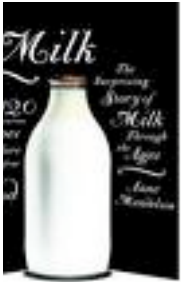


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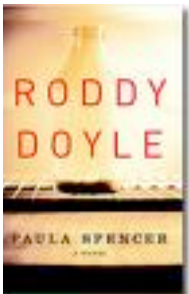
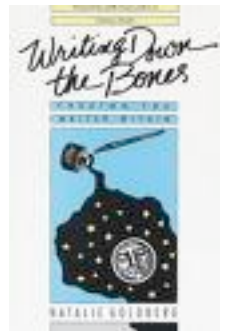
January Essential Reading

This month's Now Reading list ranges from the adventures of delivering books to children in Africa, to dark, desperate choices made by Moms and kids alike, to the history of milk. Happy New Year!



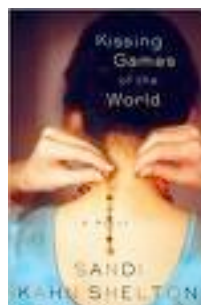
Caroline Grant, Senior Editor and Columnist, writes, "I've just started reading a history of one of my favorite foods! **Milk: The Surprising Story of Milk Through the Ages** is by **Anne Mendelson**, who wrote *Stand Facing the Stove*, a wonderfully engaging memoir of the mother-daughter team who brought us *Joy of Cooking*. Milk is a good mix of culinary history, cookbook, and sharp cultural critique. I'll never eye a simple glass of milk quite so easily again."

Literary Reflections Editorial Assistant, Christina Speed, just finished **Natalie Goldberg's *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*** again. "I own the pocket-sized version of this title, and every January, I create a comfortable spot for it among the stack of books on my night table. Goldberg's voice and message in this book are so eloquent and simple: take simple steps to peel back the layers of the writer within. Among writing exercises are words of wisdom, humor and encouragement to stay at the course. All of this combined inspires the writer in me as I start out a brand new year."



Ezine Co-Editor, Jessica DeVoe Riley, is currently reading **Paula Spencer, a novel by Roddy Doyle**. "This is my first introduction to Roddy Doyle, and he has a candid writing style that is funny and endearing despite the dark subject matter. This book is about a mother trying to maintain sobriety after several failed attempts, and working to repair her relationship with her children. After I began reading it, I discovered it is the sequel to *The Woman Who Walked Into Doors*, so I know what I'll be reading next!"

Profiles Copyeditor, Jenny Hobson, is currently reading ***Kissing Games of the World* by Sandi Kahn Shelton**. "I started reading Shelton's books back when I had a baby who wouldn't sleep. Now, I'm reading her latest novel about a young artist-mother. I like the way Shelton doesn't skimp on the round-the-clock presence of children: the children in the book aren't just being quiet in their rooms or in the back seat of the car while the protagonist is off falling in love or advancing the plot of the book. Early on, the police are interviewing the main character, but she has to keep reminding the interrogator that she still has to do the school run on time. It's the sort of detail that makes you believe that the writer is a real parent; police interviews are important and all, but true woe to the parent who doesn't get their kid picked up from school on time!"



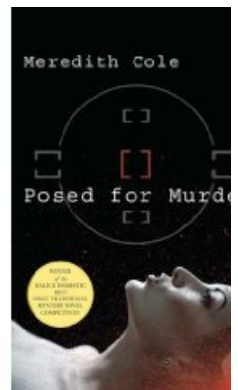
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Columnist Elrena Evans shares, "I just started reading **The Camel Bookmobile** by **Masha Hamilton**, and am finding it engrossing to say the least. Yesterday, my four-year-old daughter asked me what the book was about, and I told her it's about people helping to take books into places in Africa where they don't have libraries, and that the books are transported via camel. She was horrified at the thought of people living without libraries, and is now telling me all about the trip she is planning to Africa on a camel. She's taking along our local children's librarian, she tells me, 'so the children in Africa can hear stories.'"

Kristina Riggle, Fiction Co-Editor, shares, "I'm reading a galley of **Meredith Cole's** debut novel, called **Posed for Murder**, winner of the St. Martin's/Malice Domestic contest for debut mysteries. The heroine is Lydia, an artist who photographed recreations of unsolved murders in her Brooklyn neighborhood, touched by a book of unsolved crimes on unidentified female victims. Then, a killer begins to prey on her models by recreating the murders again, using Lydia's photographs as a guide. It becomes clear the killer intends to target her next. Lydia is a strong, likeable heroine and I'm enjoying the authentic rendering of the Williamsburg area of Brooklyn in all its complexity."



Finally, Literary Reflections Editorial Assistant, Merle Huerta, shares, "I'm reading **We Need To Talk About Kevin**, **Lionel Shriver's** 2006 novel. Written as a series of letters from the mother's perspective, the story describes the history of a fifteen-year-old teen, Kevin, who committed a Columbine-style massacre. As much as I don't love the subject, especially since so many novels, in an attempt to explore the ontogeny of kids who commit mass murder, have come out over the last decade, I do love how Shriver allows the story to unfold. Kevin's mother, Eva Katchadourian writes to her estranged husband Franklin, and in excruciating self-reflection does a painful psychological analysis of hers and Franklin's marriage, of their choice to have a child, and Kevin's subsequent childhood. It is clear Eva harbors tremendous guilt -- over her son's character and over her own inability to love him unconditionally. Even ten years after the crime, Eva carries on day-to-day life in a town where it's clear her own son's actions are burned into everyone's psyches. And with each painful reminder, she seems to relish an opportunity to further inflict self-punishment for what she perceives is her culpability in his failed character development. It's hard to read Shriver's novel and not reflect as a parent -- what mistakes have I made that are irrevocable? And could I love my own children at times when they were least deserving of love?"

