



APRIL NEWSLETTER
2015-2016 NUMBER 8

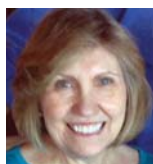
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FRIENDS OF AMERICAN WRITERS CHICAGO

www.fawchicago.org

President's Message

ROBERTA GATES, *President*



The FAW year is coming to a close with our annual meeting on April 13 and our awards luncheon on May 13.

At our April meeting we'll be electing new officers, approving the budget and voting on bylaws changes. (See pages 2-4 for more information about these items.) We'll also hear from the chairs of our two awards committees who will tell us more about their prize-winning authors. (See page 2 for the list of winners.)

Both committees have elected to give three prizes, and we expect to have all of the winners with us in May for what is the most important meeting of year.

FAW's mission, as you know, is "to encourage high standards and to promote literary ideals among American writers," and that is just what we're doing. None of these authors is well known, but they've all demonstrated just how high their standards are by producing books that are engaging, thought-provoking and beautifully written. These are also the literary ideals our committees subscribe to, and we look forward to introducing you to these new authors and their books at our end-of-the-year luncheon. You'll also have an opportunity to purchase the prize-winning books, either before or after the luncheon, and have them inscribed by the author.

A big thank-you is extended to our hard-working committee chairs that make all of this happen, including:

Tammie Bob, chair of the literature awards committee;

Marti Daniel, chair of the young people's literature awards committee;

Carol Eshaghy and **Marion Sherlock**, who are in charge of the luncheon; and

Pat Adelburg, who produces our awards luncheon program.

And thank you as well to everyone who gave to the Patrons Fund. We couldn't give our prizes without you!

APRIL PROGRAM

Jenny Riddle • *We Will Survive*

By SHIRLEY BAUGHER

April brings a special treat to FAW members.

Jenny Riddle will offer her unique interpretations of characters from a number of best-selling books in which she becomes the characters by telling their real-life stories. Her April program is entitled *We Will Survive* and gives us the coping mechanisms of



▲ Jenny Riddle

three very different women: Emily Post, Alexandra Penney, and Christie Mellor. As Emily Post, not only will Jenny set us straight on which fork to use first at a formal dinner, but she will surprise us with some of Emily's advice about life and living in Laura Claridge's biography *Emily Post: Mistress of American Manners*. In the second review, we'll meet Alexandra Penney whose book *The Bag Lady Papers* shows what one person suffered in the Madoff "rip-off" scandal and how she coped with the aftermath of the debacle. Finally, Jenny will make us smile as she dramatizes Christie Mellor's book, *You Look Fine, Really*. She guides us through the minefield of hilarious problems today's women must cope with. I know we all all enjoy traveling with Jenny as she leads us through the journeys these three women took in order to overcome their adversities and survive in fine fashion.

Jenny Riddle is an accomplished actress, singer, and writer. She received her M.A. in English from DePaul University and her undergraduate degree in English from the University of Illinois at Urbana. She is well-known throughout the Chicagoland area for her popular one-woman shows.





ANNOUNCEMENTS

Luncheon Reservations

Luncheon reservations for the April 13, 2016 meeting of the Friends of American Writers are due **no later than 6:00 p.m.** on Sunday, April 10. Please note, this deadline is **firm**. No reservations will be accepted following this date and time. To reserve, please contact **only** Lorraine Campione (773-275-5118) or Pat Adelberg (847-588-0911).

Luncheon will take place at 12:00 noon in the main floor dining room of the Fortnightly Club of Chicago, 120 E. Bellevue Place and will be followed by the program presented by Jenny Riddle. The cost of the luncheon is \$40 payable by check (preferred) in the front lobby on the day of the meeting. If you are reserving for a group, we ask that only one person make the group request to avoid confusion. Please note, if you make a reservation and find you cannot attend, you must cancel no later than 6:00 p.m. on the Sunday preceding the meeting. Reservations not cancelled must be paid for by the member.

