

The Reader



25 Years of Literary Leftovers Bookstore

Issue 12

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LETTER FROM THE PROPRIETRESS

The Next Chapter: Bookmanager

Heather Erwin,
proprietress



There are seasons in the life of a bookstore when the next step forward isn't about expansion, it's about strengthening the foundation so we can keep showing up well for the community we love. This is one of those seasons.

At Literary Leftovers, we are preparing to implement Bookmanager, a new software system that will allow us to manage inventory more accurately, serve you more effectively, and expand what we're able to offer, both within and beyond our walls. It's not flashy work, but it is meaningful. It's the kind of behind-the-scenes infrastructure that will help our independent bookstore remain efficient, sustainable, and relevant for years to come.

To make this transition, we need to raise \$7,500.

We're inviting you to be part of this next chapter—if you've ever found a book here that felt like it was waiting just for you; if you've become part of our little community; if you believe that places like this still matter in our fast-paced digital world, and want to support our ability to endure and thrive.

Over the coming months, we will have opportunities for you to join our fundraising efforts in a few ways: a small auction and celebration of our store, a yard sale, and a fundraising link for those who simply wish to donate. I wish I could tell you that your donation is tax-deductible, but we don't meet the requirements for a 501(c)3 at the moment.

Every contribution, large or small, moves us closer to our goal. More than that, it reminds us that this bookstore has never been just ours; it belongs to all of us who believe in the power of literacy, imagination, and community. We are, as always, simply its stewards, and we're grateful you're walking this road with us. Thank you.

