

The Book Rack Newsletter

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Vol 8, #3
March 2015
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"Books are friendly things. Do not count as wasted the hours spent in selecting them."

Samuel Johnson

Reading Trivia:

What literary animals "dined on mince, and slices of quince, which they ate with a runcible spoon", and, just what is a runcible spoon?

See below for the answers

March Holidays and such:

National Nutrition Month

National Irish American Heritage Month- designated by Congress in 1995

National Craft Month

March 3 – I Want You to be Happy Day – Stop in and let us make you smile!

4 – Hug a GI Day – Nothing more needed. Just do it!

6 – Employee Appreciation Day

7 – Local Author David Dorris will be at [The Book Rack](#) in Davenport 11-1:00

14 – Learn About Butterflies Day

14 – Local Author David Dorris will be at [The Book Rack](#) in Moline 11-1:00.

15 – Ides of March

15 – Incredible Kid Day – I've got 2 of those!

17 – **St Patrick's Day** (of course)

29 – Palm Sunday – **The Book Racks** will be open

30 – I'm in Control Day – This means YOU are in control. Exercise it wisely.

Free Verse is a regular, monthly, feature by one of our wonderful Quad Cities area local authors. Each month we enjoy writing by a different talent. These articles and poems are on a variety of topics bound to be of interest to many of our readers. Please help spread the word by forwarding the newsletter to others. Give these folks as wide an audience as possible, please.

Falling in Love: An open invitation to poetry

By Nancy Ann Schaefer

Reciting poems in the moonlight,

Riding a painted boat...

Every place the wind carries me is home.

—Tang Dynasty Chinese poet Yu Xuanji, translated by Jane Hirshfield

Over the years, many friends have told me that they find poetry intimidating. Some remembered negative experiences at school. Others felt that the task of understanding poetry was too daunting and insurmountable. So they gave up trying. This is not so surprising when we recall that much of Western education is built upon analytical (left brain) reasoning, while poetry—as artistic expression—is also a right-brained activity (poetry actually uses both sides of the brain but the creative impulse is usually attributed to the right hemisphere). This tension between analytical vs. intuitive understanding is nicely summed up in the poem “Introduction to Poetry” by US poet laureate Billy Collins. He encourages readers and listeners to hold a poem “up to the light like a color slide,” or “press an ear against its hive.” At the end of the poem he laments that what many really want to do is beat it (the poem) “with a hose to find out what it really means.” He wants audiences to read poetry for pleasure rather than always trying to dissect them in attempts to figure out a deeper meaning.

I agree. Unlike a secret society where only a select few can crack the code, my invitation is open to everyone to engage with poetry—to fall in love, if you will—to let poems into our hearts and homes. When you enter poetic language, think of it as you would an abstract painting or classical music. Try to suspend the linear (left) brain chatter and concentrate on how you are feeling or reacting to the poem. Let your awareness drift or free-associate. At a poetry reading in 2008, award-winning poet Mary Oliver was asked about teaching readers to appreciate poetry. She replied: “Emphasize their response in terms of feeling. We give far too much focus to understanding in our educational systems. Don’t ask them what the poem is about. Ask them, ‘How does it make you feel?’”

Try reading poems aloud. Listen to their sounds like you would a musical composition. Don't worry about understanding, just let the sounds and images, like musical notes, wash over you. The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard concludes that poetry, "comes before thought...[it] is a phenomenology of the soul." Writer Robert McDowell asserts that "[t]hrough poetry, we gain greater self-understanding as well as insight into others in our world and into our world itself." And it's possible to develop a special relationship with a poem, a lot like falling in love.

To get started, I've included a sampling of just a few of my (many) favorites. Let's begin with a lovely haiku by Basho, a 17th century Zen Buddhist student regarded as a great master of this poetic form:

Black cloudbank broken
scatters in the night...Now see
Moon-lighted mountain!

Here's the first stanza of a poem by Emily Dickinson, one of the most important American poets:

There's a certain Slant of light,
Winter Afternoons –
That oppresses, like the Heft
Of Cathedral Tunes –

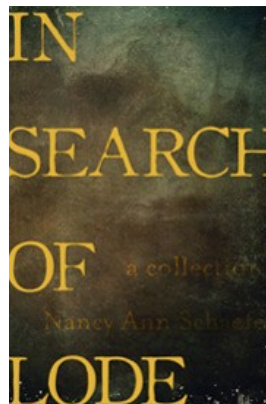
How about the last stanza of "The summer of mourning doves," by our own local poet, novelist and publisher, Dr. Robin Throne:

Your bluegray plume arrived this morning
left on a rusted paver's stone
when an eagle pair called out your mission
and choreographed their wide arc
smattered by a pelican V
invading the common ground
when you sent that clear sound of July
rejoined with the unburied
encased somewhere above it all.