Reservations for May 13, 2016 Awards Luncheon

In a change from past procedure, reservations for the May 13, 2016 Awards Luncheon will follow the usual practice. Members who have permanent reservations do not have to call to secure a place for this event. Please note, however, that the luncheon will be held on Friday rather than Wednesday. In keeping with the festive nature of the occasion, the Awards Luncheon will be preceded by wine and appetizers. The cost will be \$45 rather than \$40.

Literature Awards Winners

TAMMY BOB, *Chair*

After much deliberation, members of the Literature Awards Committee were able to select the winners from among 27 worthy finalists. They are as follows:

First Place: *Bettyville* by George Hodgman, Viking Press \$2000

Second Place: (tie) *I Was a Revolutionary* by Andrew Malan Milward, Harper (\$1000) and *A Reunion of Ghosts* by Judith Clair Mitchell, Harper (\$1000)

Congratulations to our winners. We look forward to meeting them at the Awards Luncheon meeting in May.

And our sincere thanks to all who submitted entries for our consideration. This year saw some of the most interesting and worthwhile submissions committee members have ever read. Coming up with final selections was truly difficult.

Young People's Literature Awards

MARTI DANIEL, *Chair*

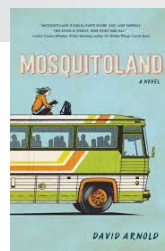
The Young People's Literature Awards Committee has selected three winners from among the many excellent submissions for 2016. They are:

Mosquitoland, by David Arnold, (\$1,300), a modern American odyssey, as hilarious as it is heartbreaking.

Mothman's Curse by Christine Hayes (Author), James K. Hindle (Illustrator), (\$1,300) The discovery of a haunted camera threatens an entire town in this spooky and action-filled novel.

North Woods Girl, by Aimee M. Bissonette (\$1,300) Aimée Bissonette, a writer, teacher, and lawyer living in the Twin Cities, shares a message of appreciating the treasures of our natural surroundings.

We will share more about all of these winners and their authors in the May issue of the newsletter



FAW BUSINESS Proposed Bylaws Changes

This year, the members of the FAW Board of Directors have proposed a number of changes to the guidelines by which we are governed. We offer these proposed changes for your consideration and will ask that you vote on them at the April meeting.

In the second sentence of Section 2 (b) of Section 2 of Article III (pg. 48), substitute "and hold office" for "hold office, and endorse for membership," changing it from:

"A Sustaining Club member shall have all rights and privileges of active membership except the right to vote, hold office, and endorse for membership."

to:

"A Sustaining Club member shall have all the rights and privileges of active membership except the right to vote and hold office."

Explanation: We no longer require endorsements for membership

Delete the current Section 3 of Article III (pg. 48) and replace it with the following:

Section 3. Sustaining Clubs shall be located in the Chicago metropolitan area and be in agreement with FAW's mission. A membership of twelve or more members is preferred.

Explanation: Language regarding written resignations was deleted since this is no longer our practice, while the substituted language provides basic guidelines for the recruitment of book clubs.

Change Section 4 (b) of Article IV (pg. 49) from:

It shall be the duty of the Vice President to serve as chairman of the Program Committee and to make arrangements related to the program.

to:

It shall be the duty of the vice-president to preside in the absence of the president or to assume her duties if she is unable to fulfill them.

Explanation: This change will separate the positions of vice-president and program chair.

Delete “Awards Luncheon” from the left-hand column of Section 4 (e) of Article IV (p. 50).

Explanation: This will eliminate the position of awards luncheon chair.

Change the first sentence of Section 1 of Article V (pg. 51) from:

The meetings of the Association shall be held on the second Wednesday in the months of September through May.

to:

The meetings of the Association shall be held on the second Wednesday in the months of September through April, while the awards luncheon shall be held on the second Friday of May.”

Explanation: This will bring our bylaws into compliance with the meeting schedule we now follow.