POETRY CORNER

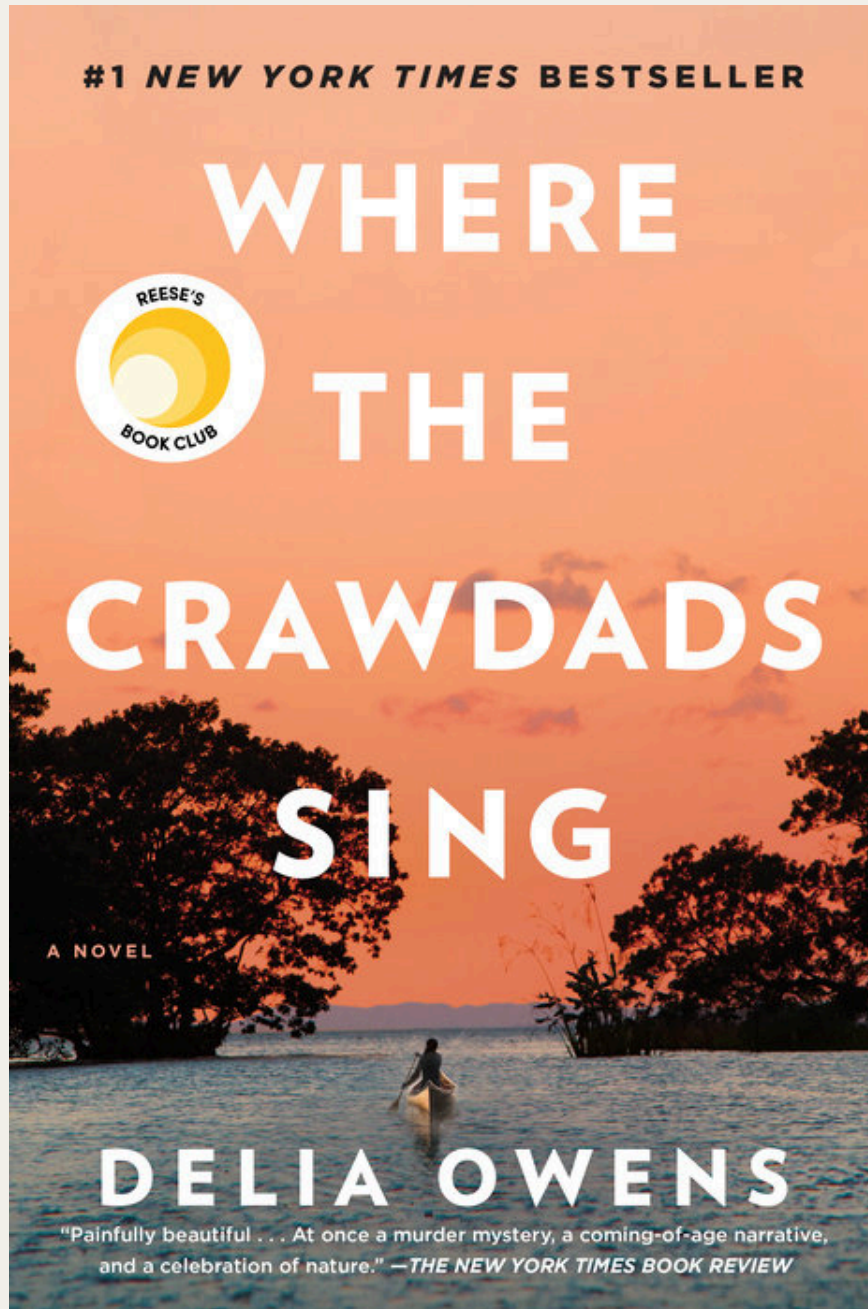
Summer River

Carol Hayes

Carol Hayes is a life-long writer and poet. She currently lives in the Pacific Northwest.



Willows grow
on the mud banks
of the summer river.
Black Birds warble
in the reeds.
Cotton Woods speak to me
with scented whispers,
as I stand mute
upon the shore.



COMMUNITY REVIEW

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens

reviewed by Evelyn Paulsdottir



Where the Crawdads Sing is set in a small, southern coastal town surrounded by lush wetlands. The story dances between two times, building tension as the past catches up to the present. The earlier timeline follows the life of a young girl named Kya living in the marsh, who learns how to survive by navigating through waterways, wildlife, and grits after being left behind by everyone she's ever known. The later timeline follows the investigation of a mysterious death, which brings on the ensuing speculation of the townspeople. As evidence is collected, the truth begins to materialize as a strange and hazy story that seems as undeniable as it does impossible.

Over hundreds of years, the marsh lands of North Carolina became inhabited by a mishmash of people escaping cruel and unjust systems in exchange for a precarious lifestyle in uncharted territories. But to Kya, marsh life is not a second chance; it is the only life she has ever known. Growing up alone in these wild lands shapes her perceived identity as a social outcast, which drives her into further isolation. While a lifetime of rejection has its way of imposing cruel limitations, her world remains untainted by the rules of conventional society. Kya understands life by observing the natural world: the bizarre mating rituals of insects, the social behavior of birds, the relationship between gravity, time and space. As Kya's survival unfolds, two opposing realities coincide with one another: the feeling of being confined by loneliness, and the inevitable sense of belonging with the world.

Delia Owens writes wonderfully descriptive scenes of various ecosystems from ocean to deep swamp, enchanting with colorful imagery and alliterations. Every bit of plant and animal life is placed intentionally, serving a purpose that is equally crucial to understanding the story as it is to experiencing it. The characters can be deeply understood through their observations and backstories, which reveal something about why they came to think, feel, or act the way they have. This book is more than a story about contending with alienation and survival; it is a campaign for deeply living and experiencing life.

BOOKSELLER'S COLUMN

Bibliosmia

Eily McIlvain,
bookseller



In 2014, Oliver Tearle on Twitter coined the term 'bibliosmia': the smell of old books. This smell is inextricable from many experiences of books, bookshops, and libraries. When I was little, before I could even read very well, I liked to ruffle the pages of books against my face, and I particularly liked to do this with older books, because their breath was more fragrant and transportive. There was no word for what I was smelling. It was just the smell of old books.

'Bibliosmia' ('biblio' (Greek, prefix, 'book') and 'osmia' (Greek, suffix, 'odor') is a neologism, and has not been recognized by the Oxford English Dictionary, though sites like Wiktionary have incorporated it. There is a bookshop in Midsomer Norton, UK that has taken the name. And lots of booklovers have added it to their lexicon. For us, it's a necessary word. We need it.

Think of this. Every week, (at least) two or three people are going to come into the shop and sigh or exclaim, I just love that smell! And then I—the bookseller, whose entire trade is words and paper—will have to sigh back and say, Oh yes, me too, if only there were a word for this thing we notice and can describe, but somehow, can't capture in a word. How embarrassing.