So the question is: How can you bring poetry into your life? It's surprising the diversity of places where we can find it: From the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament to Shakespeare's plays to contemporary song lyrics on the radio. From city subways in New York and London to suburban buses in Chicago. Poetry (as well as books about poetry) can be found in public libraries, in bookstores (such as [The Book Rack](#)) or on the Internet. Anthologies are wonderful resources as well because they are collections of poems written by a number of different people offering different perspectives and voices. Attending live poetry readings is also a fun way to meet poets and hear their work.

In the Quad Cities, check out the events planned for National Poetry Month (a celebration held annually in April around the country in cities and towns great and small). The Midwest Writing Center (www.midwestwritingcenter.org) is a good place to find out about local activities; the Executive Director, Ryan Collins, is himself a well-respected poet and educator. Why not join thousands of enthusiasts nationally for Poem in Your Pocket Day by carrying a favorite poem in your pocket on April 30th. In the meantime, my sincere hope is that you'll be falling in love with poetry soon (if you haven't already). Happy reading!

Nancy Ann Schaefer is a retired university professor from WIU-QC. A Pushcart Prize nominee, her poems have appeared in numerous anthologies, journals, and Web sites; a few have won awards. *In Search of Lode*, her first chapbook, was published by 918studio and is available at [The Book Rack](#). Nancy lives with her husband, dog and three cats and is now revising her next poetry collection. In her spare time she volunteers for animal rescue, driving dogs and cats from kill facilities to no-kill shelters. Thanks for taking a look.



Reading Trivia Answer:

The Owl and the Pussy-cat did the dining in the poem of the same name by Edward Lear. A runcible spoon is a three-

pronged fork that's curved like a spoon and has a cutting edge.

Featured Local Author:

Local Author **David Dorris** will be at [The Book Rack](#) in Davenport March 7 and in Moline March 14, 11-1:00. David is the author of *Life Is Too Short: Life Is What We Make It*.

"All of us go through life once. Life is not a rehearsal. Life is a series of choices that lead us to our destiny. We make choices about all our actions in life, such as how we treat others, how we communicate to others and how we help or hurt others. We choose the kind of jobs that we want to do, where we want to live, and the kind of families that we want to have.

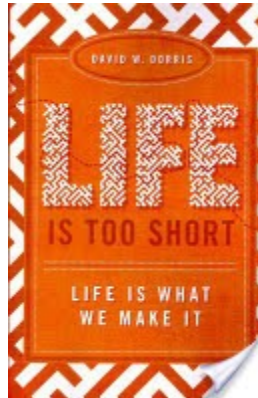
"Life can be deceiving and we're not always sure what to believe about the kind of world that we think this is. A lot of things don't make any sense. We don't always know what we want out of life or who we really are. Few, if any of us, ever reach our full potential intellect.

"Life may not be as easy as we think. It's a tough world and life isn't that easy for all of us. Life is hard work, and we should be prepared for what life deals out. The more that we educate ourselves and understand the mysteries about life on Earth, the easier our lives can be. All of us are looking for the brass ring, and we may wish to know many things to get the best out of our lives.

"To be successful and happy, we have to make the right choices. Every day and every minute we have choices to make, even if they're not to make any choices and to do nothing. Most of our choices care be very difficult. Our choices can affect our friends, our families, our co-workers, and anybody else that comes into our lives. If we make the wrong choices, our lives become harder to live. Our lives can be full of problems. We know that our futures are going to be full of choices, and at this very moment we are going to start making the right ones." (From the book cover)

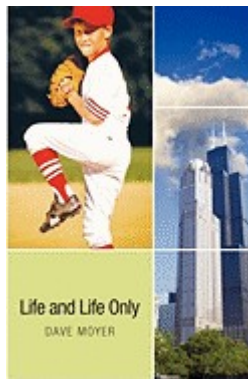
*"Fear not, for in *Life Is Too Short: Life Is What We Make It*, author David Dorris shows you how to approach life's problems and that making the right choices is easier than you think. Life is like a baseball game where the pitcher is constantly throwing you curveballs. As this is the case, do you want to simply be a spectator, or do you want to get in the game and face life head-on? Although it may sound simple sometimes, life is not an easy game to play. There are many challenges to overcome and many choices you have to make. None of you have a choice as to how you come into the world; however, you do have a choice as to the kind of life you live. Follow David in *Life Is Too Short: Life Is What We Make It*, and find out for yourself how you too can knock life's curve balls out of the park. 'For everyone on life's journey, Mr. Dorris's *Life Is Too Short* provides a well-written, easy-to-read guide on how to live, learn, grow, and follow one's dreams. A must-read for everyone who wants to live life to the fullest.' - William*