Delete Section 1 of Article VI (pg. 52), which reads:

“Dues shall be payable in May for the ensuing year, and the regular meeting in October shall be considered the deadline. The membership of any person whose dues are unpaid by this date shall be subject to forfeiture.”

and change to:

“Dues notices for the ensuing year shall be sent after the awards luncheon in May. Dues shall be considered delinquent after June 30, and the membership of any person whose dues are unpaid after this date shall be subject to forfeiture.”

Explanation: This separates our patrons’ fund solicitations from our dues notices and makes it possible to exclude unpaid members from the yearbook. The yearbook chair and her committee are free to make their own determination, however, since unpaid members are only *subject* to forfeiture.

In Section 1 of Article VII (p. 53), substitute “a philanthropic” for “an educational” and add an apostrophe to Patrons, changing it from:

“An educational fund to be known as the Friends of American Writers Patrons Fund . . . “

to:

“A philanthropic fund to be known as the Friends of American Writers Patrons’ Fund . . . “

Explanation: The word “philanthropic” describes our Patrons’ Fund better than the word “educational.”

In Section 2 of Article VII, delete “in Article VI, Dues, and Finance and Patrons’ Fund money.” and add “Patrons’ Fund money” after “Section 2;” and before “proceeds from sale of books,” changing it from:

“ . . . in Article VI, Dues, and Finance and Patrons’ Fund money. Section 2; proceeds from sale of books . . . “

to

“ . . . in Article VI, Section 2; Patrons’ Fund money; proceeds from sale of books . . . “

Explanation: To clarify the wording used.

In the first sentence of Section 5 of Article VII (p. 53), add the phrase “no fewer than six and” between “shall consist of” and “current FAW members,” changing it from:

“The Literature Awards Committee shall consist of no more than sixteen current FAW members appointed by the Literature Awards Chairman.”

to:

“The Literature Awards Committee shall consist of no fewer than six and no more than sixteen current FAW members appointed by the Literature Awards chair.”

Explanation: This makes clear the minimum number of people who can serve on the Literature Awards Committee.

In the first sentence of Section 6 of Article VII (p. 54), substitute “no fewer than six” for “no fewer than ten” and substitute “not more than sixteen” for “not more than ten,” changing it from:

“Young People’s Literature Awards Committee shall consist of no fewer than ten current FAW members and no more than ten members appointed by the Young People’s Literature Awards Chair.”

to:

“The Young People’s Literature Awards Committee shall consist of no fewer than six and no more than

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sixteen members appointed by the Young People’s Literature Awards **chair**.”

Explanation: This specifies the minimum number and the maximum number of people who can serve on the Young People’s Literature Awards Committee.

In Section 6 of Article VIII (pg. 56), add the phrase ”in perpetuity” between “yearbook” and “as a Foundation Fund Contributor,” changing it from:

“Gifts of one hundred dollars or more shall entitle the donor to be listed in the yearbook as a Foundation Fund Contributor.”

to:

“Gifts of one hundred dollars or more shall entitle the donor to be listed in the yearbook in **perpetuity** as a Foundation Fund contributor.”

Explanation: This specifies a distinction that is ongoing.

In the 1st and 2nd sentences of Section 4 of Article IX (pg. 57), change “September” to “January”; substitute “appointed by the president” for “elected”; delete “three to be elected by the Board of Directors” before “from the board”; delete “to be elected” before “from the general membership”; and delete “at the regular meeting of the Association,” thus changing the sentence from:

“The procedures for election shall consist of the following: In September a nominating committee shall be elected. It shall consist of five members, three to be elected by the Board of Directors from the board and two to be elected from the general membership at the regular meeting of the Association.”

to:

“The procedures for election shall consist of the following: In **January** a nominating committee shall be **appointed by the president**. It shall consist of five members, three from the Board of Directors and two from the general membership.”

Explanation: Letting the president appoint a nominating committee could be problematic if she wanted to be a kingmaker. But considering how difficult it is to recruit a nominating committee, it makes sense to assign this responsibility to the president, as current practice has it.