Maybe there are things like that in life, things we experience that have no name of their own, but it feels unfair that this should be one of them. When someone comes in and appreciates the smell of our little used bookshop, it surprises and delights them when I say, Do you know what that smell is called? Bibliosmia. Their faces light up. They sigh again. All is right in the world; it is right that there should be a name for that scent they love so well, and bibliosmia is the right name for it. I think exhilarating at discovering, creating, and generating words is inherent in people, who are often comforted by language, because it is the mediator between our senses and the world. It is empowering to have the word for something.

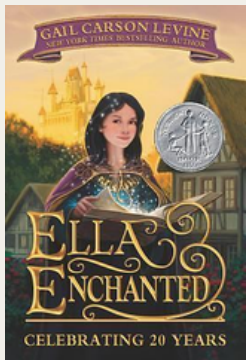
Naming a phenomenon somehow validates the effect it has on us.

That said, I doubt whether this particular word will ever see wide usage. Maybe it will never achieve Oxford status. It may have been brought into existence to join the ranks of words like 'petrichor' (the smell after rain) and 'psithurism' (the sound of rustling leaves), niche words with a strange look in print, that few people regularly use. But to me and other bibliophiles, it's a huge relief that the word exists. As a bookseller, it is invaluable: even though the exact word may fade from their memories, for my customers, the moment of standing within the scent, hearing its name for the first time, will linger.



The Little Reader

“There is a garden in every childhood, an enchanted place where colours are brighter, the air softer, and the morning more fragrant than ever again.”
Elizabeth Lawrence



THE LUCY CHRONICLES *Ella Enchanted* by Gail Carson Levine

*reviewed by Miss Lucy,
as related to, Corrie Albertson,
Children’s Program manager*

Lucy was a bookstore cat who loved her home. She loved the smell of the books, the way the sun shone through the window and warmed her favorite chair, and all the love and affection she received from her staff and the faithful readers who came in and out of the shop. But most of all she loved the books that could magically transport her anywhere. Her favorites were children’s books—not too scary—rarely any gross kissing—usually there was adventure—and they were more likely to have talking animals in them. All she had to do was find an open book, curl up on its pages and voila! She found herself inside the story.

“Lucinda, come to my aid.”

Lucy’s eyes popped open. She barely even remembered falling asleep on top of her book, but here she was, sitting right next to a beautiful young maiden dressed for a ball. Then, as if by magic, a fairy appeared. It was pouring down rain and the maiden had no way of getting to the ball without getting drenched, so she had summoned Lucinda, the fairy, to help her. Lucy watched in awe as the fairy turned a cart of pumpkins into a coach, then turned six brown mice into horses to pull it, and before Lucy knew what was happening, Lucinda picked her up and said, “You should do nicely.”

Lucy’s legs began to grow and soon she had feet and hands instead of paws. Lucy could no longer see her own whiskers. She quickly reached up and felt around on top of her head. Where there should have been ears, there was a hat! Worst of all, she reached behind herself—no tail!! Lucinda had turned Lucy into a coachman! This was too much! A human and a driver with no license, on the same day.

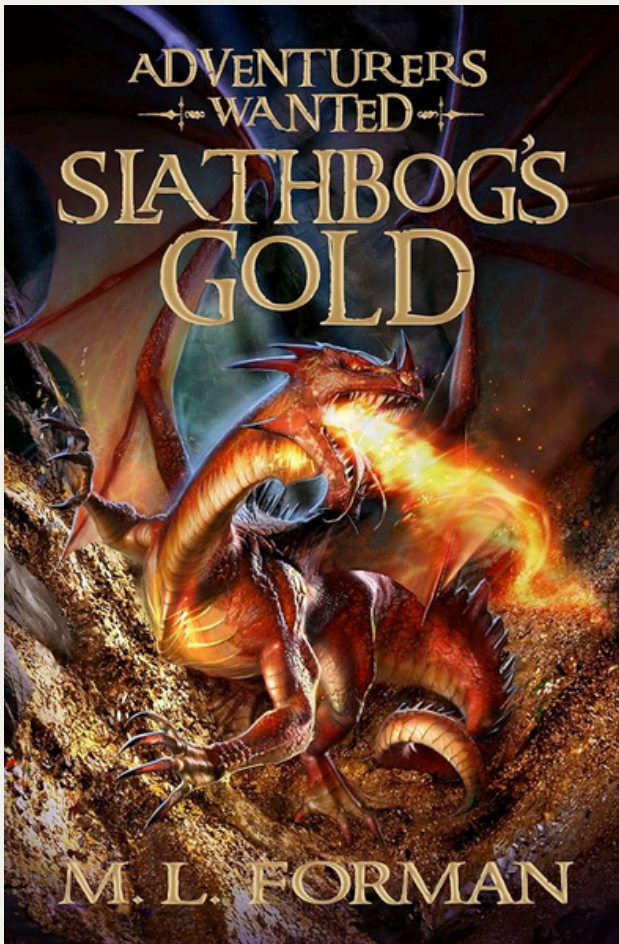
On the way to the ball the footmen, formerly lizards, told Lucy all about how when the maiden, Ella, was a baby she had been given the gift of obedience, but it had turned out to be a terrible curse endangering herself and everyone she loved. This ball was her chance to see the prince and maybe even change her fate. They dropped Ella safe and dry at the ball, hours passed, and then at the stroke of midnight the spell that had turned Lucy into a coachman was broken. Not only did she turn back into a cat, but she was transported home again to her beloved bookstore.