E. Gluba, Mayor of Davenport, Iowa” as quoted in The Quad City Times, November 21, 2014.

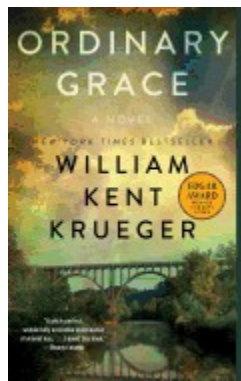


Book Reviews:

Our first review is from local author Dave Moyer, who is the author of the novel “Life and Life Only” and several published short stories and essays. He is a regular reviewer for Joseph's Reviews <http://josephsreviews.wordpress.com/> and previously contributed reviews to The New York Journal of Books. Dave's book is, of course, available from the Local Author shelves at both [Book Racks](#). Please give it a serious consideration when you are next in the stores.



William Kent Krueger’s *Ordinary Grace* far from Ordinary



William Kent Krueger's author bio on the back inside flap of his hard cover edition of *Ordinary Grace* states that he "is the author of the award-winning Cork O'Connor mystery series, which includes New York Times bestsellers *Northwest Angle* and *Trickster's Point*." I hate to disappoint any prospective readers, but if you are expecting a run-of-the-mill mystery novel to satiate your beach-reading appetite, you will be disappointed. This novel is a truly great work that is not a genre/niche publish-for-sale production. It is a damn fine story supported by excellent writing, PERIOD!

I am going to come out of the closet early on this one. I loved it. I ripped through it.

Mr. Krueger creates characters that the reader has no choice but to love, relate to, and care about, and that is what is missing from most mystery/crime novels that claim to be more than words on paper, but are actually some cleverly devised plot with names attached to the characters because somebody has to do the killing and saving thereof.

Ordinary Grace tells the story of the Drum family, which resides in the rural Minnesota town of New Bremen, and, due to the father's status as the Methodist town pastor, becomes embroiled in a summer of tragedy which eventually hits all too close to home.

The story is told through the eyes of Frank Drum, the middle child and oldest son, who struggles throughout with issues of conscience that no child should have to endure. The book that comes to mind is *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Yes, I know that sounds like hyperbole, but this book is excellent, and the ability to stay in voice through the eyes of this young teen with the complex subject matter that is made accessible via great writing deserves accolades.

The title comes from a line on page 270 of this perfectly paced, 307-page novel that clocks in at just the right time.

So, how can an author take a stutterer, harelip, mute, marred-sightless man, too-good-to-be-true minister, and three deaths and turn it into a believable slice of down-home Americana? Well, for starters, they have to be damn good. This is a no-holds-barred great book.

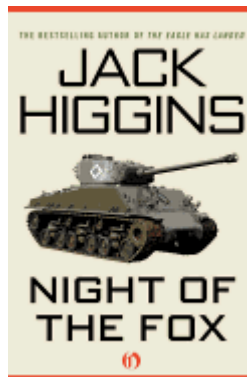
Highly Recommended by Dave Moyer

This review originally appeared on the Joseph's Reviews site:

<http://josephsreviews.wordpress.com/>

The rest of the reviews are mine! ;-)

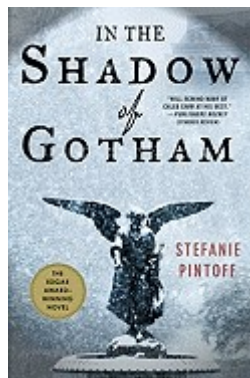
Jack Higgins – Night of the Fox (1986)



On a secret sea maneuver just before D-Day, American Colonel Hugh Kelso goes down in the English Channel. Wounded and adrift for days, he washes ashore on the German-occupied channel island of Jersey. The news spreads panic through the Allied high command: Kelso knows the time and place of the invasion. He must be rescued -- or silenced. Henry Martineau , a British professor turned Nazi impersonator, and Sarah Drayton, a young Jersey girl posing as his mistress, set off to find Kelso in the fiercely guarded island fortress. The pair join a deadly game of wits that they must win....or perish in the darkness of the "Night of the Fox". Unexpectedly, Field Marshall Rommel lands soon after them on a surprise inspection visit, seemingly complicating the rescue of Kelso.

Higgins has woven a wonderful period suspense novel, full of twists and turns. As you would expect with Higgins (if you've read him), it's very well done. I give it an A- and a strong recommendation.

