

## Book Buzz

With Carolyn Larson

Head Librarian at Lihue Public Library

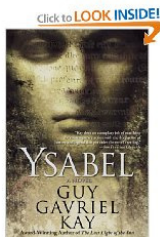
*Bringing you the buzz on new, popular and good books available at your neighborhood library.  
Book annotations are culled from online publishers' descriptions and published reviews.*

### AND THE WINNERS ARE... – June 24, 2009 Column

Book Buzz this week continues last week's list of award winning novels. Book prizes, such as the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, recognize particular books; and author prizes, such as the Nobel Prize in Literature, honor an author and his or her body of literary work. There are also awards for young readers and teen readers, for non-fiction, and for paperback books, audio books and books born digital. Far too many prizes, in fact, to include them all in two columns. Nonetheless we hope these offerings help one get a sense of what and who are being awarded of late. Each prize has its own criteria for what makes a book outstanding; but perhaps the most worthy book is the one that finds its reader and speaks to him or her at the perfect time.

Happy Reading!

## SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY

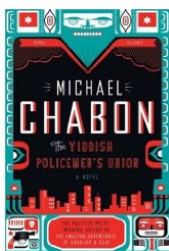


### Ysabel

By Guy Gavriel Kay

**2008 World Fantasy Award**

The author departs from his usual historical fantasies to connect the ancient, violent history of France to the present day in this entrancing contemporary fantasy. Outstanding characters, folklore, and action add up to another Kay must-read. The World Fantasy Award is sponsored by the annual World Fantasy Conference. Authors **Leo and Diane Dillon** and **Patricia McKillip** were awarded the 2008 World Fantasy Life Achievement Award.



### The Yiddish Policemen's Union

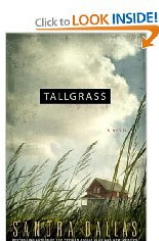
By Michael Chabon

**2008 Hugo Award for Best Novel**

## 2007 Nebula Award for Best Novel

What if Israel were relocated to a piece of land leased from Alaska? This genre-blending *tour de force* explores the outlandish premise with enthusiasm and flair. The Hugo Awards, given annually since 1955, are named for famed magazine editor Hugo Gernsback, who did much to bring science fiction to a wider audience. They are bestowed for excellence in the field of science fiction and fantasy and are voted on, in a crowdsourcing sort of way, by the thousands of members and fans at the World Science Fiction Convention. Other nominees for this year's Hugo for Best Novel are **Halting State** by Charles Stross, **Rollback** by Robert J. Sawyer, and **Brasyl** by Ian McDonald. The Nebula Awards, presented annually since 1965 by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, also celebrate excellence in science fiction and fantasy writing. The 2008 winner of the Nebula for Best Novel is **Powers** by the prolific Ursula Le Guin.

## WESTERN

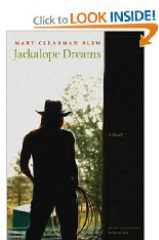


### Tallgrass

By Sandra Dallas

#### 2008 Spur Award

An ugly murder is central to this compelling historical, which takes place in the eponymous Japanese internment camp in Colorado; but the tale's focus is on one appealing family, the Strouds. The Spur Awards are given annually since 1953 by the Western Writers Association for distinguished writing about the American West. Previous year Spur Awardees include Larry McMurtry for **Lonesome Dove**, Michael Blake for **Dances With Wolves**, Glendon Swarthout for **The Shootist**, and Tony Hillerman for **Skinwalker**. WWA also presents the Owen Wister Award each year for lifelong contributions to the field of western literature. Recent winners include **John Jakes**, **Douglas C. Jones**, **David Lavender**, and **Max Evans**.



### Jackalope Dreams

By Mary Clearman Blew

#### 2008 Western Heritage Award

In Blew's fiction debut, sentences seethe with urgent, unhurried energy, and the description of the land the author so clearly loves is in service of the story. You come to care deeply about these people, caught between an uncapturable past and an uncertain future. It is the poetry and preciseness of Blew's writing that set **Jackalope Dreams** apart from others of its ilk. First presented in 1961, the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum's Western Heritage

Awards were established to honor and encourage the legacy of those whose works in literature, music, film, and television reflect the significant stories of the American West. Past winners include **Harpson** by Rilla Askew and **Broken Trail** by Alan Geoffrion.

