



HILLSBORO COMMUNITY LIBRARY NEWS

VOLUME 13: NUMBER 2.....MARCH - APRIL 2018

Ugly Duckling

Unreliable narrators are one thing; unattractive, unlikable ones are something else. The young celebrated author Ottessa Moshfegh confesses in an interview with *The Guardian* that she started her Man Booker short-listed novel as an act of defiance—an attempt to write a by-the-numbers commercial thriller—but somewhere along the way it took a very unconventional turn. As Moshfegh put it to her British interviewer: “Eileen is a character that makes people uncomfortable. She is not going to, you know, cheer you up. But might it not be liberating to hear the thoughts of someone who is completely ignored by society?”

Featured this Month

Eileen by Ottessa Moshfegh

Eileen Dunlop’s introduction of herself is astonishing in being vaguely repulsive and yet strangely compelling. Perhaps because she begins this tale as an older woman recalling the most fateful events of her youth, she enables the reader to put a bit of a buffer between the intimacy of the first person narration and the kind of icky details of the memoir she is revealing.

Eileen’s story starts with a dismal home life—an alcoholic widowed father for whom she is the sole care-taker, though her care-taking is more like purposeful enabling. Her work life provides no joy or fulfillment either. Eileen is a clerk at a Moorhead, a drab juvenile prison on the outskirts of Boston that houses young men who have done despicable deeds. Eileen, whose imagination is florid, to say the least, rather admires them. But her dark fantasies and disturbing opinions of the lives around her never seem to leak out into anyone else’s awareness. All her colleagues see is a scrawny, unattractive, unsociable, poorly dressed functionary—as institutionally gray as her surroundings. Perhaps they



notice only that she’s not going to win any awards for personal hygiene.

But suddenly into this miserable existence comes Rebecca Saint John, a beautiful, elegant Harvard educated psychologist that the prison has hired to work with its inmates. It’s love—or maybe something worse—at first sight, for Rebecca seems to take an interest in Eileen, the first person probably ever to do so. Eileen is captivated by the ray of sunshine that has illuminated her darkness. Indeed, Rebecca’s interest must be dazzling in that for all of Eileen’s acute talent at cynical observation, she fails to see that Rebecca has her own agenda, a secret plot having to do with one of the boys at the prison whom she is especially interested in interviewing about his crime. *Moshfegh’s* plot, however, isn’t going anywhere you might think it’s going.

Eileen is surprising and weird and off-putting and a really unique and fascinating creation of a character. It’s a kind of a train wreck of a novel—just awful, but you just can’t seem to look away.

Review by Mary Anne Ciancia

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New at the Library

Non Fiction

The Absurd Naturalist by Gene Twaronite
The Carnivore Way by Cristina Eisenberg
Worldly Philosopher: *The Odyssey of Albert O. Hirshman* by Jeremy Adelman
Crossing the Yard: *Thirty Years as a Prison Volunteer* by Richard Shelton
The Music Instinct by Philip Ball
Earth's First Steps by Jerry MacDonald
See It Say It in Spanish by Margarita Madrigal (re-issue)

Mystery

Bury Your Dead by Louise Penny
Origin by Dan Brown
City of the Lost by Kelley Armstrong
The Boy Who Stole the Leopard's Spots by Tamar Myers

Science Fiction

The Fifth Season by N.K. Jemisin

Fiction

Hot Milk by Deborah Levy
The Sudden Appearance of Hope by Claire North
All That Man Is by David Szalay
Stolen Oranges by Max Yeh
Arms from the Sea by Rich Shapero
Spartacus the Gladiator by Ben Kane
The Last Tudor by Philippa Gregory
Exit West by Mohsin Hamid
Under the Wide and Starry Sky by Nancy Horan

Films on DVD

Foxcatcher
Not Fade Away
Zero Dark Thirty
What Ever Happened to Baby Jane

Audio Books

Power Play by Catherine Coulter
Insidious by Catherine Coulter
My Dog Tulip by J. R. Ackerly
Garden of Beasts by Jeffery Deaver

Notes from the Library Board

Thank you!

Many thanks to WSFCU for once again supporting our Library through their generous grant program.



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

Bookmobile Schedule

Third Wednesday of the Month

April 18 - May 16

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

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