Stefanie Pintoff – In the Shadow of Gotham (2009)

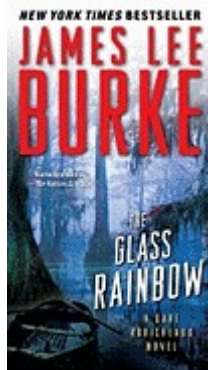


Detective Simon Ziele lost his fiance' in the General Slocum ferry disaster – a thousand

perished on that summer day in 1904 when an on-board fire burned the boat down in the waters of the East River. Still reeling from the tragedy, Ziele transferred to a police department north of New York, to escape the city and all the memories in conjured. But only a few months into his new life in a quiet country town, he's faced with the most shocking homicide of his career to date: Young Sarah Wingate has been brutally murdered in her own bedroom in the middle of an otherwise calm and quiet winter afternoon. After just one day of investigation, Simon's contacted by Columbia University's noted criminologist Alister Sinclair, who offers a startling claim about one of his research subjects, Michael Fromley – that the facts of the murder bear an uncanny resemblance to Fromley's deranged mutterings. But what would have led Fromley, with his history of violent behavior and brutal fantasies, to seek out Sarah, a notable mathematics student and a proper young lady who has little in common with his previous targets? Is Fromley really a murderer, or is someone mimicking him? This is what Simon Ziele must find out, with the help of the brilliant though self-interested Alister Sinclair – before the killer strikes again.

I thoroughly enjoyed *In the Shadow of Gotham*. If you like period mysteries, ala Anne Perry, or just enjoy a change of pace you'll be hard pressed to make a choice better than this.

James Lee Burke – *The Glass Rainbow*, A Dave Robicheaux Novel (2011)

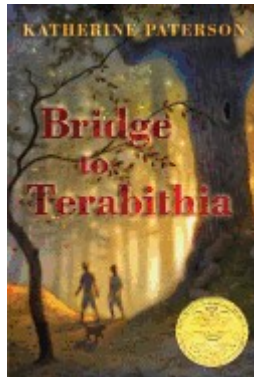


Detective Dave Robicheaux is back in New Iberia, Louisiana, and embroiled in the most harrowing and dangerous case of his career. Seven young women in neighboring Jefferson Davis Parish have been brutally murdered. While the crimes have all the telltale signs of a serial killer, the death of Brenadette Latiolais, a high school honor student, does not fit with the hapless and marginalized victims psychopaths usually prey upon. Robicheaux and his best friend Clete Purcel confront Herman Stanga, a notorious pimp and crack dealer whom both men despise. When Stanga turns up dead shortly after a fierce beating by Purcel, in front of numerous witnesses, the case takes a nasty turn, and Clete's career and life are hanging by threads over the abyss. Adding to Robicheaux's troubles in the matter of his daughter, Alafair, on leave from Standard Law to put the finishing touches on her novel. Her literary pursuit has led her into the arms of Kermit Abelard, celebrated novelist and scion of a once prominent Louisiana family whose fortunes are slowly sinking into the corruption of Louisiana's

subculture. Abelard's association with bestselling ex-conflict author Robert Weingart, a man who uses and discards people like Kleenex, causes Robicheaux to fear that Alafar might be destroyed by the man she loves. As his daughter seems to drift away from him, he wonders if he has become a victim of his own paranoia. But as usual, Robicheaux's instincts are proven correct and he finds himself dealing with a level of evil that is greater than any enemy he has confronted in the past.

Another very good mystery by Burke. I'd caution that the descriptions of the assaults on the victims is gruesome! I give it a B+ and recommend this title and any James Lee title.

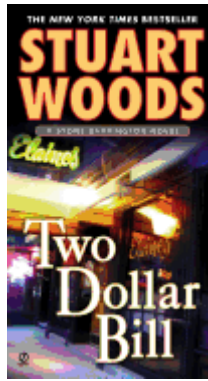
Katherine Paterson – Bridge to Terabithia (1977)



Jess Aaron's greatest ambition is to be the fastest runner in his grade. He's been practicing all summer and can't wait to see his classmate's faces when he beats them all. But on the first day of school, a new girl boldly crosses over to the boys' side and outruns everyone. That's not a very promising beginning for a friendship, but Jess and Leslie Burke become inseparable. Together, they create Terabithia, a magical kingdom in the woods where the two of them reign as king and queen, and their imagination set the only limits. Then one morning a terrible tragedy occurs. Only when Jess is able to come to grips with this tragedy does he finally understand the strength and courage Leslie has given him.

