

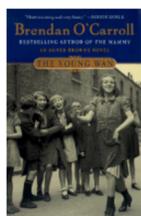
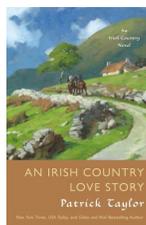
# Fiction News

The Ridgefield Library's Fiction Newsletter



March 2017

## FICTION WITH AN IRISH FLAVOR



### A Sampler:

***An Irish Country Love Story*** and others by Patrick Taylor. A heartwarming series set in Ballybucklebo, an Irish village populated by a cast of eccentric yet affectionately rendered characters.

***A Few of the Girls, Chestnut Street, The Lilac Bus, Tara Road*** and others by Maeve Binchy.

Stories of the ambitions and disappointments of ordinary people in the cities and towns of modern-day Ireland.

***Pond*** by Claire-Louise Bennett.

This novel captures the interior reality of a young woman living a singular and mostly solitary existence on the outskirts of a small coastal village, focusing on the details of her daily experience.

***The Young Man*** and others by Brendan O'Carroll.

Before she was the ultimate Irish mother, she was Agnes Reddin, a young girl growing up in 1940s working-class Dublin. With her friend Marion, she survives the indignities of Catholic school, births of siblings, days in factories and markets, and nights in a dancehall as rock and roll hits Dublin.

***Killoyle: An Irish Farce*** by Roger Boylan.

The eccentric inhabitants of a small Irish town, described with laughter and tears in the vein of Joyce and Beckett.

***Good Behaviour*** by Molly Keane.

The Edwardian aristocratic Anglo-Irish St. Charles family is sinking into a state of decaying grace. Crumbling codes of conduct cannot hope to save the family from their own unruly and inadmissible desires.

***Love and Summer*** and others by William Trevor.

Perceptive and compassionate explorations of the strengths and weaknesses of the Irish people.

***The Little Red Chairs*** by Edna O'Brien.

When mysterious stranger Dr. Vladimir Dragan arrives in the small Irish town of Cloonoila, Fidelma McBride falls under his spell, defying wedlock and convention.

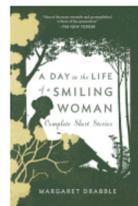
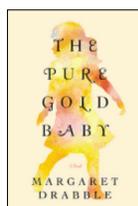
## AUTHOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT



### Margaret Drabble

Margaret Drabble writes literary fiction that philosophically explores the inner lives of contemporary British women. Her character-driven novels tell stories in polished prose that uses humor effectively, engaging readers deeply with the protagonist. The past may

intrude on the present, and the plot structure may include unexpected twists. Evoking that which has been lost to society in contemporary times, the stories have a compelling, elegiac air that does not obscure the social critique at their root.



### Partial list:

***The Dark Flood Rises*** (2017)

See Staff Picks

***The Pure Gold Baby*** (2013)

Jessica Speight, a young anthropology student in 1960s London, discovers that motherhood is more difficult than she had imagined when she gives birth to an exceptional child.

***A Day in the Life of a Smiling Woman: Complete Short Stories*** (2011)

A single-volume compilation of Drabble's previously uncollected short works offers insight into her use of irony, female friendships and personal passions.

***The Sea Lady*** (2007)

Traveling separately to Ormemouth, England, a town by the North Sea where they had spent a summer together as children, Humphrey Clark and Ailsa Kelman reassess the course of their lives and decisions over the past thirty years of separation.

***The Red Queen*** (2004)

Receiving the two-hundred-year-old memoir of a Korean crown princess from an anonymous sender, Oxford student Barbara Halliwell reads about the princess's life and finds profound changes occurring within her present-day London home.

***The Seven Sisters*** (2002)

Divorced and estranged from her grown daughters, Candida Wilton moves to a rundown flat below her means and finds exhilaration in her self-imposed poverty, recording her thoughts on a computer and making friends with new peers.

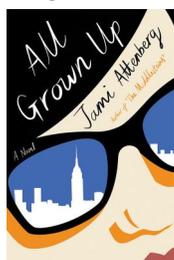
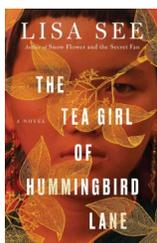
# NEW FICTION

(Annotations from BookLetters)



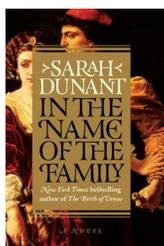
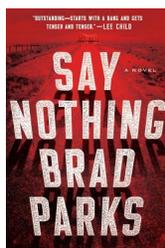
**A Piece of the World** by Kristina Baker Kline. To Christina Olson, the entire world was her family's remote farm in the small coastal town of Cushing, Maine. Increasingly incapacitated by illness, Christina seemed destined for a small life. Instead, for more than twenty years, she was inspiration for the artist Andrew Wyeth, and became the subject of one of the best known American paintings of the twentieth century. Christina Baker Kline interweaves fact and fiction in a powerful novel that illuminates the woman behind the portrait.