In the 10th line of Section 4 of Article IX (pg. 57), delete “February” and substitute “March board,” changing it from:

The committee shall prepare a slate of officers and directors and one Foundation Fund trustee to be presented at the February meeting.

to:

“The committee shall prepare a slate of officers and directors and one Foundation Fund trustee to be presented at the **March board** meeting.”

Also in the 10th line of Section 4 of Article IX (p. 57), delete the sentence “Election shall be at the March meeting,”

changing it to:

“After a vote by the board, the slate shall be presented to the membership at large in March and voted on by them at the annual meeting in April.”

Explanation: This brings our bylaws into compliance with our current practice of holding the annual meeting in April.

FAW 2016-17 Budget Proposal

DORIS ROSKIN, *Treasurer*

INCOME

Contributions:	\$ 6,500
Membership	4,500
Luncheon	<u>33,000</u>
	\$ 44,000

EXPENSE

Awards	\$ 8,000
Luncheon	22,000
Program	5,500
Yearbook	750
Newsletter	1,400
Misc. and Supplies	1,300
Professional Fees	<u>1,200</u>
	\$ 40,150

BALANCE \$ 2,850

2016-17 Proposed Slate of Officers and Board Members

The Nominating Committee has met and proposes the following individuals as candidates to the FAW Board of Directors for 2016-17:

Program Chair	Lorraine Campione
Membership	Ida Hagman
Luncheon/Social Chair	Carol Eshaghy
Sustaining Clubs Co-Chairs	Jane Foster, Nora Kashube
Website Manager	Karen Baker
Foundation Fund Trustee	Eileen McNulty

Members will be asked for vote for the slate at the April luncheon.





FEATURE ARTICLE

by Shirley Baugher

The Mockingbird Will Sing No More

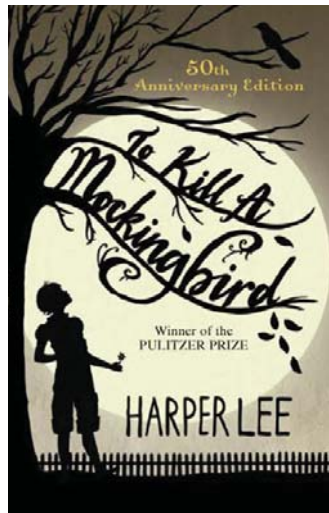
*Hush little baby, not a word,
Momma's gonna' buy you a mockingbird.
And if that mockingbird don't sing,
Momma's gonna buy you a diamond ring.*

On Friday, February 19, 2016, the voice of America's mockingbird was hushed forever. On that day, Nelle Harper Lee wheeled herself into her room at the assisted living facility where she lived in Monroeville, Alabama, fluttered her wings for one last time, and flew away to join the friends she had created more than fifty years ago: Jean (Scout) Finch, her brother Jem and their father Atticus; Uncle Jack Finch, Dill Harris, (based on her childhood friend and neighbor Truman Capote;) Boo Radley, (the mysterious man who lived down the road from the Finches); and all the other denizens of the small Alabama town they called home: Calpurnia, the maid, the Ewells—Robert and Mayella, Tom Robinson, the black man defended by Atticus accused of raping Mayella Ewell, Aunt Alexandra, Miss Maudie Atkinson, Miss Stephanie Crawford... characters etched forever in our collective memories.

Harper Lee was born on April 28, 1926, in Monroeville, Alabama where she was raised and lived most of her life. Her first name, Nelle, was her grandmother's name spelled backwards. The name she preferred to use, Harper Lee, was her pen name. Her father practiced law and served in the Alabama State Legislature from 1926 to 1938. Mr. Lee once defended two black men, a father and son, accused of murdering a white storekeeper. Both men were found guilty and hanged. The case, no doubt, inspired the story of Tom Robinson in Lee's masterpiece, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Harper Lee attended the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, where she studied law and wrote for the university newspaper. She never completed her law degree and moved to New York City in 1949 where she took a job as an airline reservation agent. But the writing urge was strong, and Ms. Lee continued to write fiction in her spare time. Her friends, who recognized her talent and knew she would never develop it on a part-time basis, joined together and gave her a year's wages with a note that said, "You have a year off from your job to write whatever you please. Merry Christmas."

