

# Fiction News

The Ridgefield Library's Fiction Newsletter



September 2011

## AUTHORS IN THE SPOTLIGHT



### John Burnham Schwartz

John Burnham Schwartz's most recent novel, *Northwest Corner*, picks up on the lives of some of the characters of his earlier work *Reservation Road*. Publishers Weekly praised Schwartz as "exceptional at describing the

chemistry of desire, creating emotional tension, and making his characters feel more like flesh and blood than fictional constructs. Imaginative and taut, Schwartz's writing is seamless and infinitely inspired."



### Tom Perrotta

Tom Perrotta's comic and realistic fiction frequently explores the psychological depths surging under the surface of an ordinary suburb; he has been praised both for his empathy and skill at portraying deep emotion and for his sidesplitting (and sometimes subversive) humor. He creates fully

fledged characters you can recognize yourself in, even when they do things you can't approve of, and situations that are timely and complex.

Ridgefield Library and Books on the Common present:

### An Author Talk with John Burnham Schwartz

Wednesday, October 5th

7:30 PM

Dayton Program Room

Please register at [www.ridgefieldlibrary.org](http://www.ridgefieldlibrary.org)

Books will be available for sale and signing.

Ridgefield Library and Books on the Common present:

### An Author Talk with Tom Perrotta

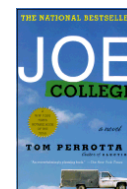
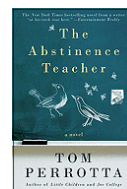
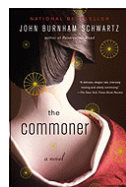
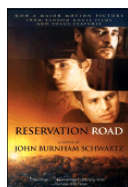
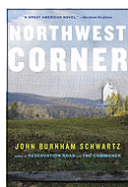
Wednesday, October 19th

7:30 PM

Dayton Program Room

Please register at [www.ridgefieldlibrary.org](http://www.ridgefieldlibrary.org)

Books will be available for sale and signing.



### *Northwest Corner* (2011)

In this sequel, 12 years have passed since the fatal hit-and-run at the center of Schwartz's *Reservation Road*, and the focus turns from the father of the victim to the perpetrator of that crime and his long-estranged, now-grown son.

### *The Commoner* (2008)

In 1959, Haruko marries the Crown Prince of Japan, becoming the first commoner to enter the mysterious and reclusive world of Japanese royalty.

### *Claire Marvel* (2002)

Over the course of fifteen years, beginning in graduate school, Claire Marvel has a profound effect on Julian Rose.

### *Reservation Road* (1998)

A hit-and-run accident that claims the life of ten-year-old Josh Learner leads to a confrontation between the driver responsible for the death and Ethan Learner, Josh's father, who embarks on a deadly pursuit of the unknown man who killed his son.

### *Bicycle Days* (1989)

Alec Stern's successful new life in Japan forces him to reflect on the memories of his family and life back in the United States.

### Partial List

### *The Leftovers* (2011)

When a bizarre phenomenon causes the cataclysmic disappearances of numerous people all over the world, Kevin Garvey, the new mayor of a once-comfortable suburban community, struggles to help his neighbors heal while enduring the fanatical religious conversions of his wife and son.

### *The Abstinence Teacher* (2007)

Teaching human sexuality from a perspective that information and pleasure are top priorities, divorced Ruth Ramsey butts heads with the local soccer coach, a former addict who became an evangelical Christian after hitting rock bottom.

### *Little Children* (2004)

A group of young suburban parents, including a stay-at-home dad, a former feminist, and an over-structured mom, finds its sleepy existence shattered when a convicted child molester moves back into town and two of the parents have an affair.

### *Joe College* (2000)

Danny, a Yale student spending his summer vacation working for his father, tries to cope with a complicated love life and an incipient battle with a gang over his father's business.

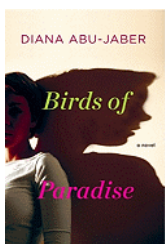
# NEW FICTION

(Annotations from BookLetters)



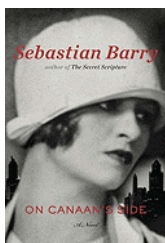
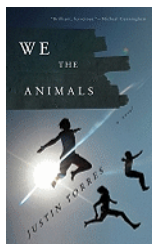
**Rules of Civility** by Miriam Towles. Towles delivers a sophisticated and entertaining debut novel about an irresistible young woman with an uncommon sense of purpose. Elegant and captivating, *Rules of Civility* turns a Jamesian eye on how spur of the moment decisions define life for decades to come.