This is a children's book that is truly a wonderful book for any age. You can probably read it in an evening, or two, but will remember it forever. Read it with your children or grandchildren for a memorable bond. Just make sure you have tissues close by. I give it an A and highly recommend this Newbery Award winner.

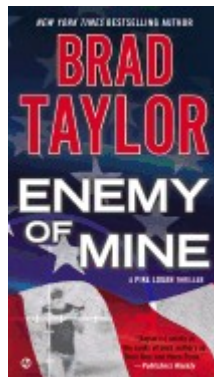
Stuart Woods - Two Dollar Bill (2005)



Stone Barrington, the suave Manhattan cop turned lawyer, is back on his home turf, facing down a brilliant southern flimflam man. The fun – and action – begin with what Stone believes will be a quiet dinner with his ex-partner, Dino, when they are interrupted by Billy Bob, a filthy-rich, smooth-talking Texan, who strolls in with the head of Stone's law firm and, unwrapping his wad of rare two-dollar bills, announces he's in town t"to make a lot of money" and in need of an attorney – namely Stone – to handle his affairs. No sooner have they sealed the deal with a handshake than the roller-coaster ride begins. Soon Stone is caught between a beautiful federal prosecutor and a love from the past, a con man with more aliases than hairs on his head, and a murder investigation that could ruin them all.

Woods' Stone Barrington series is semi-serious, but doesn't take itself quite as seriously as most. I find them easy reading/listening and give "Two-Dollar Bill" a B. Not read Woods? If you like Michael Connelly, Robert Parker and Lawrence Sanders, give Woods a shot. You'll like him!

Brad Taylor – Enemy of Mine (2013)

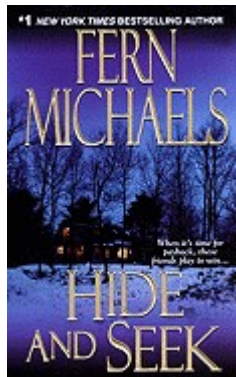


A tentative peace between Israel and Palestine has been brokered by the US. But the Taskforce – a clandestine team operating outside the US law to protect the country from terrorism – hears of an assassination attempt on the American envoy sent to solidify the treaty. The Taskforce must devote every resource to saving his life – and preventing another bloody outbreak of violence. Taskforce operator Pike Logan and his partner, Jennifer Cahill, must hunt

down the assassin in the Middle East, following a trail that becomes more perilous at every turn. And they must deal with terrorist organizations, independent killers, and shaky allies to uncover the biggest threat of all: an American citizen hiding a secret that may just destroy everything, including the Taskforce.

Lots of action, a complex plot, likable protagonists and despicable bad guys. It even borders on being slightly plausible. Not as good as some (Silva, LeCarre,) but better than many and I give it a B+. If you like Ben Coes, Larry Bond and Brad Thor you'll probably like Brad Taylor.

Fern Michaels – Hide and Seek (2007)



Together, the seven fearless friends known as the Sisterhood have served sweet justice to villains who thought they were above the law. But payback has its price, and the Sisterhood's last assignment almost landed them in jail. Now the women are fugitives with a bounty on their heads, but they're not planning on hiding out for long- not when good friends need the kind of help only they can give. Mitch Riley, the ruthless assistant director of the FBI, intends to frame Cornelia "Nellie" Easter, the judge who helped the Sisterhood evade prison, and their lawyer, Lizzie Fox, in order to save his own career. He's created a special task force to hunt the Sisters down. Mitch has the entire FBI behind him, but he's about to discover that he's no match for the seven formidable women, with an unbreakable bond and a wickedly cunning plan to bring the fight to his door.

With as many of Fern Michaels' books as we've sold over the past few years you'd think I'd have read at least one of her books! Alas, this is the first, but not likely the last. It's cleverly constructed plot and diverse collection of characters in the Sisterhood made it a quick, fun read. A little light for my regular rotation, but still recommended with a B. If you like Nora Roberts, Karen Robards, or Eve Rabi, you'll probably like Fern Michaels.

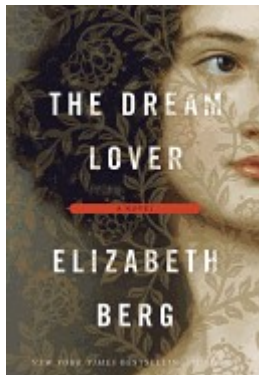
Upcoming New Releases:

Check out the prices following the title of the book. The first price is the publisher's price. The second price is the [Book Rack](#) price, when picked up at one of the stores. There is no shipping charge when you pick up your

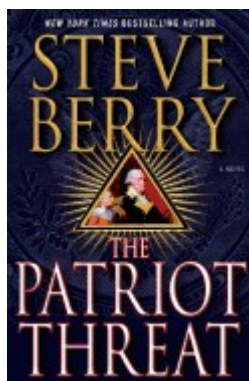
order. Order now by calling one of the stores or stopping in. We do ask for prepayment on all special orders.

