



Book Club Night 2011 Staff Recommendations

***The Household Guide to Dying* by Debra Adelaide**

Fiction, paperback, \$18.00

Adelaide's book, set in Australia, confirms my preference for reading Orange Prize nominated books. This 2009 long listed title has both great writing and a compelling story. After a career of writing advice columns and household guides, Delia writes her last and most poignant guide – the Guide to Dying. Although not yet forty, Delia's journey to death is bittersweet. The book is interspersed with letters to her readers, advice from her guide to dying, and hints of a long held secret. Her attempt to control the process of dying, both for herself and her family, is humorous yet moving. Adelaide is able to immerse you in a world that comes to all of us, almost always too early. This story leaves you reminiscing about it long after you are finished, and has many layers for discussion. (Susan)

***The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga**

Fiction, paperback, \$19.99

This is a captivating yet uncomfortable read. India, corruption, the caste system, and how you get ahead. You will applaud the main character and you will squirm at his irreverence, and amoral unscrupulousness. This is an India story like no other, its gritty and calculating, exploring the morals and conscience of the human condition. (Jeanie)

***The Secret Scripture* by Sebastian Barry**

Fiction, paperback, \$18.50

In County Sligo, Ireland, Roseanne McNulty has spent most of her adult life in the Roscommon mental institution. She has been a resident of the asylum for so long that no one knows how old she really is, or exactly why she was committed. Unbeknown to the staff, Roseanne has been recording her memories on scraps of paper with a stolen pen, and hiding them under a loose floorboard in her room. These recollections, the secret scripture of the title, differ considerably from the narrative that Dr. Grene, the head psychiatrist of the institution, is putting together. The asylum is closing, and Dr. Grene's search into Roseanne's past and the terms of her commitment will legally determine where she will be placed next. Played out against the harsh brutality of the complicated history of politics and religion in the Ireland of the past century, *The Secret Scripture* is beautifully written. The two narratives of Roseanne and Dr. Grene come together in a most satisfying ending. (Cynthia)

***The Women* by T.C. Boyle**

Fiction, paperback, \$20.00

The Women is narrated by a fictional Japanese apprentice to Frank Lloyd Wright. Writing from Japan in 1979 (supposedly translated by his Irish-American grandson-in-law), Sato Tadashi tells the story of Wright's complicated relationships with three women. Tadashi introduces the reader to Olgivanna Milannoff Wright, Miriam Noel Wright and Mahma Borthwick Cheney, infusing the story with his own recollections of these women and life with "Wrieto-San". The story is told in reverse, opening with the scandals and humiliations of Wright and Olgivanna, his third wife. Each of these women and their relation with Wright is detailed and brought to life - from the mystically-influence immigrant Olgivanna, to the drug and sex addicted Miriam, to the intelligent and liberated Mahma. Frank Lloyd Wright himself is captured as a man strongly influenced by each of these women. (Cynthia)

***Moloka'i* by Alan Brennert**

Fiction, paperback, \$17.99

It is 1891 when we meet a warm, happy family living in old Honolulu. Rachel is a lovable, inquisitive, precocious five-year-old with a sister, two brothers and two loving parents. Her father is a seaman and Rachel dreams of far away places and adventures. She never dreamed of leprosy and the leper colony at Kalupapa on the island of Molokai. This is historical fiction that we love, great characters, heartfelt emotion and detailed history that we should know about. This skilful author can transport you back to the time and place and can make you cry and smile as you live the roles of mother, daughter, sister and father. (Jeanie)

***A Curse Dark as Gold* by Elizabeth C. Bunce**

Teen fiction, paperback, \$12.99

Fairy and folk tales have survived myriad retellings, in part because they tell us so much about ourselves. Bunce here has re-spun the tale of Rumpelstiltskin, setting it in the early days of the Industrial Revolution, when new technologies and old beliefs come into conflict. Old magic vs. new machines. When it comes to saving her family's woollen mill, Charlotte Miller is tempted by a bargain that at first seems much too good to be true, but later threatens everything and everyone she loves. (Judith)

