

A Literary Magazine for the Maternally Inclined
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October Now Reading

This month, Literary Mama editors spend their reading time with great fiction, poetry, and books that tackle what it means to be part of a family.



Suzanne Kamata, Fiction Co-Editor writes, "I just finished **The Curse of Eve: and Other Stories** by Mexican writer **Liliana Blum**. These disturbing and beautiful stories read like fables, while being grounded in real life. Blum shows a deep sympathy for the dispossessed and downtrodden - an elderly servant, an unappreciated housewife, a polar bear in captivity. The brilliantly rendered title story is, of course, about a woman giving birth."

Jen Lawrence, Reviews Editor, says, "I just finished **Noelle Oxenhandler's The Wishing Year**. Oxenhandler, a writer, finds herself living in a rented house, separated from her Buddhist community, and divorced. She decides to see if she is able to will a lover, spiritual peace, and home ownership into her life using the wishing techniques prescribed by books on the subject and friends who lead seemingly charmed lives. While her methodology is hardly scientific, I found myself thoroughly engaged by this lovely book that brings a human face to the art of wishing popularized in books like *The Secret*."



Ezine Co-Editor, Merle Huerta shares "Just as she does in her other novels, **Jodi Picoult** in **Keeping Faith** weaves yet another provocative moral/ethical dilemma into her storytelling. In this novel, Mariah White, a single mother, discovers that her seven-year-old daughter Faith has been carrying on conversations with an imaginary friend. But this is no ordinary friend. Faith, raised an atheist by a secular Jewish mother and an absent Episcopalian father, has had neither formal religious education nor exposure to the concept of God. Yet, shortly after her father abandons the family for another woman, Faith begins quoting biblical passages. She openly has conversations with her female God. She begins healing the sick, and performing miracles. And she develops stigmata's in the palms of her hands. Mariah, a protective mother and a nonbeliever, desperately fights for her daughter's right to believe in God. But most importantly, in the face of public scrutiny and a media circus, Mariah fights for her daughter's right to be a child. As in many of Picoult's novels, the reader is snagged in the drama of her storytelling throughout. Long after the final line of prose is read, the reader is left to feel incomplete as if the issues are never quite resolved to satisfaction."



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Kristina Riggle, Fiction Co-Editor offers “I’m reading **Anna Karenina** again, for the first time since high school. The book is holding up well for me, the characters as thoroughly engrossing and vivid as in any modern commercial novel. According to what I’ve read, this new and award-winning **translation by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky** has restored Tolstoy’s original voice, whereas previous editions had imposed a sort of faux primness to the text. Oprah Winfrey picked this as her book club choice and while I have mixed feelings about one person with so much power to sway tastes in books, I don’t see a downside to many more modern readers discovering this classic work.”

Irena Smith, Columns Department Editorial Assistant says, “I just finished **Janelle Brown's All We Ever Wanted Was Everything** which really does have everything: a philandering husband, a meth-addicted stay-at-home-wife reeling from being abandoned just as her husband's pharmaceutical company goes public, a teenage daughter searching for love in all the wrong places, and an older daughter deep in debt after single-handedly founding, editing, and writing for a post-feminist, postmodern magazine called Snatch. It sounds like all the ingredients for a Desperate Housewives episode, but as the three women hunker down in the palatial family home in a fictional town in Silicon Valley and attempt to come to terms with the wreckage of their respective lives, the novel becomes a deeply-felt and wryly-observed meditation on failure, success, mothers, daughters, the ties that bind -- and whether you can ever make it big without selling your soul. The novel swings between dark -- and I mean dark -- humor and pathos in a way that never feels contrived, and somewhere along the way you realize that Brown has made you truly care about the humanity of the characters you were just now observing with ironic detachment.”

