

## Library Hours

Monday – Friday 9AM – 9PM

Saturday 10AM – 5PM ~ Sunday 1PM – 5PM

Closed Sundays from Memorial Day – Labor Day

## Library Phone Numbers

General 837-3430

Circulation 837-3457

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MCTV 837-3474

Youth 837-3466

TDD 837-3472

# ShelfLife

Grace A. Dow Memorial Library

### *Reunion* by Michael B. Oren

MacAdam/Cage Publishers, 2003

Part war story with a dash of mystery and suspense, *Reunion* makes the freezing foxholes of Saint-Vith, Belgium during World War II frighteningly real.

After receiving invitations to a reunion in the Ardennes more than 55 years after the Battle of the Bulge, a number of aging, infirm veterans decide to return to Belgium to relive their wartime experiences.

While many of the old soldiers had fought gallantly, almost all come with guilty recriminations for their part in the battle and the loss of their comrades-in-arms. Now nearing the end of their lives, the time has come to find out what really happened that winter of 1944. Through a series of flashbacks and a current murder, Oren sets the stage for the revelation of haunting secrets, intrigue, murder and mayhem that keeps the vets still fighting to find out the truth.

The characters are well-drawn and realistic as they try to find their place in what happened and to deal with feelings and ghosts that have never properly been put to rest. The result is both an entertaining story and a journey through the effects of war on a soldier's heart.



### *Best Friends* by Thomas Berger

Simon & Schuster, 2003

It seems opposites can attract, not only in love, but also in friendship. Sam and Roy have been best friends since childhood, though their personalities and lifestyles couldn't be more different. Roy is slim, health-conscious, wealthy, single and playing the field. Sam is overweight, illness-prone, a spendthrift, and married to Kristina, a beautiful, successful and slightly mysterious woman Roy is beginning to find irresistible. While Sam and Roy daily go their separate ways secure in the tradition of best friends, Roy's growing obsession begins to seem fueled by Sam, who grows ever more demanding of his loyalty. Are they friends, or fundamentally mortal enemies? Forgotten bits of their shared past begin to cast shadows on the present in this complex tale about friendship.



### *Haunted Ground* by Erin Hart

Scribner, 2003

The discovery of the severed head of a young redhead, in a peat bog in the Irish countryside, opens this debut thriller. When authorities determine the identity is not that of the wife of a local landowner who has been missing for two years, it's discovered, astonishingly, that the head, perfectly preserved by the peat, dates back to the 1600s.

Irish archaeologist Cormac Maguire and Nora Gavin, a visiting American pathologist, team up to uncover the history of the decapitated woman, and unintentionally become involved in the case of the unsolved disappearance of the local woman and her son. The research the two characters undertake to investigate the remains will fascinate readers. Detective Garrett Devaney, who is no longer officially assigned to the missing persons case, continues to question acquaintances and possible suspects, thereby coming into contact with Cormac and Nora.

The Irish setting, history, musical references and folklore, along with the colorful local characters, distinguish this novel. The elements of danger and mysterious personal histories add welcome complexity to an absorbing story. The author effectively weaves plots together, resulting in a compelling story with an unexpected ending.

Although the author is not Irish, her many visits to Ireland provided the inspiration for this novel. Erin Hart plans to continue to write suspense novels that reflect her interest in Ireland.



*“The voice in the receiver was not her father, but a disembodied, breathy whisper that was neither male nor female: ‘Leave it alone.’”*

**The books reviewed in this fall issue of *ShelfLife* promise the gamut of entertainment - from adventure and intrigue to conflict and consonance. *Read on!***

### *The Water Dancers* by Terry Gamble

William Morrow, 2003

The setting for this story of lovers from different racial and economic backgrounds is the shore of Lake Michigan, in a fictional location between Grand Traverse and Mackinac.

The story moves from 1945 to 1970, capturing the lives of a wealthy veteran of World War II and a Native American housemaid.

Woody Marsh returns from the war minus a leg. Sixteen-year-old Rachel Winnapee combines her maid duties with nursing responsibilities for Woody at the family's summer home. The author writes of a duty that becomes a friendship that develops into a love affair. It comes as no surprise to the reader that when Rachel becomes pregnant, she is on her own, for Woody has married someone from the 'correct' social class.

Eleven years later, Rachel and her son, Ben, find themselves in the company of Woody. Ben brings a joy to Woody's life that has been lacking in his marriage and his relationship with his other son. Contentment will be short-lived as a tragic accident alters many lives, and blackmail buys silence to protect family secrets.

The author delivers a story with well-developed characters and a writing style that gently leads the reader on journeys of self-discovery. Traditions and beliefs of the Odawa Indians are integral elements of the story.