Hardcover:

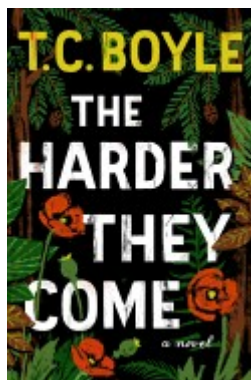
Elizabeth Berg – The Dream Lover – 28.00/.22.40



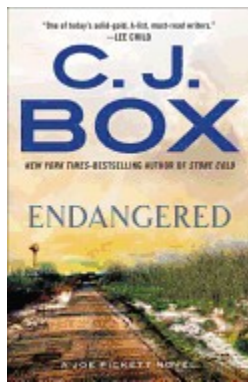
Steve Berry – The Patriot Threat – 27.99/22.40



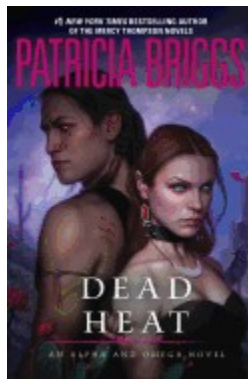
TC Boyle – The Harder They Come – 27.99/22.40



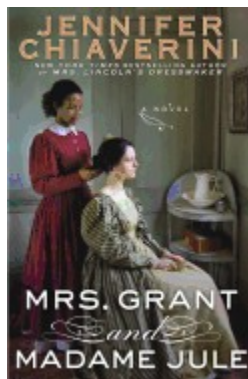
CJ Box – Endangered – 26.95/21.60



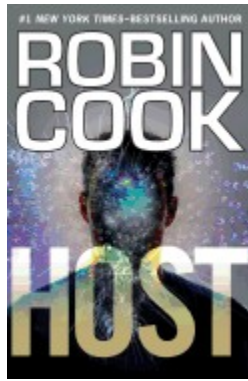
Patricia Briggs – Dead Heat – 26.95/21.60



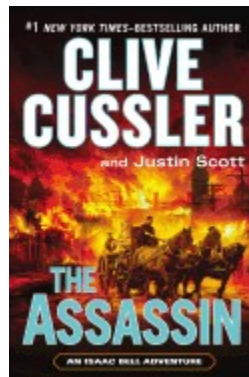
Jennifer Chiaverini – Mrs. Grant and Madame Jule – 26.95/21.60



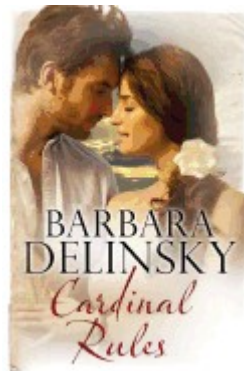
Robin Cook – Host – 26.95/21.60



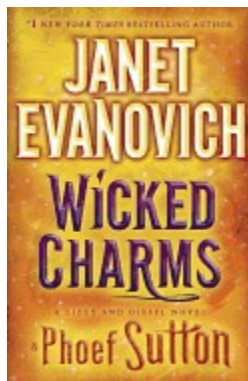
Clive Cussler – The Assassin – 28.95/23.20



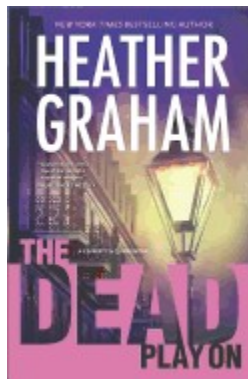
Barbara Delinsky – Cardinal Rules – 28.95/23.20



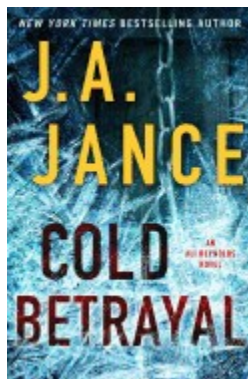
Janet Evanovich – Wicked Charms – 28.00/22.40



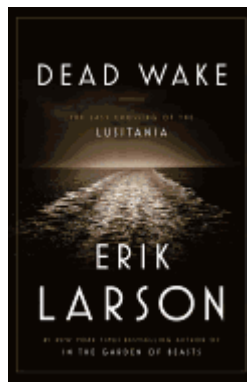
Heather Graham – The Dead Played On – 24.95/20.00