**Only Time Will Tell** by Jeffrey Archer. From the internationally bestselling author of *Kane and Abel* and *A Prisoner of Birth* comes *Only Time Will Tell*, the first in an ambitious new series that tells the story of one family across generations, across oceans, from heartbreak to triumph.



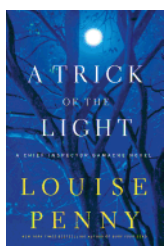
**Birds of Paradise** by Diana Abu-Jaber. A multilayered, beautifully textured novel about family and self, self-indulgence and generosity, against the vivid backdrop of contemporary Miami.

**We the Animals** by Justin Torres. In this exquisite, blistering debut novel, three brothers tear their way through childhood-- smashing tomatoes all over each other, building kites from trash, hiding out when their parents do battle, tiptoeing around the house as their mother sleeps off her graveyard shift. Paps and Ma are from Brooklyn--he's Puerto Rican, she's white--and their love is a serious, dangerous thing that makes and unmakes a family many times.



**On Canaan's Side** by Sebastian Barry. From the two-time Man Booker shortlisted author of *The Secret Scripture* comes a magnificent new novel that is the story of the twentieth century in America. Told in the first person, as a narrative of Lilly Bere's life over seventeen days, *On Canaan's Side* opens as she mourns the loss of her grandson, Bill. Lilly revisits her past, going back to the moment she was forced to flee Ireland, at the end of the First World War, and continues her tale in America, a world filled with both hope and danger.

**A Trick of Light** by Louise Penny. Lillian Dyson is dead. Chief Inspector Gamache, the head of homicide at the Surete du Quebec, is called to the tiny Quebec village and there he finds the art world gathered, and with it a world of shading and nuance, a world of shadow and light.



*For a more extensive list of new fiction, mystery, and science fiction and fantasy titles, visit our website at [www.ridgefieldlibrary.org](http://www.ridgefieldlibrary.org)*

## STAFF PICKS

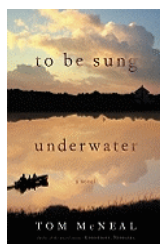
### Elise's Picks

**Joy for Beginners** by Erica Bauermeister.

While celebrating her cancer survival with her six closest friends, Kate reveals that her daughter has booked the two of them on a white water rafting trip the next summer – a terrifying prospect for Kate. When her friends urge Kate to accept the challenge, she reluctantly agrees, but on the condition that each of them also accepts a challenge, one that she will carefully chose.



The twist in this book's plot is that the adventures aren't of the reality show variety. Each of the assigned tasks is designed to bring out potential strengths or help her friends bridge their personal fears. Book groups have chosen this novel because it is a graceful, wise story with nuanced characters, but also because it makes for an interesting discussion about personal challenges.



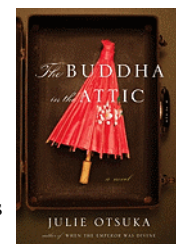
**To Be Sung Under Water** by Tom McNeal.

When the seemingly successful life she has constructed begins to unravel, 44 year-old Judith, a Hollywood film editor, starts to wonder what became of her better self and the dedicated young Nebraska carpenter she abandoned decades earlier. Summoning her courage, Judith tracks down the elusive Willy and to her surprise, he agrees to see her. Beautifully written, this bittersweet love story is both redemptive and realistic. A former Nebraska native and Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford, the author Tom McNeal pays homage in this novel to the "purity" he found in the prairie landscape and the complex, admirable people who live there.

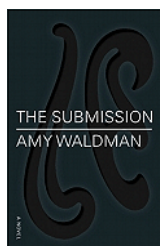
### Dorothy's Picks

**The Buddha in the Attic** by Julie Otsuka.

Written in the first person plural, *The Buddha in the Attic* follows the plight of Japanese picture brides who came to the United States in the decades before World War II. Otsuka melds their multitude of experiences as they journey to America, meet their husbands, work in menial jobs, and confront their status as outsiders. This beautifully-constructed lyrical novel is a haunting tale of the immigrant experience.



**The Submission** by Amy Waldman.



This debut novel by a former *New York Times* bureau chief revolves around the controversy surrounding a Ground Zero memorial. When the winning design turns out to be by a young architect of Muslim descent, it ignites a public outcry fueled by local politicians and the media. With a cast of characters taken from all walks of life, this thought-provoking and compelling novel addresses some of the legacies of 9/11, including how to best honor the victims and the impact of the tragedy on both the families of survivors and on the Muslim community.