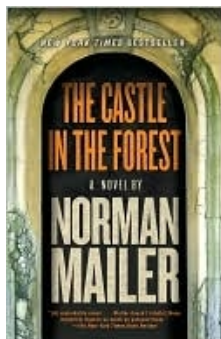
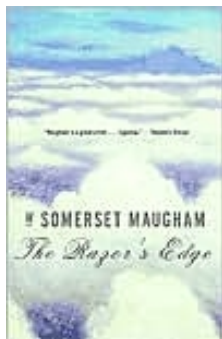


A Literary Magazine for the Maternally Inclined
<http://www.literarymama.com>

LITERARY
Mama

Now Reading: January 2008

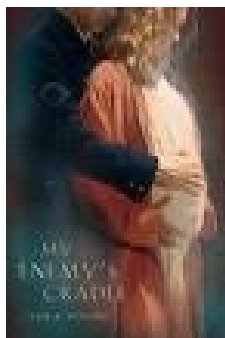
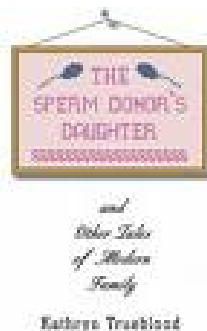
Each month, Literary Mama's editors and columnists look in our bags and on our nightstands to let you know what we're reading right now. Take a look at our picks; you may want to add some of these titles to your reading list, too.



Reviews Editor **Rebecca Kaminsky** just finished [The Razor's Edge](#) by Somerset Maugham and loved "the memoir/fiction crossover appeal -- the author narrates the story and interacts with the fictional characters. It also has interesting commentary on motherhood, family, and one's "station" in life that still resonates today.

Next on my list is [The Castle in the Forest](#) by Norman Mailer because I haven't read anything by him and figure why not?"

Fiction Editor **Suzanne Kamata** shares, "Although the bright pink cover of Kathryn Trueblood's [The Baby Lottery](#) suggests lite mommy lit, this engaging novel deals with four middle-aged women making serious decisions about reproduction. This is a follow-up to the author's short story collection, [The Sperm Donor's Daughter](#), which also took up timely topics."



Columnist **Erica Lutz** is intrigued with Sara Young's debut novel [My Enemy's Cradle](#) about a young, pregnant half-Jewish girl living in a Nazi breeding nursery, a "Lebensborn." This is an astonishing novel -- an engrossing read, heartbreaking, page-turning -- and Young tackles an area of history most people (including me) have known little about: the German program to increase population by indoctrinating young girls into bearing the children of Nazi soldiers."

[Identical Strangers](#) by Elyse Shein and Paula Bernstein has captured Creative Nonfiction Editor **Kate Hass**. "The authors are identical twins who were adopted separately and only learned of each other's existence at age 35. It's not only a riveting story, but a meditation on sisterhood, loss, the debate of nature vs. nurture, and the unsettling experience of being confronted with the very different life choices of someone with one's exact genetic makeup."



A Literary Magazine for the Maternally Inclined
<http://www.literarymama.com>

LITERARY
Mama

Now Reading: January 2008

Each month, Literary Mama's editors and columnists look in our bags and on our nightstands to let you know what we're reading right now. Take a look at our picks; you may want to add some of these titles to your reading list, too.

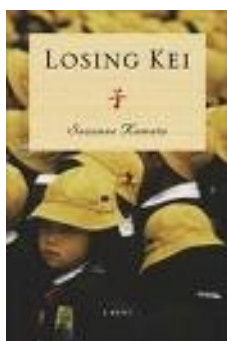
Blog Editor [Amy S. Mercer's](#) pick is [Bad Girls: 26 Writers Misbehave](#) a collection of essays by women writers edited by Ellen Sussman. In the collection, Joyce Maynard writes about her time with J.D. Salinger, explaining how the truth set her free. 'All my life I'd been afraid that if I were ever to be a bad girl, no one would love me anymore. But what does it mean, anyway, if what it takes to be loved is the denial of one's own story?'



Katherine Weber writes about being on top of the world as she breaks into and climbs one of the (under construction) World Trade Center Towers with her boyfriend in the middle of the night. Susan Casey tells the story of ditching the stress of Christmas in New York and driving down to Baja where, 'Everything was peaceful. Everything was moving. And if you asked me what would have made me happier than this, I couldn't have told you.'

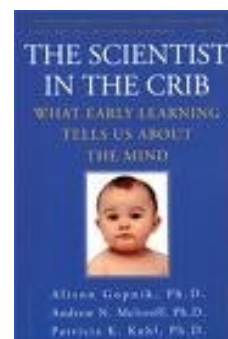
I wanted to slink out of the library with this book under my arms, (the cover carries the image of big, puckered, bright red lips, and the phrase "Bad Girls" dangling like a charm from the anonymous mouth) but I've looked forward to falling into bed each night and savoring these stories of personal, female triumph.

