

# Fiction News



The Ridgefield Library's Fiction Newsletter

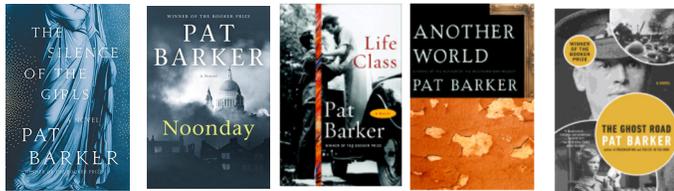
September 2018

## AUTHOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT



### Pat Barker

British author Pat Barker writes both historical fiction set in Britain around World War I and contemporary fiction that follows the lives of widely disparate people. Her rich detail and evocative atmosphere are complimented by a realistic tone. Spare, moving prose and complex carefully drawn characters result in resonant fiction.



### Partial List:

#### *The Silence of the Girls* (2018)

Pat Barker turns her attention to the timeless legend of *The Iliad*, as experienced by the captured women living in the Greek camp in the final weeks of the Trojan War.

#### *Noontday* (2016)

An ambulance driver races through Blitz-torn London to save lives while reflecting on how the war has shattered the dreams and bonds of her generation, a situation that leads to confrontations with a profit-mongering spirit medium and an impossible choice.

#### *Toby's Room* (2012)

Toby and Elinor, brother and sister, closest friends and confidants, are sharers of a dark secret, carried from the sweltering summer of 1912 into the battlefields of France and wartime London in 1917.

#### *Life Class* (2007)

Spring, 1914. The students at the Slade School of Art gather in Henry Tonks's studio for his life-drawing class. But for Paul Tarrant the class is troubling, underscoring his own uncertainty about making a mark on the world. When war breaks out and the army won't take Paul, he enlists in the Belgian Red Cross.

#### *Another World* (1999)

Nick tries to keep the peace in his disintegrating family while comforting his grandfather, a proud, intelligent man who lies dying on the other side of town.

#### The Regeneration trilogy:

This trilogy of novels set during World War I mingles real and fictional characters. *The Ghost Road* won the 1995 Booker Prize.

#### *Regeneration* (1991)

#### *The Eye in the Door* (1993)

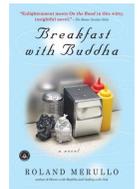
#### *The Ghost Road* (1995)

## BOOKS THAT DESERVE ANOTHER LOOK

Below are some of our favorite books from past years that are below the radar but deserve consideration from those looking for their next read.

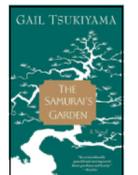
#### *Breakfast with Buddha* by Roland Merullo.

Told with wonder, bemusement, and wry humor, this novel follows a journey into the minds and souls of two very different men—one of them in search of the truth, the other a man who may have already found it. Otto Ringling is a confirmed skeptic and six days on the road with an enigmatic holy man who answers every question with a riddle is not what he'd planned.



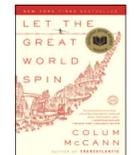
#### *The Samurai's Garden* by Gail Tsukiyama.

Tsukiyama's classic story of love, sacrifice, and devotion. On the eve of World War II, a young Chinese man is sent to his family's summer home in Japan to recover from tuberculosis.



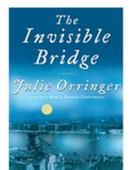
#### *Let the Great World Spin* by Colum McCann.

McCann's ambitious work offers a dazzling and hauntingly rich vision of the loveliness, pain, and mystery of life in New York City in the 1970s.



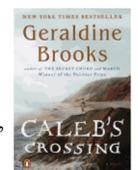
#### *The Invisible Bridge* by Julie Orringer.

An unforgettable story of three brothers, of history and love, of marriage tested by disaster, of a Jewish family's struggle against annihilation, and of the dangerous power of art in a time of war.



#### *Caleb's Crossing* by Geraldine Brooks.

In 1665, a young man from Martha's Vineyard became the first Native American to graduate from Harvard College. Upon this slender factual scaffold, Brooks has created a luminous tale of love and faith, magic and adventure.



#### *The Snow Child* by Eowyn Ivey.

Alaska, 1920: a brutal place to homestead—and especially tough for recent arrivals Jack and Mabel. Childless, they are drifting apart. During the season's first snowfall, they build a child out of snow. The next morning the snow child is gone—but they glimpse a young, blonde-haired girl running through the trees.



# NEW FICTION

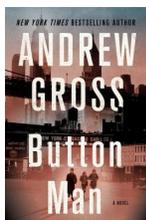
(Annotations from BookLetters and NoveList)



**The Masterpiece** by Fiona Davis. Fiona Davis takes readers into the glamorous lost art school within Grand Central Terminal, where two very different women, fifty years apart, strive to make their mark on a world set against them.

**Button Man** by Andrew Gross.

This is a stirring story of a Jewish family brought together in the dawn of the women's garment business and torn apart by the birth of organized crime in New York City in the 1930s. This new novel is equal parts historical thriller, rich with the detail of a vibrant New York City in the 1920s and 1930s, and family saga, based on Andrew Gross's own family story and on the history of the era.



