

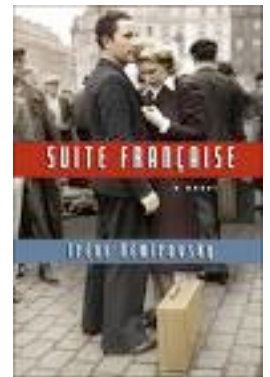
A Literary Magazine for the Maternally Inclined
<http://www.literarymama.com>

LITERARY *Mama*

March, 2009

Is your reading list needing a shake-up? We have it here: understanding, motherly love, science, wartime experiences, philosophy and humor. Take your pick!

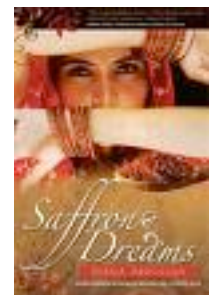
Maria Scala, Columns Editor, writes, "I'm enthralled by the late Irène Némirovsky's *Suite Française*, a gorgeously written novel about the German occupation of France during the Second World War. I'd heard so much about this book and the circumstances leading up to its discovery that I couldn't wait to pick it up. Némirovsky evokes the emotional complexity of the situation in passages like this, in which a young Frenchwoman named Lucile, who's husband is a prisoner-of-war, reflects on the German officer staying in her home: 'He's intelligent and well-mannered. But I'm glad he'll be leaving soon. It pains my mother-in-law to see him living in her son's room. Passionate souls are so simple, ... She hates him and that's all there is to it. People who can love and hate openly, consistently, unreservedly, are so lucky.'"



Merle Huerta, Literary Reflections Editorial Assistant, shares, *The Witch of Portobello* a novel by Paulo Coelho. "The tale of Athena, a descendant of gypsies, is described through the eyes of those who knew her or thought they knew her. And that's what makes it fascinating. The character of this woman is seen through the lens of others and shows how her passions touched each of them in unique ways. I wouldn't call this an epitaph; but Coelho's narrative raises her from the ashes."



Suzanne Kamata, Fiction Co-Editor, writes, "I just finished reading *Saffron Dreams* by Shaila Abdullah. This is a novel told from the point of view of Arissa, a Pakistani 9/11 widow. Shortly after she learns of her husband's death, she discovers that the baby she is carrying will be multiply disabled. This richly textured story offers a rare glimpse into the lives of upper class Pakistanis, while reminding us that families of all creeds and colors were affected by tragedy. Ultimately, it's a story about motherly love."



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Ezine Co-Editor Jessica DeVoe Riley, says, "I recently finished reading *Plato and a Platypus Walk Into a Bar...Understanding Philosophy Through Jokes* by Thomas Cathcart and Daniel Klein. (Isn't that just a wonderful title?) This book offers an overview of the major Western philosophies via jokes, 'because philosophy and jokes proceed from the same impulse: to confound our sense of the way things are, to flip our worlds upside down, and to ferret out hidden, often uncomfortable, truths about life. What the philosophers call an insight, the gagster calls a zinger.' Have you ever read a book where you learned about Kant and the ding an sich through a doctor joke? Or contemplated ethics and emotivism through a joke about cheating the IRS? Considering the state of the world right now, it seems like everyone could use a good laugh and a moment to reflect on the meaning of life or our pursuits therein. This book accomplishes both."



Caroline Grant, Senior Editor and Columnist, writes, "I've just finished reading Reviews Editor Sybil Lockhart's wonderful new memoir, *Mother in the Middle: A Biologist's Story of Caring for Parent and Child*. In some ways this was a re-read; I loved the Literary Mama columns on which the memoir is based, and I was lucky enough to read the book in progress in my writing group. But reading the book for the first time cover to cover was deeply satisfying. The book expands on the column beautifully, with more about Lockhart's family (especially her mother, who was a teacher and peace activist) and more of the science behind her mother's degenerating mind and her daughters' rapidly-developing brains. The interwoven stories of family and biology are elegantly, movingly told."



Sarah Kilts, Literary Reflections Editor, adds, "I'm lovin' it too! I was thinking that since I had seen so much of the book while it was being written (in writer's group) that I might not get as involved (I know some scenes so well I sometimes think they were part of my life, I know the ending etc...) But every time I open it I can't put it back down, 'just one more chapter...' So, it's been keeping me up very late at night -- three nights in a row! Way to go Sybil!"