

BOOKMARKS

Winter 2016 Newsletter ~ The Bookloft ~ Your hometown source for books and more ~ Enterprise, Oregon

Mary's Top 10 Books Read in 2015

THE MEMORY OF OLD JACK by Wendell Berry

In the course of a day in 1952, an old man reflects on his life as a farmer in a small town in Kentucky. Eloquent, deeply reflective and beautifully written.

THE LUMINARIES by Eleanor Catton

Set in the 1800s and written in the style of a novel of that time, this book looks at life in the early gold-mining days of New Zealand.

THE BURIED GIANT by Kazuo Ishiguro

In the dark days just after King Arthur's reign, two people set off on a journey that becomes an inquiry into whether or not all memories are good or whether some should be left to fade into forgetfulness.

THE BONE CLOCKS by David Mitchell

A brilliant big novel by the author of the *Cloud Atlas* and like that novel, it is written in a most unusual and creative way.

STATION ELEVEN by Emily St John Mandel

It's the post pandemic future and 99% of the population is gone. A troupe of musicians and Shakespearean actors take to the road to provide entertainment and to see who is left out there.

SHORT NIGHTS OF THE SHADOW CATCHER by Timothy Egan

A most interesting biography of Edward Curtis, whose attempt to photograph as many living Indian tribes as possible became his life's obsession.

KITCHENS OF THE GREAT MIDWEST by J. Ryan Stradel

A great read for foodies about how a young woman develops her love of food and cuisine and becomes a renowned chef. Very fun and very Midwestern.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF WATER by Mary Emerick

An exquisite novel of a young girl's coming of age in southeast Alaska

THE CARRY HOME by Gary Ferguson

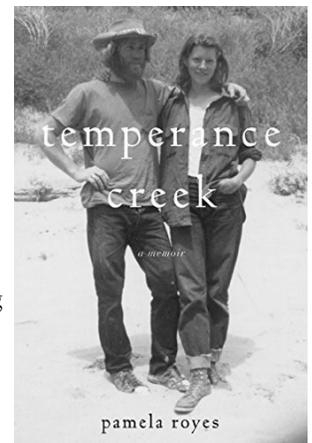
Following the death of his wife, the author makes a journey to some of their shared favorite places in nature.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS by Charlie Lovett

The Bookloft turns 40 this year and as so often happens at that age, a makeover was due. A makeover of the website, that is. I'm very pleased with the new look and I should have more flexibility about posting book reviews and general book commentary. As if I need any encouragement to do that! Browsing, ordering, communicating with us will all be so much more fun with our zippy new website.

Please check us out at
www.bookloftoregon.com.

Our very own Pam Royes has a book coming out in May. **TEMPERANCE CREEK** is a memoir of her years living in Hells Canyon after meeting Skip. We haven't set a date for the gala book signing to celebrate the publication, so stay tuned. We would be glad to reserve a copy for you so you can start on it as soon as it is released.



What Mary has been reading...

SONG OF HARGROVE HALL by Natasha Solomon

This is a novel about music, deep connection to place, song collecting, and love and betrayal, all of this set on an old estate in Dorset. The story is told by Harry Fox-Talbot, reflecting back to his early years on the estate following World War II, living with his father, "the General" and two brothers, Jack and George. The Fox-Talbots face the dilemma common to many estate owners in the post war period – crumbling manor houses and insufficient income to keep them up. When the General decides the only option is to tear down the house, the boys come up with an alternate plan. They decide to team up and learn to run the estate and farm the land. Unable to hire much help, the brothers must take up the hard labor largely by themselves. All three brothers are deeply tied to the estate and the history and culture being lost. Harry spends his free time traveling the area and collecting old songs of the area. His passion is music and he eagerly transcribes these old tunes as well as composes his own work. A complication arises in the form of a love interest Jack brings to live with them. Both other brothers are smitten by the diminutive Edie Rose, a popular war-time singer, but Harry develops a deep love for Edie which, in time is reciprocated. Things come to a head and Harry flees to London where over years his musical career is established. The story then shifts from the past to Harry's present in the early 21st century. He is now in his 70s and has lost his wife of 50 years, Edie. He is still living at Hartgrove Hall, has two grown daughters and several grandchildren including a young boy Robin, who Harry discovers is a musical prodigy. How things transpire from fleeing the estate and the woman he loves to this life in the present is the narrative of the book. The author builds suspense as she paints a portrait of post World War II England and the choices made by the characters. With themes of music woven with beautiful descriptions of the English countryside, this novel was an enjoyable escape to another time and place – just what you'd want from a good read. 16.00