What happened to Ella? Was she able to break the curse? If you know, please come tell Lucy how it ends, or if you’d like to find out, read Ella Enchanted by Gail Carson Levine.

YOUTH POETRY Spring Poem

by Fennec Patriquin, age 7

Flowers bloom on trees.
Here comes the bees!
The sun zooms, the flowers bloom.



YOUTH REVIEW

Adventurers Wanted: Slothbog’s Gold by M.L. Forman

*reviewed by Troy Pillsbury,
age 14*



This book will take you on a much needed adventure. Alex is a 15-year-old boy who works for his stepfather’s tavern, a nice place but it’s run on tough love. His stepfather treats him kindly but a little harsh. One day after an argument with his stepfather he decides to go for a walk to blow off some steam but gets captivated by a bookstore’s sign that seems to change each time he looks at it. Little does he know that the sign will lead him to the adventure of a lifetime.

Slothbog’s Gold is a story where Alexander Taylor (or just Alex), a kind and fair kid, gets whisked away by a magical bookstore sign only thought of while making a children’s story full of magical wonders, oracles, dwarves, elves, and even dragons. In this book Alex learns that he and his party must defeat an evil dragon that has taken over the city of Varlo. In his travels, he discovers he can use magic, which shocks the rest of his party.

In my opinion, the strengths of this book are that it has great storytelling, good character development, and even better humor that invited a nice family feeling into the story. Sadly, I felt that this book needed to have more detail, specifically on the second half of the trip whenever they stopped to rest. I would’ve also liked more explanation on why magick “just works” in their world and where it comes from. Overall, this is a good book, and I would highly recommend it to people who want a book that doesn’t have a lot of backstory, gets to the point, and also has good family humor to break the tension.

YOUTH POETRY My Color Poem

by Dilly Rice, age 7



Pink is pink.
Pink tastes like a strawberry.
Pink smells like a crayon.
Pink feels like a pencil.
Pink looks pink.
Pink sounds squeaky.
Pink makes me smile.
Aqua is my favorite color!

YOUTH ART & POETRY Supermoon

Rick Kaski, grade 5



This artwork was submitted as part of our 2026 K-12 Art & Poetry Community Calendar. The sales of this calendar help to fund our Children’s Program.

Schedule

LEGO CLUB
at 10am Tuesdays & 4pm Thursdays.

STORYTIME WITH CORRIE
with special guests once a month
at 11am Tuesdays, right after Lego Club.

JUNIOR BOOK CLUB
please sign up online
at 3-3:30pm each 3rd Thursday of the month

Upcoming

THE BOTTLED BOOK CLUB
sign up online to receive address
May 14, 6pm, \$5
June 11, 6pm, \$5

OVERSTACKED BOOK CLUB
May 28, 6pm at the shop, \$5
June 25, 6pm at the shop, \$5

Accepting submissions!

Tues.-Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-5
813 W. Main St. #105, Battle Ground, WA.
IG: @literary.leftovers
literaryleftoversusedbooks@gmail.com
thereaderatliteraryleftovers@gmail.com

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