

literary **mama**

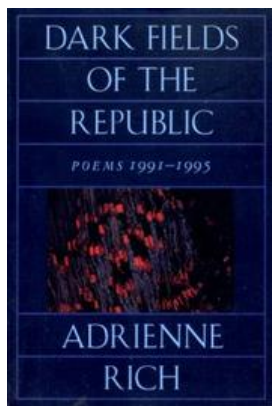
reading for the maternally inclined

Now Reading: September, 2011

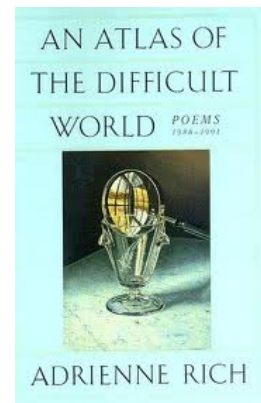
By [Rhena Tantisunthorn Refsland](#)

When on the hunt for my next reading selection, I return again and again to Margaret Atwood, whose character-driven stories never fail to engage and teach me a few things about human behavior and good writing. *The Robber Bride* is no different. In this story of three college friends (Roz, Charis, and Tony) who are pulled together by the evil machinations of their nemesis, Zenia, Atwood draws from Grimm's fairytales for both characters and plot. (The title is taken from the folk story, "The Robber Bridegroom.") But most compelling of all is Atwood's ability to write people with such rich interior lives and clear voices that I am not only convinced that they are real people, but I find myself trying to decide which one of them I'd most like to have as a friend.

Below, two more Literary Mama editors share where their reading ventures have most recently brought them.



[Christina Marie Speed](#), Literary Reflections Co-Editor, shared, "I just finished reading two poetry collections from Adrienne Rich: *An Atlas of the Difficult World* and *Dark Fields of the Republic*. Rich's compelling imagery and form propelled me to consider the world around me, both personal and civic, in a startlingly new way. Her work creates space for the reader to consider opposing forces, such as love-hate, sublime-loathsome, or duty-malaise, in taut freedom. I read poetry to become closer to myself and to a clearer understanding of this increasingly challenging world in which we live. These two collections of poetry from Adrienne Rich accomplished this for me -- and more -- with texture and grace."



[Karna Converse](#), Blog Co-Editor, wrote, "My 14-year-old daughter and I just finished *The 19th Wife*, by David Ebershoff, and we recommend it for any mother-daughter pair interested in historical fiction. The novel is actually two books in one: one set in late-1800's Utah, the other set in present-day Utah. Both narratives depict families torn apart by polygamy.

"Ebershoff alternates between the stories of Ann Eliza Young and Jordan Scott. Ann Eliza, Brigham Young's nineteenth wife, wrote a book denouncing polygamy in 1875 and then traveled throughout the United States speaking against the Mormon church. Jordan Scott is a young man who was thrown out of his fundamentalist community and whose mother, BeckyLyn, also a nineteenth wife, sits in jail, accused of killing her husband. Jordan's search for answers and Ann Eliza's memoir-like chronicle encourages readers to contemplate the mysteries of love, family, and faith. My daughter and I had several interesting conversations about human nature and why we believe what we do.

Understanding the book's structure is key to its enjoyment. In addition to studying how the chapters were laid out, we found it helpful to read the Author's Notes and the Reader's Guide before immersing ourselves too deeply in the text."