Columnist [Rachel Sarah](#) just finished the bestselling novel, [The Memory Keeper's Daughter](#). "I bought this paperback a while ago, but hesitated from picking it up because I thought it would be too sad. Yes, there's much grief, but there is also much joy in Kim Edwards's gripping writing, which follows the birth of twins, a healthy boy, and a girl with Down syndrome. After seeing his daughter, the father instructs the nurse, Caroline, to take her to a home. He then tells his wife, who was drugged during labor, that their daughter died at birth. Instead of sending Phoebe to an institution, Caroline raises her as a single mom, in secret. Will her birth mother ever know the truth? For any activist parents who are raising children with disabilities, [The Memory Keeper's Daughter](#) is a must-read."



[Susan Ito](#), Creative Nonfiction Editor and [Columnist](#), just finished reading "our own Suzanne Kamata's [Losing Kei](#), which is about an American mother living in Japan struggling with Japanese divorce codes which prevent non-Japanese citizens from having child custody. Gripping! Moving! A page-turner!

[The Scientist in the Crib: Minds, Brains, and How Children Learn](#) by Gopnik, Meltzoff, and Kuhl tops Profiles Copyeditor [Jenny Hobson's](#) list. "It came out in 1999, but I never had a chance to read it. With a new baby in the house, I wanted to think some more about how Paul's brain is developing. Oddly enough, the book reminds me of Literary Mama in that its purpose is descriptive, not prescriptive. The authors aim to describe the experiences of small babies, not to give parents tips on how to make their children smarter."



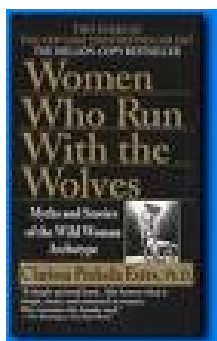
A Literary Magazine for the Maternally Inclined
<http://www.literarymama.com>

LITERARY Mama

Now Reading: January 2008

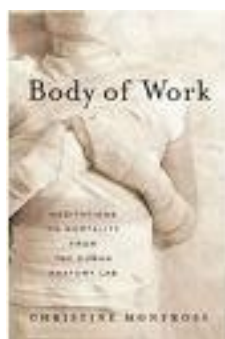
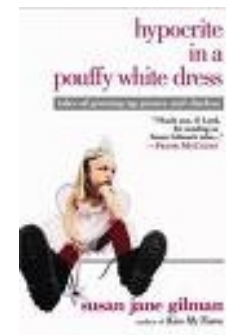
Each month, Literary Mama's editors and columnists look in our bags and on our nightstands to let you know what we're reading right now. Take a look at our picks; you may want to add some of these titles to your reading list, too.

After receiving a few fervent recommendations, [Violeta Garcia Mendoza](#), Literary Reflections Co-Editor, just started reading [The Shadow of the Wind](#) by Carlos Ruiz Zafon, a contemporary Spanish writer. It's an epic story, beginning in post-WWII Barcelona and unraveling forward and backward. Already in the first few pages, an irresistible premise is introduced: the first book that a reader loses himself in is one of the most important of his life, that the book he chooses also, somehow, chooses him. Through the rest of the novel, protagonist Daniel Sempere shows how this premise can become a stunning and terrible promise.



Christina Speed, E-zine Editor, is currently reading an older title, [Women Who Run with the Wolves](#) by Clarissa Pinkola Estes, PhD. "It reads beautifully, and touches deep places in the soul. Women of all backgrounds tend to inhibit their wildish side. Whether for fear, rejection, or conformity, we push down our inner instincts and learn the ways of those around us or ahead of us. This book encourages every woman to seek out the wildish side and nurture it, so we may be the true woman we are."

Just finishing Susan Jane Gilman's [Hypocrite in a Pouffy White Dress](#), Columns Department Editor [Alissa McElreath](#) notes that Gilman provides, "a funny and sometimes poignant look into childhood disasters of every sort and the process of growing up and into yourself. Imagine seeing the world through the eyes of a Ramona-with-street-smarts, and you'll have Gilman's childhood reflections to a tee."



Columnist [Vicki Forman](#) says, "I have a "weird" addition: [Body of Work: Meditations on Mortality from the Human Anatomy Lab](#) by Christine Montross. "This book tells the story of the author's first months of medical school, during her semester-long dissection of a human cadaver. The book is much more than a narrative of human anatomy, however; rather, the author uses her experience in the anatomy lab to ponder questions ranging from what is the ethically responsible way to treat a dead body, to what it means to be detached enough to be in the caring profession at all. Offbeat but highly engaging!"

Merle Huerta, E-zine Editor, just finished a new memoir [The Rabbi's Daughter](#), released in Israel eight months ago and recently published in New York. "It's impossible to put down, but the story line is devastating. The author, granddaughter of the chief Rabbi of Israel, daughter of a prominent London rabbi, tells a tale of using drugs, sex, and religion as a child to cover up the pain of childhood and then rediscovering her center while raising her own children."