**The Dinner List** by Rebecca Serle.

When Sabrina arrives at her thirtieth birthday dinner she finds at the table not just her best friend, but also three significant people from her past, and well, Audrey Hepburn. As the appetizers are served, wine poured, and dinner table conversation begins, it becomes clear that there's a reason these six people have been gathered together.... Bon appetit.



**The Tattooist of Auschwitz** by Heather Morris.

An international best-seller based on the true story of an Auschwitz-Birkenau survivor traces the experiences of a Jewish Slovakian who uses his position as a concentration-camp tattooist to secure food for his fellow prisoners.



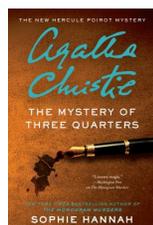
**The Mermaid and Mrs. Hancock** by Imogen Hermes Gowar.

When one of his trading vessels returns to 18th-century London with the remarkable body of a mermaid, Jonah gains entry into high society and falls in love with a highly accomplished courtesan, with unexpected consequences. Imogen Hermes Gowar, Britain's most-heralded new literary talent, makes her debut with this spellbinding novel of a merchant, a mermaid, and a madam—an unforgettable confection that explores obsession, wonder, and the deepest desires of the heart with bawdy wit, intrigue, and a touch of magic.



**The Mystery of Three Quarters** by Sophie Hannah.

The world's most beloved detective, Hercule Poirot—the legendary star of Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*—returns in a stylish, diabolically clever mystery set in the London of 1930. “Sophie Hannah had a massive challenge in reviving the beloved Poirot, and she met it with heart and no small amount of little grey cells. I was thrilled to see the Belgian detective in such very, very good hands. Reading *The Monogram Murders* was like returning to a favorite room of a long-lost home.” - Gillian Flynn



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

## STAFF PICKS

### Elise's Picks

**Happiness** by Aminatta Forna.

A noted African psychiatrist and a dedicated American biologist join forces to search for a terrified young boy, whose mother was swept up in an immigration crackdown. Attila, a large dignified Ghanaian, with a strong sense of obligation, is a man of many missions. In London to deliver a prestigious lecture on war-related trauma, he is also trying to arrange more humane care for a former lover, suffering from dementia, and visit his niece, who unfortunately is the mother of the missing boy. Jean a recent divorcee and urban wildlife specialist has inadvertently become the leader of the opposition to a fox-culling witch hunt. Experts in behavior, and each suffering a recent loss, the two seeming strangers find common cause as Jean mobilizes her network of volunteer fox spotters to find the lost boy. A generous-hearted, wise novel about coexistence, resilience and the possibility of second chances.



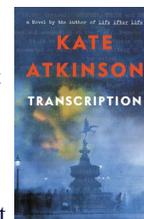
**Warlight** by Michael Ondaatje.

In 1945 England, at the end of WWII, London is still reeling from the Blitz, and Nathaniel and his sister are reeling from the news that their parents are packing to move to Singapore. Appalled to be losing Rose, their charismatic mother, the siblings are doubly distressed to learn that they are being left in the care of two shadowy characters they dub the Moth and the Darter. In the beginning, the teenagers suspect that the two secretive men may be criminals, but the kind, enigmatic Moth and the resourceful Darter turn out to fierce surrogate protectors, especially when Rose mysteriously reappears, and they all face the fallout from her covert career as a British spy. Highly atmospheric, and filled with characters worthy of Dickens, distinguished author Michael Ondaatje's luminous new novel explores the haunting aftermath of war, the ongoing cycle of betrayal and revenge, and the collateral damage even heroic actions can have on families.

### Dorothy's Picks

**Transcription** by Kate Atkinson.

In 1940, Juliet Armstrong is an idealistic 18 year-old when she is recruited by M15 for a mission to help thwart fascist sympathizers in Britain as Hitler's armies sweep across Europe. Alternating between Juliet's time in M15 during the war and her post-war life working at the BBC, this novel has a cast of intriguing characters who prove that nothing is as simple as it looks on the surface and that the lines between sides often blur. *Transcription* is part historical novel, part thriller and a treat for fans of Kate Atkinson, who once again proves she is one of our most gifted storytellers.



**French Exit** by Patrick DeWitt.

Now in her 60s, Frances Price, a wealthy Upper East Side widow, never plays by anyone else's rules and always speaks her mind, no matter whom she may offend. When she finds herself on the verge of bankruptcy, she heads for Paris with her 30-something laggard son and her aging cat Little Frank (whom she believes embodies the spirit of her late husband). What ensues is a wild ride with a cast of eccentric characters and a denouement controlled by the strong-willed Frances. DeWitt's novels are hard to categorize, and *Paris Exit* is no exception. By turns hilarious and darkly comic, this novel has an undercurrent of sadness as Frances grapples with the belief that the best is behind her.