Harper Lee made good use of the gift. In 1957, Lee completed the manuscript for *Go Set a Watchman*. It ended up in the hands of Tay Hohoff, a literary agent, who recognized that Lee had talent, but knew that *Watch-*



man was in no way fit for publication. She took the young author in hand and guided her through several drafts of the novel until it was finally published by Harper and Row in 1960 as *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The rest is history. *Mockingbird* became an immediate best seller and won great critical acclaim. The book went on to sell more than thirty million copies. Ms. Lee won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1961.

In 1999, nearly forty years after its publication, *To Kill a Mockingbird* was voted "Best Novel of the Century" in a poll by the *Library Journal*.

To Kill a Mockingbird was adapted for the screen in 1962 by acclaimed author Horton Foote. The movie won an Academy Award for best screenplay, and Lee called it "one of the best translations of a book to film ever made." She became a good friend of its star, Gregory Peck, who won an Oscar for his portrayal of Atticus Finch. Harper Lee gave Gregory the pocket watch that had belonged to her father, on whom she modeled Atticus. He wore it the night he accepted the Academy Award for the role. Lee remained close to Peck's family even after his death. Mr. Peck's grandson, Harper Peck Voll, was named for her.

To Kill a Mockingbird took on a life of its own. In January 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed Ms. Lee to the National Council on the Arts. In March 2005, she made one of her few trips out of Monroeville to Philadelphia to receive the ATTY Award for her positive depiction of the attorney Atticus Finch. That same year, she accepted the Los Angeles Public Library Literary Award, even though in the forty-five years since *Mockingbird's* publication, Harper Lee had not produced another book. In 2007, President George W. Bush presented her

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with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Three years later, President Barack Obama awarded her the National Medal of the Arts—the highest award given by the United States government for outstanding contributions to the “excellence, growth, support, and availability of the arts.”

From the time of *Mockingbird's* publication until her death in 2016, Harper Lee granted almost no requests for interviews or public appearances. She lived very privately in her hometown, mingling only with friends and neighbors. In 2011, Ms. Lee did give one of her very few interviews to the Reverend Dr. Thomas Lane Butts for an Australian newspaper. At the time, she was confined to a wheel chair in an assisted living facility in Monroeville. When Dr. Butts asked her why she had never published another book she replied that she had said what she wanted to say and would not say it again.

Why then, did she consent to the publication of *Go Set a Watchman*, in July 2015, her first effort deemed not fit to print by Ms. Hohoff? The book was “discovered” in 2014 by her attorney in a safe deposit box. The attorney passed it on to her agent who supposedly got Ms. Lee’s permission to publish the book. Many thought that Lee was not in her right mind and was coerced into allowing its publication, but an investigation by the State of



▲ Clockwise from top left: Gregory Peck as Atticus Finch, Scout Finch, Boo Radley, and Tom Robinson

Alabama showed that the author was competent enough to give her consent. Marja Mills, a friend and neighbor, painted a different picture. Mills quoted Lee’s sister Alice as saying, “Poor Nelle can’t see and can’t hear and will sign anything put before her by anyone in whom she has confidence.” Unfortunately, Alice died a few months before *Watchman's* publication. Whatever the case, there are mixed feelings about *Go Set a Watchman*—both for its depiction of the beloved Atticus as a racist and its decidedly inferior writing. Gregory Peck’s son, Stephen, expressed concern about the book, saying his father would have been troubled by the decision to publish it and would have counseled her not to do it. “To me,” Stephen Peck said, “it was an unedited draft. Do you want to put that early version out there, or do you want to put it in the University of Alabama archives for scholars to look at?”