***Mirage: Napoleon's Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt* by Nina Burleigh**

History, paperback, \$17.99

In 1799, Napoleon arrived in Egypt with 50,000 soldiers and 151 savants (scientists, mathematicians, engineers, and artists). Ostensibly they were there on a fact-finding mission to this ancient land. In reality, the French were hoping to take control of Egypt in the same way the English had India. In most history books about this Napoleonic endeavour, the focus has been on the military aspect, with little reference to the scientific discoveries other than possibly the Rosetta Stone. Nina Burleigh focuses each chapter on a different savant and their area of expertise. Through the savants, the reader learns about the true Egypt. The author counterpoints the savants' research and discoveries against the arrogance and ignorance of Napoleon and his soldiers. Very informative and entertaining. (Cynthia)

***Chocolate Wars* by Deborah Cadbury**

History, hardcover, \$29.99 (paperback due October 2011)

If you have any interest at all in chocolate you will love this history of the world's great chocolate makers. Focusing mainly on the three biggest British companies, Cadbury's, Fry's and Rowntree's, all Quaker owned, it also covers the mainland European and the American makers. We are told how the great discoveries of processing chocolate were made and learn of the personalities and history behind each company. This is an absolutely fascinating look at one of the world's best foods. (Sandy)

***Deadly Fall* by Susan Calder**

Mystery, hardcover, \$26.95

As someone who rarely reads mysteries, I was pleasantly surprised by Susan Calder's first Paula Savard mystery. Paula is a middle aged woman going through a bit of a mid-life crisis when she learns her best friend has been murdered. Much to the dismay of the police she becomes more and more involved as the attempt to locate the killer stalls. It's fun to read a book set in Calgary with totally realistic portrayals of many people, so many of whom could be the murderer. With great skill, Calder keeps you guessing until the very end. (Mike)

***Practical Jean* by Trevor Cole**

Fiction, hardcover, \$29.99 (paperback due September 2011)

Nominated for the Leacock Award, 2011

Jean is the only daughter of an overachieving family. She creates totally impractical ceramic leaves, which no one in her family understands. Through her impractical nature, she becomes the family outsider. Yet it is her career that causes her family to delegate her as her mother's caregiver in her final illness. Three months of watching her mother die causes a personality change in Jean. Cole explores the nature of friendship through very dark humour and a touching understanding of the need to be accepted. Although Cole makes it very clear early in the book just what being practical can mean, it is an engaging read nonetheless. Cole explores many themes--death, loss, friendship and acceptance - in a potentially award winning way. (Susan)

***The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins**

Teen Fiction, paperback, \$9.99

Drawing extensively from the history and mythology of ancient Rome, Collins has created a world that takes ours to extremes and warns us of what we could become. As punishment for a generations-old uprising, the twelve Districts must send one boy and one girl to the Capitol to participate in the annual Hunger Games. When Katniss Everdeen's younger sister is chosen from the lottery, Katniss makes use of a rarely-used rule and volunteers in her place. Like Orwell's *1984* and Lowry's *The Giver*, Collins uses a dystopian world as a lens for our own. *The Hunger Games* is quickly establishing its place amongst the classics of science fiction. (Judith)

***The Creation of Eve* by Lynn Cullen**

Fiction, paperback, \$18.50

This novel is based on the true story of Sofonisba Anguissola, the first renowned female artist of the Renaissance who in 1559 trained with Michelangelo in his Roman workshop. When a scandal involving one of his other students forces her to leave, Sofi's family accepts an invitation from King Felipe II of Spain for her to become lady-in-waiting and painting instructor to his young wife. Bound by the rules and restrictions of her position, Sofi wants only to paint, but the young Queen draws her into court intrigue. An interesting view of life in the late 1500s and the difficulties of women in the arts. (Michelle)

***Ex Libris: Confessions of a Common Reader* by Anne Fadiman**

Essays, paperback, \$15.00

A collection of short, often humorous essays on the love for and devotion to the written word. Married to a writer, Fadiman grew up in a family of writers where it was and continues to be common practice to proofread newspapers, menus, and various other written material and to challenge each other into who can find the longest and most obscure words. (Michelle)

***The Best Laid Plans* by Terry Fallis**

Fiction, paperback, \$19.99

Having already read *The Best Laid Plans* I was delighted to learn it won CBC's Canada Reads this year. The history of the publication is curious: not one publisher would touch it, thus prompting Fallis to first release it as a podcast, then self-publish, and then find it going on to win the Stephen Leacock award for humour. The story is about a burnt-out political aide who quits just before an election. However, he is forced to run a campaign where the candidate has absolutely no hope of winning. A deal is made with a crusty old Scot who will do just about anything to avoid teaching English to engineers, and the die is cast. In so many ways, the book mirrors what is happening in many of our Alberta ridings in 2011. The book is wonderfully funny. (Mike)

