

## Rockport Public Library Summer Reading for Grown-Ups

### 2011 Hot Picks for Fiction

**Genre Key:** L – Literary. H – History. M&T – Mystery & Thriller. P – Popular.

The list is divided into sections by the above genre. Copies of all the titles listed are available at Rockport Public Library.

Author	Title	Genre
--------	-------	-------

#### LITERARY

<b>Barry, Sebastian</b>	<b>On Canaan's Side</b>	<b>L (Sept)</b>
-------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------

Lilly Bere, an 89-year-old retired cook, mourns her grandson, a Gulf War veteran, who committed suicide. But this is hardly Lilly's first loss. Born and raised in Ireland, Lilly's first loss was her brother Willie who was killed in WWI. A fellow soldier, Tadg Bere, comes to pay his respects and woos her soon after. The couple has no time to marry, as Tadg, enrolled in an auxiliary police force, is implicated in an ambush of IRA militia men and a price is put on both their heads. They flee to America, hoping to start a new life there with the help of extended family in Chicago, but the past catches up with them. Barry's skills are evident as he tenderly unspools Lilly's story. *—Publishers Weekly*

<b>Brooks, Geraldine</b>	<b>Caleb's Crossing</b>	<b>L, H</b>
--------------------------	-------------------------	-------------

A splendid historical inspired by the first Native American to graduate from Harvard. Brooks brings the 1660s to life with period detail, intriguing characters, and a compelling story narrated by Bethia Mayfield, the daughter of a Calvinist preacher. . . . After Caleb loses most of his family to smallpox, he begins to study under Bethia's father. Since she isn't allowed to pursue education, she eavesdrops on Caleb's and her brother's lessons. She tags along when Caleb and her brother go to Cambridge. Her descriptions of 17th-century Cambridge and Harvard are as entertaining as they are enlightening. *—Publishers Weekly*

<b>Campbell, Bonnie Jo</b>	<b>Once Upon a River</b>	<b>L</b>
----------------------------	--------------------------	----------

In her follow-up to National Book Award finalist *American Salvage*, Campbell focuses on Margo Crane, a down-on-her-luck 16-year-old living in late 1970s Michigan who is abandoned by her mother, raped by her uncle, and witness to the shooting death of her father. An accomplished marksman, Margo . . . travels up the Stark River and struggles to survive on her own, having been rejected by her mother. Encountering a progression of strangers, . . . Margo is a modern-day pioneer whose steely resolve is matched only by her guarded need for tenderness. Against the backdrop of a beautiful but unforgiving landscape, Campbell juxtaposes spare prose with lush details in this chronicle of hardship and splendor, friendship and disappointment, and families undone and reunited. *—Publishers Weekly*

<b>Christensen, Kate</b>	<b>The Astral: A Novel</b>	<b>L</b>
--------------------------	----------------------------	----------

Like the gentrifying Brooklyn of its setting, Christensen's latest is populated by an odd but captivating mix of characters. At the center is Harry Quirk, a middle-aged poet whose life is upended when his wife, convinced he's having an affair, destroys his notebooks, throws his laptop from the window, and kicks him out. . . . Their idealistic Dumpster-diving daughter is lonely and lovelorn, and their son is in the grip of a messianic cult. . . . Harry must come to terms with the demands of starting anew at 57. Astute and unsentimental, romantic and rational, Harry is an everyman adrift in a changing world. . . . Christensen takes a singular, genuine story and blows it up into a smart inquiry into the nature of love and the commitments we make, the promises we do and do not honor, and the people we become as we negotiate the parameters of marriage, friendship and parenthood. *—Publishers Weekly*

<b>Crummey, Michael</b>	<b>Galore</b>	<b>L, H</b>
-------------------------	---------------	-------------

Set in Newfoundland, this novel chronicles the intertwined lives and loves of two families . . . over two centuries. Crummey's prose is glorious, honest and unsentimentally magical. Supernatural episodes and anecdotes share the page with naturalistic descriptions of people, physical afflictions, weather, and landscape, and the veil separating life and death is nigh transparent. *—Library Journal*