For better or worse, the book was published and remains on the Best Seller list months after it appeared. Its popularity will fade, eventually; but its iconic predecessor will never fade. Along with its author, *To Kill a Mockingbird* will remain one of the greatest literary achievements of our time. So even though the little mockingbird is hushed, her song is not.



The Reading Corner

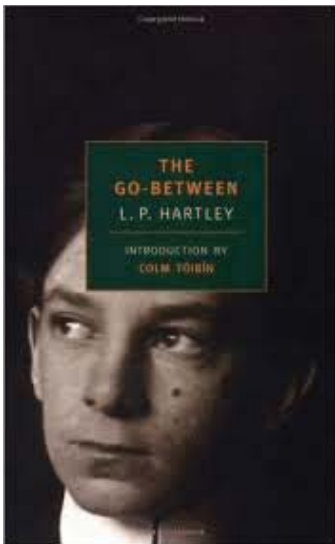
Note: This month, we asked FAW Board President, Roberta Gates, to share with members a few of her favorite books to inspire their reading pleasure. Here are her recommendations. We hope you will enjoy them as much as she did.

A Few of My Favorite Books
ROBERTA GATES

Fiction:

The Go-Between
L.P. Hartley

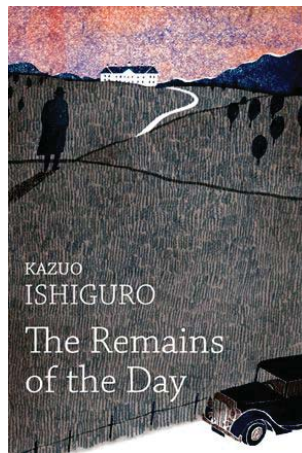
Years ago, someone asked me what my favorite book was, and without even thinking, I blurted out *The Go-Between*. And while it's not as important as, say, *Walden* or *Moby-Dick*, this novel is a little-known classic that's still my favorite and one that is well worth tracking down. During the summer of 1900, Leo, an impressionable 12-year-old boy, pays a long visit to Marcus, a much richer school friend whose family is renting Brandham Hall. There he encounters Mariam, Marcus's bewitching older sister, whose half-affectionate, half-condescending attentions leave him dazed and bewildered. He also bonds with Hugh, her aristocratic fiancé, as well as Ted, a tenant farmer whose



manliness makes Leo sadly aware of his own immaturity. It is these three characters, all beautifully and compellingly drawn, who use Leo's innocence to facilitate their own ends. Social nuances, as always, play an important role in this British novel, but an undercurrent of evil is the engine that will keep you turning the pages of this wonderfully written book.

The Remains of the Day
Kazuo Ishiguro

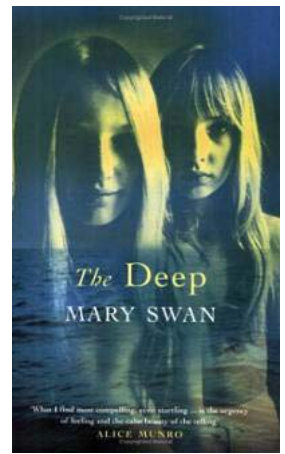
I loved this novel, a Booker prize winner, for its language and subterranean passion which builds quietly but relentlessly. In it, Stevens, the protagonist, is the perfect English butler who is now ending three decades of service at Darlington Hall in post-war Britain. But now, as retirement closes in on him, he begins to wonder about Lord Darlington: Was he really as "great" as Stevens thought? And what about Miss Kenton, who served alongside him as the estate's faithful housekeeper? Had they merely been professionals, working together to ensure the smooth running of a fine old house, or had there been something else, something that he'd stupidly missed?