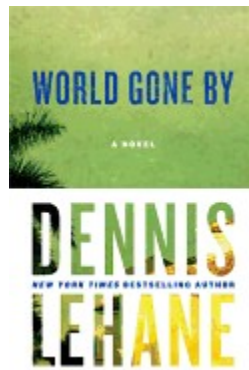
JA Jance – Cold Betrayal – 25.99/20.80



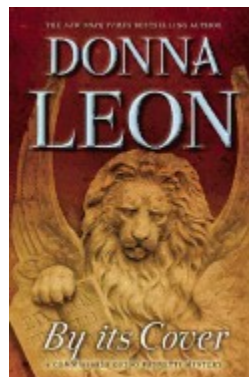
Erik Larson – Dead Wake, The Last Crossing of the Lusitania – 28.00/22.40



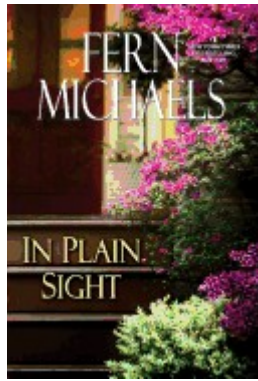
Dennis Lehane – World Gone By – 27.99/22.49



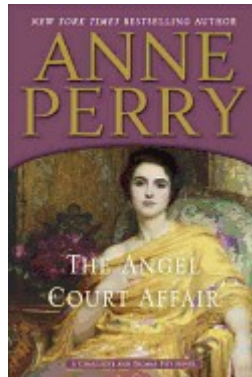
Donna Leon – By It's Cover – 15.00/12.00



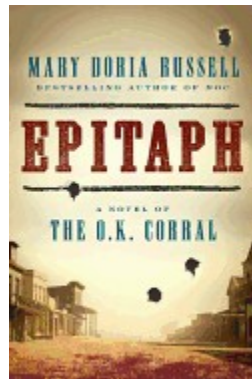
Fern Michaels – In Plain Sight – 27.95/22.40



Anne Perry – The Angel Court Affair – 27.00/21.60



Mary Doria Russell – Epitaph – 27.99/22.49



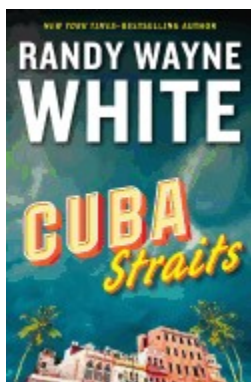
RA Salvatore – Vengeance of the Iron Dwarf – 27.95/22.40



Olen Steinhauer – All the Old Knives – 23.99/19.20

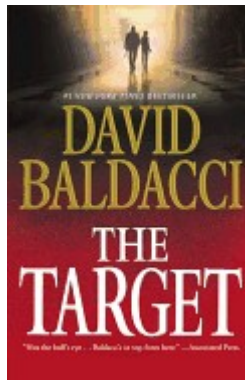


Randy Wayne White – Cuba Straits – 26.95/21.60

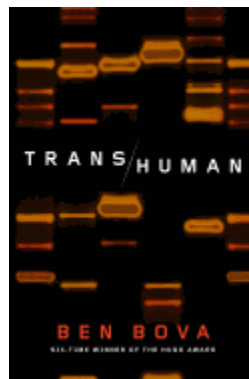


Paperback:

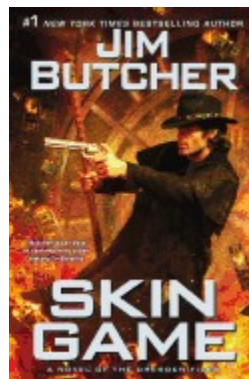
David Baldacci – The Target – 10.00/8.00



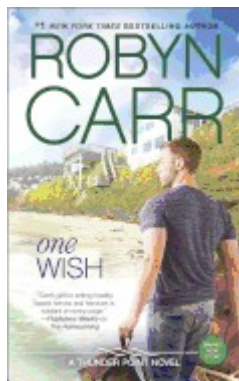
Ben Bova – Transhuman – 8.99/7.20



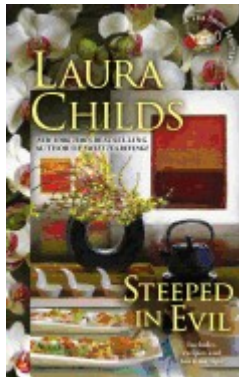
Jim Butcher – Skin Game – 9.99/8.00



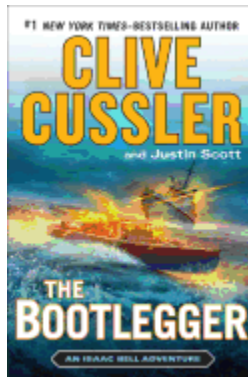
Robyn Carr – One Wish – 8.99/7.20



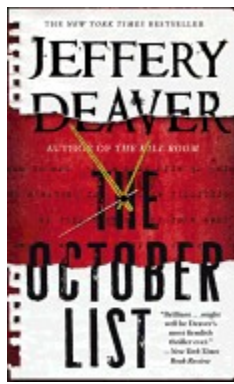
Laura Childs – Steeped in Evil – 7.99/6.40