***Freedom* by Jonathan Franzen**

Fiction, hardcover, \$34.99 (paperback due September 2011)

Freedom is a family saga not for the faint of heart. You will not consume *Freedom* quickly. Nor will you be especially fond of the entirely unlikeable cast of characters. I loved it! Franzen is much less concerned about creating likeable characters than he is about portraying ones who are fully alive, in all their self-justifying complexity. Can you ever really truly know another person? Of all the modern day American authors, Franzen comes close to realizing this goal. He is infuriating. I loved it.

Freedom is a gut-wrenching portrait of a Midwestern family from St. Paul Minnesota. Patty and Walter Berglund find each other early, have a couple of kids and make a life together--sort of. Over time, they slowly lose track of each other. Their stories align with modern day issues including large corporations, the environment, politics, war profiteering, music and more. But what you remember most, are the characters who you grow to know, love, and hate, perhaps because they remind us so much of ourselves. (Mike)

***Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything* by Joshua Foer**

Memoir, hardcover, \$33.50

Forgot where you put your keys? Can't remember why you just went into the kitchen? Joshua Foer has the answers. As a science journalist covering the U.S. Memory Championship, Foer was captivated by the secrets of the competitors and set out to become a competitor himself.

Visual imagery is easier to remember than factual information like lists. With the help of experts, Foer learned how to transform memories into the kind his brain remembers more naturally. As a personal illustration of this point I remember the title of his book among hundreds of others because the mental imagery of moonwalking with Einstein is so absurd. Now, if I could just memorize the exact order of 1,528 digits in an hour like the current memory champion. Great for fans of Malcolm Gladwell. (Mike)

***Vienna Waltz* by Teresa Grant**

Mystery, paperback, \$17.95

The Congress of Vienna, 1814: after twenty years of war with Napoleon, Europe is finally at peace, and everyone wants some of the spoils as France's borders are pushed back to where they were in 1794. Secret alliances, both personal and political, are commonplace. When the glamorous Princess Tatiana Kirsanova is found murdered in her rooms, her secrets could plunge the continent back into war. Part family drama, part spy novel, part political thriller, *Vienna Waltz* features Grant's signature ability to weave invented characters and historical figures together seamlessly. (Judith)

***The Turtle Catcher* by Nicole Helget**

Fiction, paperback, \$17.50

Set in the growing town of New Germany, Minnesota, Helget's appealing first novel is a work of historical fiction centered around a strange, secretive, independent young woman named Leisi. Leisi is different in a way she can never, ever talk about. Before meeting Leisi we are horrified by what happens to her would-be suitor, Lester, who is brain damaged from his father's beatings. It is a singular most troubling event surrounding Lester that catapults you into the story.

As the novel skips back and forth through time, Helget deftly illustrates how tensions in New Germany around World War I serve as a very real back-drop to the escalating tension in Leisi's family. As for the town itself, I had no idea such a place existed in the United States and thoroughly enjoyed the knowledge acquired while being immersed in a truly captivating story. (Mike)

***Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* by Laura Hillenbrand**

History, hardcover, \$31.00

This is the true story of Louis Zamperini. Louis survived 47 days, stranded in a life raft in the ocean after his plane crashed, and this was only the beginning of his real ordeal. Louis grew up in a loving Italian family in Torrance, California. As a youth he was a rebellious, undisciplined teenager who became an Olympic runner...and then came WWII. Hillenbrand's research uses old letters, newspaper headlines, broadcasts and of course hours and hours of interviews with the larger than life Louis, his family and Louis's work as a bombardier. You actually feel squeezed reading the description of what it was like in those planes. You understand who these men really were, the jokes they told, the pranks they played, their fears, their courage--Hillenbrand's details are unrelenting. This is a book everyone in the family will want to read. Great for Father's Day. (Jeanie)

***The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane* by Katherine Howe**

Fiction, paperback, \$19.99

In essence, *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane* is a novel about the Salem witch trials. But it is so much more. Katherine Howe holds degrees in art history and philosophy from Columbia, and is completing her PhD in American and New England Studies in Boston. She is more than qualified to write a captivating thriller that moves from a mysterious old mansion in modern day Cambridge back to the infamous Salem witch hysteria in the late 1600's.