*“She had taught her son the subtle tastes of rock and dirt. There are secrets in the soil, she told him. It will always bring you home.”*

*ShelfLife* is a publication of the Adult Services Department of the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library.

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Fall 2003

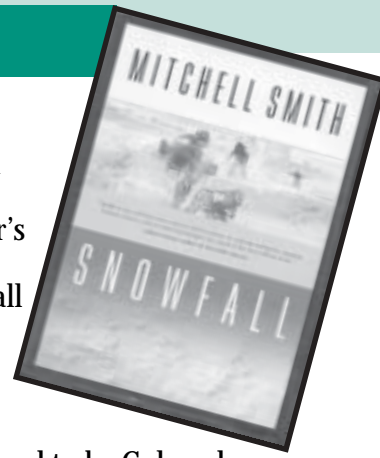
## Snowfall by Mitchell Smith

Forge/Tor Books, 2002

*Snowfall* is a great post-apocalypse tale. Smith delivers a dark story of human survival, set several hundred years after a change in Jupiter's orbit causes a new ice age on Earth. North America is divided geographically by an ice wall a mile high which runs east to west. The book focuses on groups of people who have lost much knowledge, but are trying to maintain a society in the face of starvation and invasion.

The Trappers live near a glacier in what used to be Colorado. Their knowledge and language come from stories told by elders and from a few old books salvaged generations before, which have been copied and recopied. Under the leadership of the renegade Trapper Jack Monroe and their doctor Catania Olsen, the Trappers flee south toward the unknown lands of the warm-time people. The Trappers journey to find a sanctuary where they may live in peace.

This novel explores the resilience of the human spirit in a world where book learning is almost nonexistent and survival is the order of the day. Fans of survival fiction and adventure stories will enjoy this story of courage and persistence.



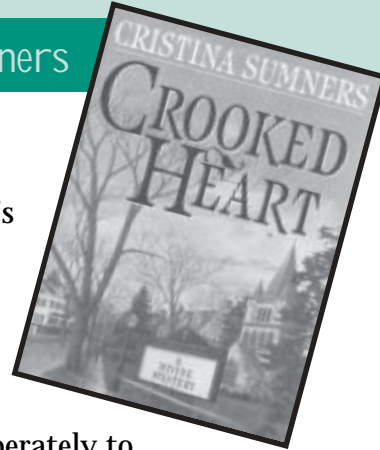
## Crooked Heart by Cristina Sumners

Bantam Books, 2003

This absorbing mystery opens in a kitchen, detailing the bloody aftermath of a woman's violent death. No names are revealed in the dialogue that takes place. Next comes a scene in a neighboring house in which 10-year-old Tita Robinson's mother finds her fast asleep in her attic aerie, a journal by her side. Cut back to the scene of horror, where the presumed murderer is trying desperately to clean up the mess and to bring his sense of dread under control. Next we find a nearly hysterical woman, referred to only as "she," rushing to catch a plane to California.

Meanwhile, another neighbor, pompous George Kimbrough, returns from the city to discover the thoughtless disappearance of his wife (no dinner prepared), which he reports to the police. Chief of Police Tom Holden takes on the investigation, aided by the lovely Kathryn Koerney, an Episcopalian priest who serves his parish church. Admiring Kathryn's brains as well as her beauty, the unhappily married Tom finds every excuse to consult with her about the case. Kathryn in turn finds the puzzle disturbing and challenging, and she enjoys Tom's company as well. Their easy relationship is a pleasant contrast to the increasingly ominous tone of the plot.

This story has all the ingredients for the best kind of mystery – interesting characters (likeable or not), almost agonizing suspense, and a hint of romance. Happily, first-time author Sumners is already at work on her second novel.



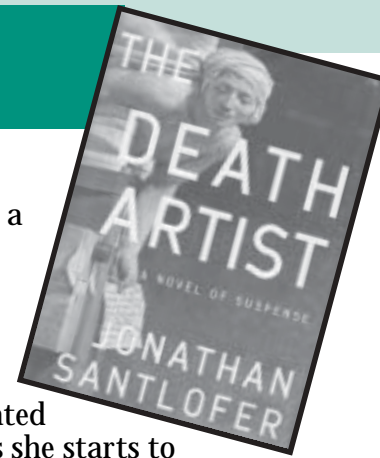
## The Death Artist by Jonathan Santlofer

William Morrow, 2002

This is a gruesome yet intellectual tale of a serial killer whose crimes are staged to mimic famous artworks. Former NYPD detective and art historian Kate McKinnon is at first puzzled, then horrified when she begins to receive enigmatic messages that appear to be related to recent murders of art world figures. As she starts to investigate the killings, Kate realizes that the killer has, in turn, shifted his attention to her.