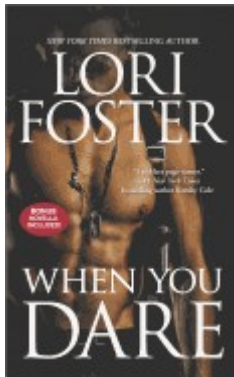
Clive Cussler – The Bootlegger – 9.99/8.00



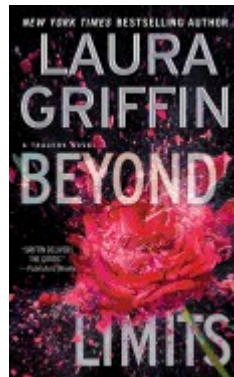
Jeffery Deaver – The October List – 8.00/6.40



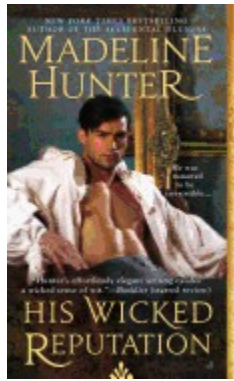
Lori Foster – When You Dare – 7.99/6.40



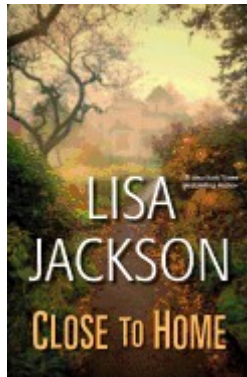
Laura Griffin – Beyond Limits – 7.99/6.40



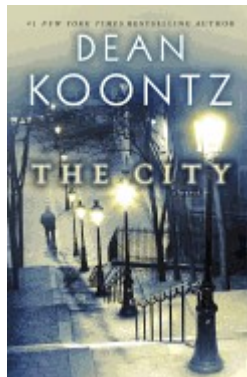
Madaline Hunter – His Wicked Reputation – 7.99/6.40



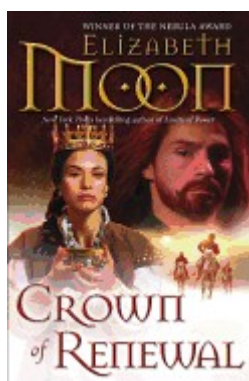
Lisa Jackson – Close to Home – 7.99/6.40



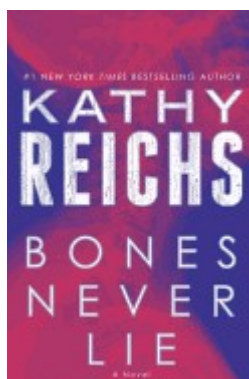
Dean Koontz – The City – 9.99/8.00



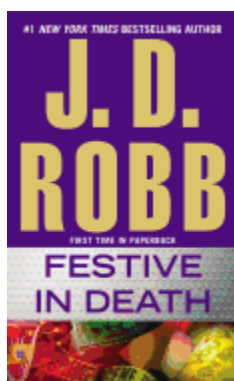
Elizabeth Moon – Crown of Renewal – 8.99/7.20



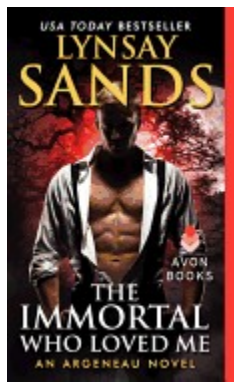
Kathy Reichs – Bones Never Lie – 9.99/8.00



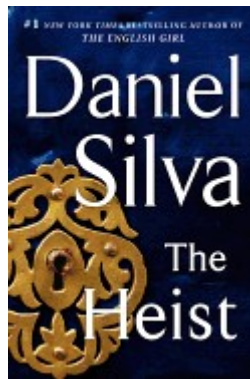
JD Robb – Festive in Death – 7.99/6.40



Lynsay Sands – The Immortal Who Loved Me – 7.99/6.40



Daniel Silva – The Heist – 9.99/8.00



JR Ward – Immortal – 7.99/6.40