While going through her grandmother's house, Connie, a graduate student at Harvard, finds an old bible and a key that contains a scroll with the name Deliverance Dane. Flashback to Salem in the 1600's and we learn that Deliverance is connected to a group of women thought to be witches. She kept a diary containing information that may solve 'the meaning of witchcraft'. It is hard to categorize this novel. I'm going to call it a work of historical fiction that is both a mystery and a thriller with some fantasy and magic thrown in--just to keep you on your toes! (Mike)

***Russian Winter* by Daphne Kalotay**

Fiction, paperback, \$21.99

In the 1950s Nina Revskaya defected from the Bolshoi Ballet while dancing in Berlin. Today she lives in Boston and is auctioning her jewellery collection in aid of the Boston Ballet. As each item is appraised and catalogued a small piece of Nina's story is revealed. A story of love, betrayal, misunderstanding and finally, peace. (Michelle)

***The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate* by Jacqueline Kelly**

Mid-Grade fiction, paperback, \$8.99

The summer of 1899 is one of the hottest in rural Texas. It is also the summer that eleven-year-old Calpurnia Tate, the only girl in a family of seven children, discovers her grandfather. Grandfather had always lived with Callie, her parents and six brothers, but he seemed a distant, awe-inspiring presence to be feared. That summer, Callie and her grandfather become aware of each other when she asks him where the huge yellow grasshoppers that had appeared that summer came from. Grandfather inspires her to question what she sees when he merely answers that he is sure she will figure it out on her own. Before long, Callie and her grandfather bond over their mutual love of the natural world. Grandfather teaches her about science and evolution, encouraging her in their tramps through fields and swamps, much to the despair of her mother. Callie must come to terms with what she is and what the world of the 20th century expects her to be. (Cynthia)

***The Swan Thieves* by Elizabeth Kostova**

Fiction, paperback, \$17.99

Well-known artist Robert Oliver attacks a painting at the National Gallery in Washington DC and is committed to an institution. Andrew Marlowe is the quiet, unassuming psychiatrist who tries to solve the puzzle that is Oliver. Covering two time periods and countries, Impressionistic France and modern day United States, this is a story of obsession and artistic honesty. (Michelle)

***The Matter of Sylvie* by Lee Kvern**

Fiction, paperback, \$19.95

Jacqueline Burrows is the mother of three children, including her sweet, difficult daughter, Sylvie. It is a normal Wednesday in July 1961 when something happens that will dramatically alter everything about Jacqueline's family. The mother's impulses on that Wednesday combined with her absent husband and her other young children, culminate in an event that echoes into the next two decades. Calgarian Lee Kvern uses three family members to tell the story. A familial triptych: three Wednesdays, three decades, three narrators who explore the meaning of family. *The Matter of Sylvie* is a first novel that is a real gem and should not be overlooked. (Mike)

***Our Kind of Traitor* by John Le Carré**

Fiction, hardcover, \$32.00 (paperback due May 2011)

This is the tale of two innocents—Oxford don Perry Makepiece and barrister Gail Perkins—who get caught up in an intrigue involving the Russian mafia and British intelligence. Dima, a mob money-lauderer, pushes Perry to help him get sanctuary in the U.K., while the spies try to pull the young couple into the case. Despite the dangers, Perry is attracted to an adventure as amateur spy.

Our Kind of Traitor has the hallmarks of a Le Carré novel as he explores the issue of the links between the Russian underworld and British financiers, politicians, and government officials in a novel that is well-written, textured, strong on plot, and featuring interesting and complex characters. (Anne)

***Shine* by Lauren Myracle**

Teen fiction, hardcover \$19.99

Lauren Myracle grabbed my attention right away by opening with a newspaper story out of a rural North Carolina town called Black Creek. Patrick, amiable clerk at the local gas station and village oddity for being openly gay, is found severely beaten and tied to a gas pump with a homophobic slur scrawled on his chest in blood. The narrator, Cat, used to count Patrick as her best friend, but hasn't spoken to him in several years. Cat thinks she knows who is responsible for hurting Patrick, but also knows that Black Creek is a place of secrets; secrets that people want kept secret. And Cat herself has a secret that has caused her to

stop speaking to nearly everyone. But for Patrick's sake, she is willing to speak despite the repeated advice to stay silent. (Cynthia)