The NYPD task force investigating the murders has narrowed the field of suspects down to two, who then kill each other. Kate receives another reproduction in the mail—this one sent before the murder. Scrambling to figure it all out, the task force narrowly misses the killer at the scene of his next murder. As the tension builds, the stress-ridden investigators' emotions are in turmoil. The FBI is called in. People close to Kate are implicated. Maddeningly, the death artist's clues are increasingly difficult to decipher.

Artist Jonathan Santlofer has written a tight, engrossing book, which is nearly impossible to put down. The tension builds to an almost unbearable level as Kate and the police struggle to stop the death artist.

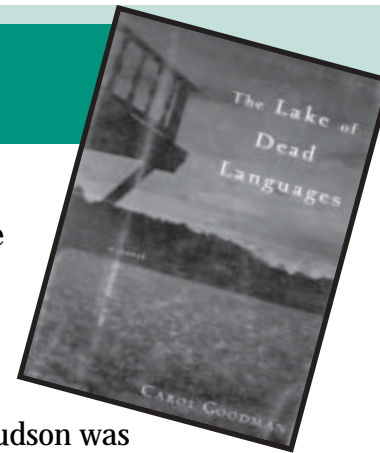


*"After all, he's the death artist.  
And he can't—he won't—  
disappoint them."*

## The Lake of Dead Languages by Carol Goodman

Ballantine Books, 2002

Legend has it that the lake at Heart Lake School beckons for the deaths of three students. The tale begins with the three daughters of the founder of the school who are rumored to have drowned and the three rocks that rose out of the water to lure young girls to their doom. Jane Hudson was a student at the school twenty years ago when her two roommates died in the lake. Some believed that she should have been the third. She has now returned to the school in the position of Latin teacher. She eases into the comforting routine of academia and has garnered the admiration of her students. But as pages start to appear from her long lost diary that chronicle that doomed senior year long ago, she begins to realize that history may be repeating itself. Author Goodman has successfully written an engrossing modern gothic novel.



## The Invisible World by John Smolens

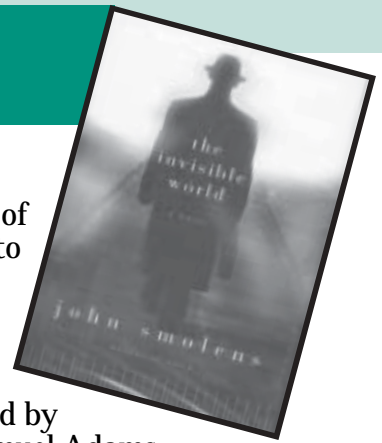
Shaye Areheart Books, 2002

Smolens weaves a loving homage to the city of Boston into a gripping story that pulls us into the invisible world of 'black-ops.'

Samuel Xavier Adams, aka Sam Adams, is a 50-ish journalist obsessed with the relentless secrecy of his father's career, and the devastating upheaval and discord suffered by his family because of it. His father, John Samuel Adams, had been employed by the U. S. Government since he enlisted in the navy at the beginning of World War II. Sam has never been certain exactly what his father's duties for the government have entailed, nor what amoral or unethical means he may have used to achieve the questionable political ends of nameless covert agencies.

Grief stricken after the death of his mother, Sam is unable to understand why his father has vanished with his mother's ashes. Sam doggedly searches for his father, setting off a frightening series of events that threaten to leave scorched earth in their wake.

Shadowy figures plague Sam, all urging him to cease his search; to let the past alone. The closer he gets to the truth, the more threatening his mysterious adversaries, and the more unsettling the insights into national policy.



## Saturn's Return to New York by Sara Gran

Soho Press, 2001

Mary Forrest is informed by an astrologer that, due to her Saturn Return, she must face and resolve her emotional issues, or wait another 29 years. This is just another task in Mary's inbox of angst.

For openers, there's the burden of her birth—to parents famous in the literary realm, whose brightness she can never hope to equal, followed by the suicide of her father. Then there are her youthful romantic and vocational missteps.

*"They're happy...  
I tell you right  
now, the dead are  
always happy."*

The icing on the cake is Mary's accomplished but neglectful mother, editor of New York's most famous literary review, locked in the downward spiral of Alzheimer's. The bits and pieces of her childhood Mary is able to excavate from her mother's failing memory are crucial in coming to terms with her demons.

A highly entertaining cast of characters includes two of Mary's former schoolmates, a couple of would-be suitors, and Annette, a co-worker sympathetic to what she terms Mary's hereditary insanity, and quite openly bent on stealing her job.