- Rash, Ron** **One Foot in Eden** **L, H**  
 A moody, potent slice of Southern gothic fiction centered on a murder and its effect on a small Appalachian town in the 1950s. When Holland Winchester, local troublemaker in Seneca, S.C., vanishes without a trace, the town sheriff and WWII veteran searches for answers. Holland's mother insists that neighbor Billy Holcombe killed her son. As events unfurl it's revealed that Billy's pregnant wife, Amy, had an affair with Holland. The ensuing drama of infidelity, jealousy and betrayal is told by a chorus of characters with distinctive Appalachian voices. As each character reveals his or her secrets, the tale builds into a quiet storm—and a terrific novel. —*Publishers Weekly*
- Roffey, Monique** **The White Woman on the Green Bicycle** **L**  
 Few novels capture the postcolonial culture with such searing honesty as this Caribbean story told through the alternating viewpoints of a white British couple over the last 50 years. The pitch-perfect voices capture the colonials' racism and sense of entitlement. —*Booklist*
- Roy, Anuradha** **An Atlas of Impossible Longing** **L**  
 The story explores love, the caste system, and familial lines in a vivid portrait of war-stricken 20<sup>th</sup> century India. A single act of pity rattles down generations to break a caste's rules, test a family's mettle and throw together two unlikely friends. This absorbing story defies prediction. Roy's grace and mesmerizing language linger. —*Washington Post & Amazon.com*
- Russell, Karen** **Swamplandia!** **L, H**  
 A shabby tourist attraction deep in the Everglades is threatened when its star performer dies and her husband and children lose their moorings. Otherworldly sister Osceola, 16, vanishes after falling in love with the ghost of a young man who died in the 1930s. It's up to Ava, 13, to find her sister. Her odyssey to the Underworld is mythic, spellbinding, and terrifying. Ravishing, elegiac, funny, and brilliantly inquisitive, Russell's archetypal swamp saga tells a mystical yet rooted tale of three innocents who come of age through trials of water, fire, and air. —*Booklist*
- Russell, Mary Doria** **Doc** **L, H**  
 A colorful group-portrait of famous frontiersmen years before many of them would pass into legend at the O.K. Corral. Young John Henry "Doc" Holliday moves west in hopes of ameliorating the tuberculosis that would eventually kill him, relocating in the late 1870s to Kansas, where he divides his time among his poorly paying vocation of dentistry, lucrative gambling, and his fractious relationship with a cultured, Hungarian-born prostitute. Tension between the corrupt, carousing, and well-armed inhabitants of Dodge and the forces of law represented by Wyatt and Morgan Earp makes a spectacular background to a memorable tale of a young Southern gentleman whose loyalty to his friends and love of music outshine his fragile health and the whiskey-soaked violence of the frontier. —*Publishers Weekly*
- Santiago, Esmeralda** **Conquistadora** **L, H**  
 A big, bold novel about life on a Caribbean sugar plantation in the mid-19th century. Ana Cubillas, a descendant of conquistadors, is unhappy with the life of a young woman in Spain. She marries Ramon Argoso and encourages him and his twin to take over their family's plantation in Puerto Rico. So begins the saga of Ana's determination to revive the plantation in the face of all obstacles. Is Ana an admirable example of female endurance, or does her relentless ambition only bring tragedy to her family? Can we have sympathy for someone whose success comes from the slavery of others? These are the questions Santiago poses in this lively, well-researched historical novel. —*Library Journal*
- See, Lisa** **Dreams of Joy** **L**  
 Sequel to *Shanghai Girls* sends Pearl back to Shanghai 20 years later in pursuit of Joy, whose flight to China is propelled by anger, idealism, and a desire to find her true father, an artist who may be falling out of favor with the Party. Joy goes with him to the Green Dragon commune, where they take part in the energetic inception of Mao's Great Leap Forward. —*Amazon.com*
- Tanner, Haley** **Vaclav and Lena: A Novel** **L**  
 Vaclav and Lena practice their magic act every day under the watchful eye of Vaclav's mother, who imagines all kinds of dangers befalling her son. She worries about Lena, who is too thin, sneaks food, and lives in abominable conditions. When she witnesses something terrible at Lena's home, she calls Child Protective Services and Lena is taken away. In Part 2, Vaclav at 17 has not gotten over losing Lena. When she reconnects with him, what is initially bliss turns to pain as the truth about the past surfaces. Tanner's novel is a love story of unusual innocence and intensity. Her understated prose is powerful and quite funny. A suspenseful, literary work that is hard to put down. —*Library Journal*