***Karma* by Cathy Ostlere**

Teen fiction, hardcover, \$22.00

Are you in a reading rut? Do you need to step out of your comfort zone? Treat yourself to a beautifully written book of free verse. Don't panic! The story is so captivating and the images so artistically crafted that you will not even realize it is verse. I read it once quickly because I had to find out what happened but I had to read it again knowing that I had not fully appreciated the beauty in the images and the language. I think this is a blockbuster of a little story. The writing is sparse and tight and lyrical, every single word is important, the images and emotions are riveting. It's a story of a young girl thrown into a city of chaos on the night of Indira Gandhi's assassination. Maya is half Hindu, half Sikh. You will be transported, the events, are told in a powerful unforgettable way. You will not be disappointed. (Jeanie)

***The Year of the Hare* by Arto Paasilinna**

Fiction, paperback, \$17.50

A journalist and his photographer are driving along a Finnish country lane when their car hits a young hare hopping down the middle of the road. This starts the journalist on a life-altering path. Already dissatisfied with his life, work and marriage, he nurses the hare to health and together they travel the length and breadth of Finland. Humorous and often dark, *Year of the Hare* explores the Finnish reality of 1970s. (Michelle)

***State of Wonder* by Ann Patchett**

Fiction, paperback, \$19.99

Dr. Marina Singh is sent to the Amazon jungle by her employer, Vogel Pharmaceutical, to ascertain the details of the death of one of her colleagues, and to report on the progress of a scientist funded by Vogel who is working on a fertility drug. Great characters, wonderful subplots ; a totally enthralling book. (Sandy)

***Wench* by Dolen Perkins-Valdez**

Fiction, paperback, \$19.99

Set in a country retreat in Ohio, a place where Southern plantation owners take their slave mistresses for "vacation", this is the story of four of those mistresses and the friendship formed over the years. We hear the full story of one of these women, and get a picture of the dehumanizing aspects of slavery while also seeing the bonds that exist between slaveholder and enslaved. (Sandy)

***Sing You Home* by Jodi Picoult**

Fiction, hardcover, \$32.00

Max, an self employed landscaper and alcoholic, and Zoe, a music therapist, are struggling to have children. After a Zoe delivers a premature baby Max decides to divorce her because he can't deal with the pressure associated with conceiving a child. Zoe winds up in the arms of Vanessa. Max spirals downward and winds up in the arms of Christ. Max, with the backing of the church, and Zoe wind up in court battling over a very precious gift. The story is told from the perspective of the three protagonists which makes it revealing and convincing. (Lyle)

***The Midwife of Venice* by Roberta Rich**

Fiction, paperback, \$22.95

This is a lighter book, a good read, especially if you love historical Venice. Hannah is a midwife living in the Jewish ghetto. Her husband is a prisoner and slave on the island of Malta. It is illegal and there would be severe consequences to the whole ghetto if Hannah were to provide medical assistance to anyone in the Christian community. This is a window into the very harsh life and times of 16th century Venetian society. (Jeanie)

***So Much For That* by Lionel Shriver**

Fiction, paperback, \$17.99

Shep is the quintessential Mr. Nice Guy, with a dream of making a million dollars and retiring to a place where he and his wife can live comfortably for the rest of their lives. On the day that he finally quits his job, buys the plane tickets and is ready to go, his wife tells him that she needs the health benefits from his job because she has cancer. As we see Shep's world crumbling around him, and his bank balance slowly eroding, we also see the strength of love and friendship. This book is both a scathing indictment of U.S. health insurance and a testament dying dreams. (Sandy)

***Major Pettigrew's Last Stand* by Helen Simonson**

Fiction, paperback, \$22.00

Fans of Miss Marple will be drawn to the reality of a modern English village. Christie's characters of the retired military soldier and the shopkeeper reflect England's class system. Major Pettigrew has long known of Mrs. Ali the shopkeeper, but they only really meet the day Major Pettigrew learns of his brother's death. The common experience of grief allows MP and Mrs Ali to crash through the barriers of class, race, and gender. Their growing awareness of each other leads to many conflicts with a society and families that disapprove. The differences between pragmatism and moral stances make this an engaging look at our own society. It is a beautifully written love story that engages on many levels. (Susan)

***The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot**

History, paperback, \$18.00

Henrietta Lacks was 31 when she died in agonizing pain from cervical cancer, leaving behind her five children, her husband, and her cells, growing in test tubes in the hospital lab. HeLa cells were incredibly robust, the first human cells scientists were able to keep alive. Since 1951, these cells have been essential for biological research.