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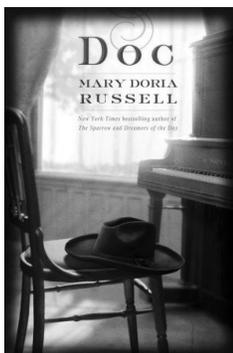
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DOC by Mary Doria Russell

I have enjoyed several books by this author. She is impressive not only in her stories and writing, but also in the variety of topics she writes about, from science fiction to historic fiction and now to stories about "the old west". But the Doc Holliday that Russell portrays is not the typical gunslinger, rather, a southern gentleman forced to move west due to poor health. Having inherited bad lungs from his mother, Holliday heads for the Texas frontier. Accompanied by his high-strung, classically educated Hungarian gambling partner Kate, Doc settles in Dodge City and tries to make a living with his skills both as a dentist and more lucratively, at the poker tables in the saloons around town. Constantly struggling with his illness, his inflammable partner and his financial difficulties, Doc nonetheless manages to present a flamboyant appearance. Spouting philosophy as well as flinging Greek and Latin phrases with Kate, Holliday is shown as far from rustic or cutthroat. Russell shows Doc's friendship with the Earp brothers in a different light as well, through the everyday aspects of their lives. Her description of Wyatt Earp quailing in fear in the dentist's chair, show a different side to these tough guys, more normal and human than as they are normally portrayed as glamorous, overblown characters. The book does not quite take us to the drama that waits at the OK Corral. That is portrayed in her subsequent book, *Epitaph*. This is an epic tale of the west and a good one. I look forward to the rest of the story. 15.00



the residents in his neighborhood to his benefit as well as theirs. For despite his gruff exterior, we discover that Ove actually possesses a big heart. This portrayal of the ultimate curmudgeon is both funny and poignant. 16.00

THE READERS OF BROKEN WHEEL RECOMMEND by Katarina Bivald

Sara, a young Swedish woman, has traveled to Broken Wheel, a small town in Iowa, to visit her pen pal Amy, an elderly woman who has lived her whole life there. The two share a love of books and Amy's letters are sprinkled with talk about her favorite books and authors as well as tidbits about the residents of her town. But to her dismay, when Sara arrives, she discovers that Amy has recently died. However, the folks of the town take her under their collective wing as "Amy's guest". It's a really small town, down on its luck and there is not that much going on. But as a way of paying back hospitality and to give herself something to do, Sara opens a bookstore in one of the empty storefronts on Main Street. "Whether they knew it or not, they needed books. That much was clear". My sentiments exactly! To people's surprise, the store gradually energizes the town and reunites their sense of community. But Sara's visa is running out and the people of Broken Wheel must devise a plot to keep her in the US.

I really enjoyed this book. Of course I would with all of its talk about books, authors and the joy of bookstores. But I also liked the eccentric cast of characters, and the bit of romance that results in Sara's comment that "Reality really was a good as books." This fun read is reminiscent of other great "small town" novels, like *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe* and other great novels for book-lovers, like *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*. I even enjoyed reading the author's responses in the Q & A section of the readers guide. When asked "How many books do you pack when you go on vacation?", she replied "I pack as many as I can fit, but never less than five, regardless of how long I'm planning to be away. When packing, always sacrifice clothes for books." Amen. 16.99



A MAN CALLED OVE by Fredrik Backman

Ove is a man with definite ideas about things and an iron-clad daily routine. When he is forced into retirement, his life and its strict schedules are thrown into disarray. To further upset his life, new neighbors move in across the street and announce their arrival by backing their moving van into his mailbox. The new family consists of a young Iranian woman, her husband and their two small girls. Their arrival will have life-changing effect on Ove's life. In his self-appointed role as neighborhood watchman and caretaker, Ove reluctantly becomes involved in the lives of all of