorder of the world around him. The book not only offers a remarkable glimpse into the mind of a high-functioning autistic child, but also provides the reader with a satisfying and extremely compelling narrative at its center. I started reading Haddon's novel at the red traffic lights on the way home from the library and I couldn't stop reading until I was done!"