



## HILLSBORO COMMUNITY LIBRARY NEWS

VOLUME 11: NUMBER 5 .....MAY 2016

### Science and Art

Hanya Yanagihara is probably better known for her second novel which came out last year, **A Little Life**, which was short listed for both the Man Booker Prize and the National Book Award. However, her first novel, the featured book this month, was also highly praised as a stunning debut of a serious writer.

### Featured this Month

#### **The People in the Trees** by Hanya Yanagihara

At the start of the novel we are introduced, through two newspaper articles, to the protagonist, Dr. A. Norton Perina, who discovered in the 1950's on a remote Micronesian island a medical miracle --a small tribe, some of whose members had life spans of well over 200 years. Perina's discovery of the cause of this virtual immortality --the consumption of a rare indigenous turtle-- earned him the Nobel Prize. Unfortunately, Perina also discovered that the gift of bodily health over the additional life span was not accompanied by corresponding mental health; senility set in at an accustomed age and continued till the oldest became in a sense sub-humans. But all this is mere background to the lede of the news articles: Perina has been arrested --and then convicted --of the sexual abuse of an adopted son, one of 42 Perina has adopted from the island.

In a story that starts at the end, the point cannot be the destination of the plot --rather it is the journey --how and why did we get here? And so, the travels of Dr. A. Norton Perina are presented to us as his memoirs written from prison and edited by a devoted colleague, who insists that Perina was a benevolent genius who could not possibly be guilty of such a horrid act.

In fact, Perina's guilt encompasses a great deal else.

The memoirs take us back to Perina's childhood with his twin brother Owen, who became not a scientist,



but a professor of literature and a poet. (Norton and Owen's antics will echo later in Norton's experiences with his own children.) Norton becomes a doctor and researcher, who likely because of his odd disconnection to any personal relationships, is offered a position on the team of two anthropologists going out to study the people of the South Pacific island of Ivu'ivu. One of the scientists, Paul Tallent, is the first person since Owen to strike a chord in Norton's heart.

The memoirs go on to detail the exploration team, the island's tribal life and culture, including some disturbing rites, and the startling find of "the dreamers," who have eaten the turtle and entered the Faustian bargain.

What happens after Norton's discovery is perfectly predictable -- so much that one wonders how Norton does not see it. But that then is perhaps the point. In the last chapters about Norton's later life as pater familias is the parallel of what he had done cosmically. Norton is intended to be the face of science as an abstract force without social or ethical considerations, knowledge without humanity, a power that thinks it justifies itself.

*Review by Mary Anne Ciancia*

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## New at the Library

### Fiction

**The Nest** by Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney  
**The Widow's Strike** by Brad Taylor  
**Enemy of Mine** by Brad Taylor

### Mystery

**Cross Justice** by James Patterson  
**Off the Grid** by C. J. Box  
**One for the Money** by Janet Evanovich  
**Blood Sweep** by Steven F. Havill  
**Come Dark** by Steven F. Havill  
**NYPD Red 3** by James Patterson & Marshall Karp  
**NYPD Red 4** by James Patterson & Marshall Karp

### Non Fiction

**As Far as the Eye Could Reach: *Accounts of Animals on the Santa Fe Trail, 1821-1880*** by Phyllis S. Morgan

### Films on DVD

**At Risk .... The Front**

### Books on CD

**Dust** by Patricia Cornwell  
**Mortuary** by Patricia Cornwell  
**Red Mist** by Patricia Cornwell

### Notes from the Library Board

Have you read Marie Kondo's *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*? Finished your spring cleaning? Left with some items that are going to the dumpster or will just get stowed back on the shelf unused anymore?

Why not donate your items to the Library table at the annual Hillsboro Street Sale? On Saturday, May 7, we'll be set up on Main Street across from Our Lady of Guadalupe Church selling used books and donated items. You can bring your donations then and there or if you'd like to drop them earlier, we'll be glad to store them for you (contact Steve Siegfried at 895-5657).

One exception: if you have artifacts of historical importance for the Hillsboro area, please consider giving them (or selling them) to the Hillsboro Historical Society and not to outsiders.

Hope to see you all there!

### Bookmobile Schedule

**Wednesday, May 18**

Hillsboro: 1:00 – 2:00 pm    Kingston: 2:30-3:30 pm

For a complete listing of Library materials, visit  
<http://www.hillsborocommunitylibrary.com>

### Library Hours:

Sunday & Monday: closed  
Tues. 3:30 - 5:30pm    Wed. 1:00 – 4:00pm  
Thurs: 3:30 - 5:30pm    Fri: 10:00am – 1:00pm  
Saturday 10:00am–2:00pm

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