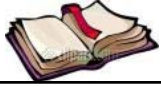


# BOOKMARK



*Fiction and Nonfiction News from Janet Litherland*

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## Potpourri

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas, and now I wish for you a very healthy and happy New Year, one in which you achieve all of your goals. I was able to visit relatives in Oregon, Arizona, and Atlanta over the last two months, and I truly enjoyed my time with them. I am counting my blessings.

My upcoming novel, *The Long Road Home*, travels back and forth in time between the 19th century potato famine in Ireland and present-day life in both Union City, PA (where I grew up) and nearby Jamestown, NY. It is being represented by a new agent who is confident this book will find the perfect publishing home.

Currently, I am working on a novel that reflects life in 1940s Tennessee. It is tentatively titled *Sweet Revenge*, and I am about a third of the way through the first draft. I'll let you know more about it in the next newsletter.

Winner of last issue's photo contest and a copy of *Song of the Heart* was Lilian Bowen of Thomasville, GA. She guessed correctly, and specifically, that the penguins were attacking me at Trafalgar Square in London.

**All of Janet's books  
are available at:**

BarnesAndNoble.com  
Amazon.com  
and other online stores.

## Fiction Reviews

*Down River* (John Hart, 2007, paperback). This is Hart's second book. I've not read the first one, but I will. Soon. The story involves a southern family torn apart when individual secrets, kept too close to the heart for too long, are revealed. It's a thriller full of greed, revenge, deception, and even murder; but it's also a story of human error and reconciliation.

*Swan for the Money* (Donna Andrews, 2009, hardcover). This book was touted as a funny mystery about a rose show. Since I live in "The Rose City," where a rose show has been held every year for the past 86 years, I decided to read this book. It is about roses and showing roses, but it is neither funny nor much of a mystery. More like a kids' book for grown-ups; or a grown-ups' book for kids. Rose growers might possibly find it interesting, but only because of the roses. Andrews has written 10 other books with a bird in the title, so someone out there must like her stuff. I don't.

*Where Memories Lie* (Deborah Crombie, 2008, paperback). Another of my favorite blends—history and mystery—this time persecution of the Jews during World War II and present-day greed. Excellent characterization, plenty of angst. I liked this novel!

*The Fate of Katherine Carr* (Thomas H. Cook, 2009, hardcover). As I've often said, I'm not fond of literary novels. This one might best be described as an exercise in literary psychology. It's about missing persons. The author teases us into believing that "Katherine Carr" and others in the story will be found, or at least that their loved ones will see justice done, but that never happens. After plodding expectantly through the detailed paragraphs and beautifully worded sentences, I was left wondering what it was all about and asking myself, "Why did I bother?" (If I hadn't seen the author's photo—big burly man—I would have bet this book was written by a woman.) For reviews of two excellent literary novels, *The Song of Names* and *The Student Conductor*, check the January 2007 newsletter archive on my website.

*The Associate* (John Grisham, 2009, paperback). This has got to be the worst book Grisham ever wrote. A positive review in *The Washington Post* said, "Grisham makes it easy for us to keep flipping the pages." That worked for me. I flipped handfuls without even reading them. Didn't need to. Pages and pages of extraneous prose. Finally, the story piqued my interest at Chapter 31 (page 333), so I began perusing more carefully. The next 100 pages (which are also the last 100) were vintage Grisham. But guess what? (**Warning: Spoiler here**) Our hero walks off into the sunset; however, unlike in the old John Wayne movies, the plot is not resolved, and we never find out "whodunit." A complete waste of time.

## More Reviews

FICTION AND NONFICTION NEWS FROM  
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WWW.JANETLITHERLAND.COM

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Three of my readers have recommended *The Help* (Kathryn Stockett, 2009, hardcover). Set in Mississippi during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, it is this season's "buzz book." I have not read it.

*The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* (Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows, 2009, paperback; first published in England, 2008). This is not an ordinary novel—it's extraordinary. It isn't even written like a novel. It's a collection of letters among friends following World War II, giving a vivid picture of life in the Channel Islands during the German Occupation. It's "chatty" because that's the way letters are, delivering an engaging storyline that includes history (What happened back then?), mystery (Where is Elizabeth?), and romance (Will Juliet get married?). I was enchanted.

*Killing Floor* (Lee Child, 1997, paperback). This is Child's first novel in the Jack Reacher series, which now adds up to 13 books. The latest (2009) is *Gone Tomorrow*. Reacher is a former military policeman, now a drifter, who is ruthless and violent when it comes to bad guys. If you have a strong stomach but like a storyline where good triumphs evil in a can't-put-it-down manner, you'll like the books in Child's Reacher series.

I have said many times that I won't keep a book on my shelves if it isn't worth reading twice. Jonathan Kellerman's *Gone* (2006, paperback) is worth it, and I just read it for the second time. Alex Delaware, a psychologist, is asked by the police to evaluate an aspiring actress accused of staging her own abduction—but she turns up dead. The story absolutely flies!

## A New Year — A New You

For this you will need: A **vision**; **belief** that it *can* happen; intentional **action** to *make* it happen; **space** to grow; **structure** to minimize the risk; **support** from family and friends; and **courage** to face fears. **What is your vision?**

## Language: What's Bugging You?

1. "Try and" — Let's try and lose weight. Better: Let's try to lose weight.
2. Improper use of "I" — They're going with John and I. Should be: They're going with John and me.
3. "Myself" is a weak word. — Give the ticket to Anne or myself. Better: Give the ticket to Anne or me.

Often Misspelled Words: ecstasy, putrefy, liaison, pavilion, supersede, inoculate, obligato, anoint, desiccate, until.

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Want to know what was happening in the world on any specific date, such as your birthdate?

Go to: <[www.dmarie.com/timecap](http://www.dmarie.com/timecap)>

**Read back issues of *Bookmark* online at: [www.janetlitherland.com/newsletter.htm](http://www.janetlitherland.com/newsletter.htm)**



**Bookmark**  
Janet's Book News

**Janet's Ratings:** Scaled 1 - 5 ★=OK, ★★★★★=Fantastic!

*Below Zero* (C.J. Box, 2009) ★★★★★

*A Dark Love* (Margaret Carroll, 2009) ★★★★★

*Heat Lightning* (John Sandford, 2009) ★★★★★

Janet Litherland, author of 10 nonfiction books and four novels, also is editor emeritus and former owner of Write-Choice Services, Inc., a book-development company that aspiring authors can find at: [www.writechoiceservices.com](http://www.writechoiceservices.com). (Note there is no hyphen in the web address.)