Her family was completely in the dark. Neither Henrietta nor her husband had been informed that her cells were taken for research, much less asked for their consent. Her family had little benefit from the medical advances her cells made possible, as they could not afford to see a doctor.

In this compelling work, Rebecca Skloot interweaves the story of Henrietta and her family with the story of the scientific advances achieved with HeLa cells. The author examines the science in the context of ethics and racism. This is non-fiction that reads like a novel. Highly recommended.

***The Lotus Eaters* by Tatjana Soli**

Fiction, paperback, \$16.99

Having lived through that time as a young man, it is not surprising how Soli's vivid, beautiful depiction of war-torn Viet Nam drew me in: the dangers of the field where death can be a single step away, the jungle, the emptiness of the Saigon streets in the final days of the American evacuation. In short, the writing is exceptional, the imagery masterful. While it is a work of fiction, the story comes from real people and events. Helen Adams is the fictional character based on the first female photographer to get into Viet Nam. At its core, the story is about how she begins as a naïve and unskilled photographer who loses her innocence as she learns her craft. We can only wonder how damaged or healed she has become after two love affairs and so many years in turbulent Viet Nam. (Mike)

***A Man in Uniform* by Kate Taylor**

Mystery, hardcover, \$32.95 (paperback due June 2011)

1897 Paris, Dreyfus affair. Dreyfus is on Devil's Island after being convicted of spying for the Germans. An unassuming estates lawyer, François Dubon, is approached by Mme Duhamel to find evidence to prove that Dreyfus is innocent. This is the start of a page-turning cloak and dagger adventure. The book illustrates the anti-Semitism of the time and the lengths to which the government and military will go to look good in the eyes of the public, not daring to admit they have the wrong person. (Michelle)

***Clara and Mr. Tiffany* by Susan Vreeland**

Fiction, hardcover, \$30.00

Louis Comfort Tiffany's name is synonymous with stained glass windows and lampshades. What was unknown until recently is that many of those signature windows and lampshades came from an all-woman studio that assembled them. The original concept and designs of the lampshades were the creative genius of Clara Driscoll, the manager of the women's studio. Susan Vreeland follows Clara through the sixteen years she worked for Tiffany. The novel immerses the reader in New York City at the turn of the last century with the limitations on women, the difficulties of new immigrants, and the demands of trade un-

ions. The beauty of Art is set against the practicality of Commerce. The process of making the windows and lampshades comes to life in this book, and the author has photos of many of these creations on her website. I was fortunate on a recent visit to the Metropolitan Museum in New York to see many of the windows and lampshades described, of which only one was credited to one of the women in the studio. (Cynthia)

***Cool Water* by Dianne Warren**

Fiction, paperback, \$19.99

One day in a small town on the Saskatchewan prairie, and the way in which one small act affects the lives of its people. The lonely rancher, the banker whose wife and pregnant daughter are planning the wedding of the century, the young couple who have lost almost everything except their kids and each other, the older couple who have a lack of communication, all come to vivid life in the pages of this book.

(Sandy)

***Before I Go to Sleep* by S. J. Watson**

Fiction, paperback, \$21.99 (forthcoming book, due June 2011)

“Memories define us. So what if you lost yours every time you went to sleep? Your name, your identity, your past, even the people you love. All forgotten overnight. And the one person you think you can trust is only telling you half the story. Welcome to Christine’s life.” Quote from back cover, advance reading copy, 2011.)

One of the most thought provoking books I’ve read in a long time. Watson’s ability to keep her story moving when Christine’s every day is a repetition of the previous one is masterful. We gradually suspect that all is not well, even given the parameters of Christine’s disability. Watson builds suspense to an overwhelming tension, yet the story is a grave tribute to all who live with chronic memory problems. (Susan)

***The Sultan's Seal* by Jenny White**

Fiction, paperback, \$17.50

The Ottoman Empire at the end of the 19th Century. New secular courts have been created and Kamil Pasha is one of the young magistrates in charge of a sector of Istanbul. When an English governess is murdered, he sets out to find the murderer. Entwined with the main story is a secondary story of a young, well-educated Muslim woman from a devout but progressive family. Jenny White is a social anthropologist who specializes in Turkey and brings her knowledge of the country to her rich descriptions of the people