

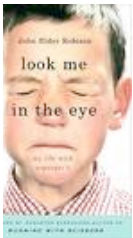
# literary **mama**

reading for the maternally inclined

Now Reading, February 2010

This month, Literary Mamas explore the human experience, in fact and in fiction. These titles address Asperger's, alcoholism, and crossing borders in the name of family. Take your pick!

Heather Cori, [Columnist](#), writes, "I have to admit, I picked up [Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger's](#) after I heard that the author was Augusten Burrough's big brother. While his writing is very different from his brother's, I was just as delighted with what I found inside. John Elder Robison wasn't officially diagnosed with Asperger's until he was forty. Up until then, he just thought there was something he didn't 'get' about relating to people. Adults thought him rude, teachers thought him evil, and other children thought he was just plain weird. When he dropped out of school, he began to feel accepted for his savant-like gift for solving problems and inventing. Not only did he create a smoking guitar for KISS, but went on to solve expensive toy issues for the Milton Bradley company. Robison's clarity and honesty about being an Aspergian, and what makes him unique in the world, is touching and powerful."



[Kate Hopper](#), Literary Reflections Co-Editor, says, "I'm reading [The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir](#) by Kao Kalia Yang. With a rich storytelling voice, Yang vividly recounts the history of her people and their journey from Laos to Thai refugee camps and finally to the United States. It's a stunning story about the devastation of war, the love of family, and the perseverance of a people. I can't put this book down."



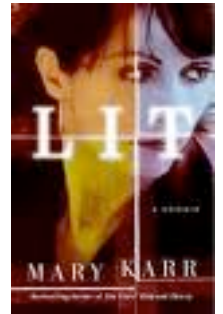
[Caroline Grant](#), Editor-in-Chief and [Columnist](#), says, "I'm engrossed in Barbara Kingsolver's new novel, [The Lacuna](#), which tells the story of Harrison William Shepherd and how his life intersects with the lives of Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, Leon Trotsky and others. What I love best is how the story is told -- through a combination of Shepherd's diaries, letters, newspaper clippings, archivist's records and other writing. These bring all the characters, from the colorful historical figures to the fictional and quietly observant Shepherd, vividly to life. Kingsolver is always a terrific storyteller, and I think in this novel she's achieved something really new."



# literary **mama**

reading for the maternally inclined

Columns Co-editor, [C. Delia Scarpitti](#), writes, "I am reading Mary Karr's latest, [Lit: A Memoir](#), a raw and revealing book exploring the heart of one woman's journey into motherhood, creativity, alcoholism and survival. The book begins with an open letter to her son, discussing memory, freedom and forgiveness and ends with a blessing and tentative hope. Karr is known for her willingness to explore the roots of family darkness, but here has willingly excavated her own failures and struggles. This is a beautiful, wrenching book about individual potential and the redemptive value of love."



Reviews Co-Editor and former columnist [Sybil Lockhart](#), is also reading [Lit: A Memoir](#). "I found her downward spiral almost physically nauseating, and then her recovery was such a relief. Her descriptions of Cambridge are spot-on, and the language of her sharp Texas humor made me laugh out loud more than once. As with Anne Lamott's rebirth after recovery, I was a little concerned that Karr might push her Catholicism at the end, but of course she hasn't undergone a personality change any more than Lamott has; she's just sober. Still sharp and raw and beautiful and literate, and this book remains a good read all around."

[Suzanne Kamata](#), Fiction Co-Editor, shares, "In Wendy Tokunaga's second novel, [Love in Translation](#), American Celeste Duncan, a thirtysomething aspiring musician who was brought up in foster homes, goes to Japan, Land of Hello Kitty, to find out the truth about her father. Tokunaga strikes just the right balance between serious and silly in this coming-of-age story for adults. Her best work yet."