## CHRISTIAN FICTION

In 1999 the fast-growing field of Christian fiction decided that it was time to recognize excellence in the genre. Named in honor of Catherine Marshall's well-loved novel, the Christy Awards recognize novelists and novels of excellence in several categories of Christian fiction. Two of the most recent winners are:

**Chasing Fireflies**

By Charles Martin

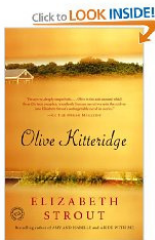
**Christy Award for Contemporary – Stand-Alone**

**Home to Holly Springs**

By Jan Karon

**Christy Award for Contemporary-Series**

## GENERAL FICTION



**Olive Kitteridge**

By Elizabeth Strout

**2009 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction**

A collection of 13 short stories set in small-town Maine that packs a cumulative emotional wallop, bound together by polished prose and by Olive, the title character. Blunt, flawed and fascinating. The \$10,000 Pulitzer is awarded for distinguished fiction by an American author, preferably dealing with American life. Pulitzer Prizes were established by newspaper magnate Joseph Pulitzer as an incentive to excellence. Other 2009 finalists are: **The Plague of Doves** by Louise Erdrich, and **All Souls** by Christin Schutt. Last year's winner is **The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao** By Junot Diaz.

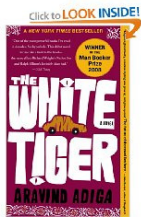


## Netherland

By Joseph O'Neill

2009 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction

This story takes place in the aftermath of 9/11. It tries to evoke the disorientation and darkness of that time, which we only emerged from with the election of President Obama. Part of the story involves trying to bring the British game of cricket to Brooklyn, New York. The \$15,000 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction, founded in 1980, is a national prize which honors the best published works of fiction by American citizens in a calendar year. The Award is named for author William Faulkner, who used his 1949 Nobel Prize funds to create an award for young writers, and for PEN, the international writers' organization. Past winners include Kate Christensen for **The Great Man** and Philip Roth for **Everyman**.

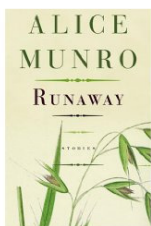


## The White Tiger

By Aravind Adiga

2008 Man Booker Prize

Born in a village in heartland India, the son of a rickshaw puller, Balram is taken out of school by his family and put to work in a teashop. As he crushes coals and wipes tables, he nurses a dream of escape - of breaking away from the banks of Mother Ganga. The book is a tale of two Indias and Balram's journey from the darkness of village life to the light of entrepreneurial success. Deeply endearing and altogether unforgettable. The Man Booker Prize for literary excellence in fiction, which celebrated its 40th anniversary last year, aims to reward the best novel of the year written by a citizen of the Commonwealth or the Republic of Ireland. Some past winners include **The Gathering** by Anne Enright and **The Inheritance of Loss** by Kiran Desai.



## Alice Munroe

2009 Man Booker International Prize

The Man Booker International Prize recognizes a writer's overall contribution to fiction on the world stage. It is awarded every two years to a living author of any nationality published either originally in English or whose work is generally available in translation in the English language. The winner is chosen solely at the discretion of the judging panel; there are no submissions from publishers. A nominee for the same prize in 2007, Canadian Alice Munroe is the author of **Dance of the Happy Shades**, **Lives of Girls and Women**, **The Beggar Maid**, and **Runaway**. Nigerian writer, **Chinua Achebe** won the 2007 prize and Albanian writer, **Ismail**

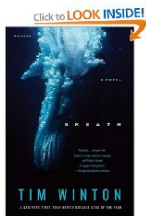
**Kadare** won the inaugural prize in 2005 and went on to gain worldwide recognition for his work.



## Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio

### 2008 Nobel Prize in Literature

This prestigious prize is awarded annually by the Swedish Academy to an author in recognition of outstanding achievement in the literary arts. Established in 1901 by Alfred Nobel, the 2008 prize amount is over \$1 million. Le Clezio, who hails from France and the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius is characterized by the Academy as an “author of new departures, poetic adventure and sensual ecstasy, explorer of a humanity beyond and below the reigning civilization.” Perhaps unsurprisingly, given his background, he has always been interested in thresholds. For instance, his novels explore the transformation from childhood into adulthood (*Cœur Brûlé et Autres Romances*), voyages that result in the confrontation of cultures (*Désert*), and the points where past, present and future collide (*Ourania*). "Writing for me is like travelling", says Le Clézio, who shows us that we are all emigrants, that we all face futures that are both liberating and terrifying. His works available in English include **The Prospector Onitsha**, and **The Round & Other Cold Hard Facts**. The 2007 winner is British novelist **Doris Lessing** who gave us **On Cats**, **Time Bites: Views and Reviews**, **The Sweetest Dream** and **The Cleft**.

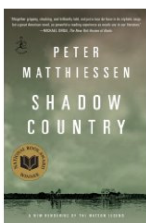


## Breath

By Tim Winton

### 2009 Miles Franklin Award

This book is a document about masculinity, risk, and young people’s desire to push the limit. It is Winton’s greatest love letter yet to the sea, to the coast of West Australia; and it is a compelling testimony to the role of surfing in Australian culture. We are drawn in by the elemental currents of its narrative and the compelling, wave-like force of events. First awarded in 1957, The Miles Franklin Award was bequeathed by the will of female Australian novelist Miles Franklin for a published novel or play portraying Australian life in any of its phases. The award furthers her vision for the perpetuation of Australian literature. The 2008 winner of this prize is **The Time We Have Taken** by Steven Carroll.

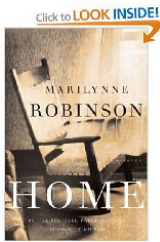


## Shadow Country

By Peter Matthiessen

### 2008 National Book Award

Critics described Matthiessen's three stand-alone previously published Watson novels as magnificent epics. Now they describe *Shadow Country*, a seamless weaving and slimming down of these three works, as a masterpiece ... a potent distillation of a tale that was brilliantly told to begin with. Where Watson was a magnificent character before, he comes across as nothing short of iconic here. When Watson delivers his final line, it's as close as most will come to witnessing a murder. As in all his writing, Matthiessen offers a beautiful homage to place—the raw, untamed Everglades of the late 19th century—while trying to understand the costs that accompanied the conquering of the frontier. Begun in 1950 by the publishing industry, the National Book Awards are given annually by writers to writers to honor the year's best work in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Books written by American citizens and published in the United States are submitted by publishers. One winner in each genre receives \$10,000 for the best book chosen in that category. Other finalists include Aleksandar Hemon for **The Lazarus Project**, Rachel Kushner for **Telex from Cuba**, Marilynne Robinson for **Home**, and Salvatore Scibona for **The End**.

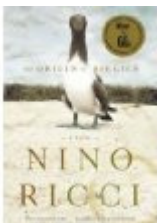


## Home

By Marilynne Robinson

### Orange Prize for Fiction

In this story the author of **Housekeeping** and **Gilead** has written a kind, wise, enriching, and exquisitely crafted work of art about the heartland of the US. **Home** revisits the fictional town of Gilead, Iowa and features some of the earlier book's characters. The son of a minister who has gone off the rails tries to reconcile his troubled life with the expectations of his traditionalist father. The ability of the writer to draw the reader into a world of hope expectation, misunderstanding, love and kindness stood out to the prize judges. The Orange Prize for Fiction, established in 1996, is awarded to the woman of any nationality who has written the best eligible full-length novel in English and published in Great Britain in the preceeding year. The prize founders were concerned that many of the biggest literary prizes often appeared to overlook wonderful writing by women and thought that both male and female readers might be missing out on fantastic novels by women that they'd really enjoy.



## **The Origin of Species**

By Nino Ricci

2008 Governor General's Award for Fiction

A book written with great humanity, realism and wit, *The Origin of Species* reads as if it has come up through our collective memory. With the shock of recognition, we gain a new understanding of our fragility and our strength. Alex Fratarcangeli, a modern Prufrock, must survive in the multiethnic complexity of Montreal in the 1980s. For each of the past 72 years the Canada Council for the Arts and the Governor General of Canada have collaborated to honor the finest in Canadian literature. The prize is \$25,000 and a specially-bound copy of the winning book. The 2007 GG winner is **Divisadero** by Michael Ondaatje and the 2006 winner is **The Law of Dreams** by Peter Behrens.