**The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane** by Lisa See. Explores the lives of a Chinese mother and her daughter who has been adopted by an American couple. A powerful story about a family, separated by circumstances, culture, and distance, *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane* paints an unforgettable portrait of a little known region of China and its people and celebrates the bond that connects mothers and daughters.



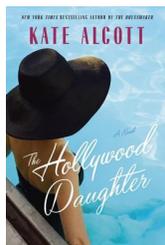
**All Grown Up** by Jamie Attenberg. Hiding the truth about her unhappiness and struggles with anxiety from everyone including her family, best friend and therapist, an alcoholic designer joins her loved ones in a reevaluation of family strength in the wake of a newborn's heartbreaking ailment.

**Say Nothing** by Brad Parks. Judge Scott Sampson is about to pick up his six-year-old when his wife, Alison, texts him that she'll get the kids from school instead. Then the phone rings, and every parent's most chilling nightmare begins. A man has stolen Sam and Emma. A man warns the judge to do exactly as he is told in a drug case he is about to rule on. The kidnapper's call is only the beginning of a twisting, gut-churning ordeal of blackmail, deceit, and terror; a high-profile trial like none the judge or his wife has ever experienced.



**In the Name of the Family** by Sarah Dunant. Sarah Dunant has long been drawn to the high drama of Renaissance Italy: power, passion, beauty, brutality, and the ties of blood. With *In the Name of the Family*, she offers a thrilling exploration of the House of Borgias' final years, in the company of a young diplomat named Niccolo Machiavelli.

**The Hollywood Daughter** by Kate Alcott. A coming-of-age story of a young woman in 1950's Hollywood who grew up idolizing Ingrid Bergman and is forced to reassess her beliefs and desires in the face of Ingrid's scandalous affair with Roberto Rossellini and her fall from grace.

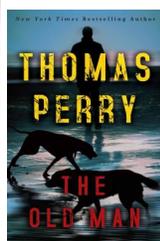
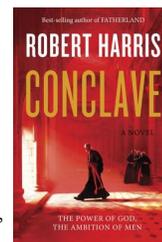


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## STAFF PICKS

### Elise's Picks

**Conclave** by Robert Harris. Robert Harris's gripping new novel provides an intriguing view of the inner workings of the Vatican. Set in the near future after the sudden death of a reformist Pope, the pivotal character is the Dean of the College of Cardinals, Jacopo Lomeli, the prelate charged with managing the fractious conclave that will choose the next pontiff. Initially, there are four front runners: a wily Venetian arch-conservative, a charismatic African cardinal, a media-savvy Canadian, and an Italian liberal who wants to further modernize the church. As ballot after ballot fails to achieve the two thirds needed, alliances fray and new favorites emerge including, much to his dismay, Lomeli himself. Politically astute but spiritually respectful, *Conclave* paints a sophisticated portrait of both the personal temptations and the institutional strengths of the "oldest election in the world, and its most mysterious."



**The Old Man** by Thomas Perry. To all outside appearances Dan Chase is a quiet Vermont widower devoted to his two big black dogs, but decades earlier he was a lethally trained Army Intelligence Officer who stole back 200 million dollars from a rogue Libyan middleman. The funds, intended for U.S backed rebels, never reached them. Chase realized he was just a loose end in a botched operation, so he went into hiding. Now, 35 years later, assassins break into his farmhouse, and with his cover blown, he finds himself once again on the run. The epitome of calm under pressure, Chase can out plan and out fight most enemies, but his trackers have a huge surveillance advantage. Perry has created a unique, appealing character, an unconventional older action hero whose life experiences and survival instincts make *The Old Man* a hard man to kill.

### Dorothy's Picks

**Exit West** by Mohsin Hamid. Nadia and Saeed are two young urban professionals who fall in love in troubling times. When militants overrun their unnamed country, the veneer of civilized life quickly breaks down, and everyday becomes a struggle to survive. With exquisite language and shades of the surreal, Hamid follows the plight of Nadia and Saeed as they become refugees in a world facing mass migrations and as they go from one Western country to another in the search for safety and acceptance. This both beautiful and unsettling novel explores what it takes to preserve one's humanity, both from a personal and a global perspective, in a turbulent world.



**The Dark Flood Rises** by Margaret Drabble. In her seventies, Francesa Stubbs is as an expert on housing for the aged while she herself fights against the encroachment of her own decline. From London to the Canary Islands, enter into the world of Fran and her interconnected circle including childhood friends, long-term colleagues, family, and ex-husband Claude, a bedridden retired surgeon. With both humor and sadness, Drabble unveils their triumphs and missteps and their choices for going forward from embracing life to retreating from the world. Some of the erudite musings of her characters bog the novel down, but Drabble is a witty and intelligent guide to the new old age.