The Deep
Mary Swann

This is an enchanting novella by a Canadian writer who shows war's impact on twin sisters who leave Canada to do war work in France at the close of World War I. Esther and Ruth are sheltered and

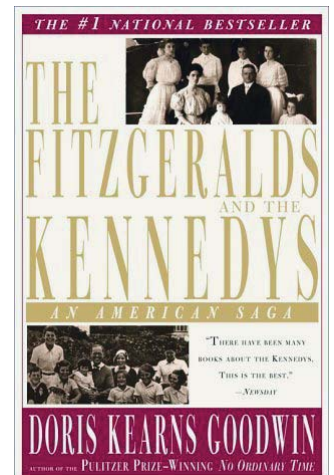
pampered girls when they leave, but they grow up quickly as they listen to the stories of shell-shocked young soldiers, write letters for the grievously injured or stumble (as they did once) on "a small, perfect child's hand, lying palm up in the dust." A soldier named Hugh offers solace, but inevitably he draws closer to one of them, threatening the essential bond that sustains these twin sisters. This story, told in poetic vignettes from multiple points of view, is gorgeously written and an inspiration to any would-be writer.



Nonfiction:

The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys: An American Saga
Doris Kearns Goodwin

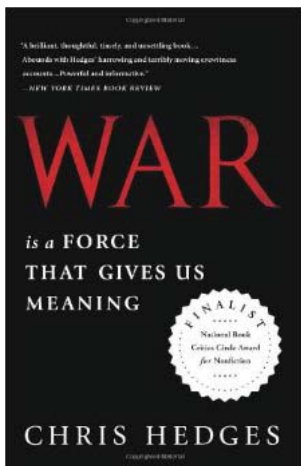
Goodwin is a historian best known for her work on Lincoln, but earlier in her career she wrote this absolutely fascinating book about John F. Kennedy and the generations ahead of him who prepared the way for his presidency. His maternal grandfather, John Francis ("Honey Fitz") Fitzgerald, had been mayor of Boston, and Rose, his favorite, became shrewdly political as a result of his tutelage. When she married, however, she had to take a back seat to her husband, Joseph P. Kennedy, who played a larger-than-life, almost Shakespearean role in the family. Frustrated in his own ambitions to become president, he turned to his sons to fulfill the destiny that was beyond his reach.



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SHIRLEY BAUGHER
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War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning
Chris Hedges

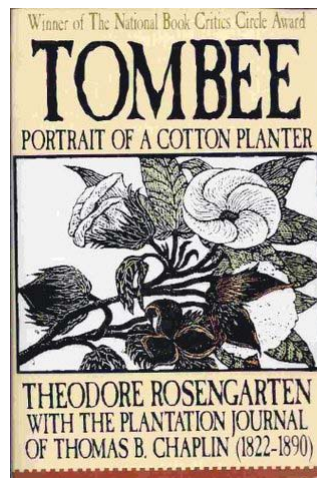
This book, a National Award finalist, challenges the mythology of war by taking a long, hard look at the dehumanizing brutality which is all too often disguised as heroism or camaraderie or noble sacrifice. Hedges, a

seminarian-turned-war-reporter, is relentless in his observations: “The closeness of a unit . . . is possible only with the wolf of death banging at the door”; “Victims and survivors are an awkward reminder of . . . collective complicity”; “It is not the best who

survive war but often the selfish, the brutal, and the violent.” This is an important philosophical book that asks us to look war and violence in the eye and see it for what it is—as something that spares no one, whether victim, persecutor or bystander

Tombee: Portrait of a Cotton Planter
Theodore Rosengarten

This is a scholarly, yet very readable book about Thomas B. Chaplin, the antebellum owner of Tombee Plantation on St. Helena Island off the coast of South Carolina.



His journal, which is the core of the book (it was rescued from a pawn shop where it had been sold by a descendant for liquor money), provides a day-to-day record of Chaplin, his family and his slaves from 1845, when he’s riding high, to 1886, when he’s not. As intriguing as the journal is, however, Rosengarten’s chapters on everything from agriculture and social life to slavery and war are just as engrossing. This is history at its most immediate, as seen from the perspective of a single man and his family.

