

**THIRD THURSDAYS: BEACH READS**  
**presented by Jennifer Patterson, June 16, 2011**  
**a CTLS webinar**

**Mary Kay Andrews:**

***The Fixer Upper*** After her boss in a high-powered Washington public relations firm is caught in a political scandal, fledgling lobbyist Dempsey Jo Killebrew is left almost broke, unemployed, and homeless. Out of options, she reluctantly accepts her father's offer to help refurbish Birdsong, the old family place he recently inherited in Guthrie, Georgia...But "Bird Droppings" would more aptly describe the moldering Pepto Bismol pink junk...everyone in Guthrie seems to know Dempsey's business, from a smooth-talking real-estate agent to a cute lawyer who owns the local newspaper. It wouldn't be so bad if it weren't for the pesky FBI agents who show up on Dempsey's doorstep, hoping to pry information about her ex-boss from her. Publisher

***Summer Rental (hardback)*** Ellis, Julia, and Dorie...Best friends since Catholic grade school, now find themselves...at the crossroads of life and love. Ellis, recently fired from a job...is rudderless and...beginning to question the choices she's made over the past decade of her life. Julia...has a man who loves her and is offering her the world, but she can't hide from how deeply insecure she feels about her looks, her brains, her life. And Dorie has just been shockingly betrayed... A month in North Carolina's Outer Banks is just what each of them needs. Ty Bazemore is their landlord, though he's hanging on to the rambling old beach house by a thread ... **Publisher**

**Sarah Bird**

***The Gap Year (prepub)***... told with perfect pitch from two points of view, we meet Cam Lightsey, lactation consultant extraordinaire, a divorcée still secretly carrying a torch for the ex who dumped her [and] ... Aubrey Lightsey, tired of being the dutiful, grade-grubbing band geek, ready to explode from wanting her "real" life to begin...When Aubrey meets Tyler Moldenhauer, football idol–sex god with a dangerous past, the fuse is lit. Late-bloomer Aubrey metastasizes into Cam's worst...nightmare, a girl with zero interest in college...On the sly Aubrey's in touch with her father, who left when she was 2 to join a...cult. As the novel unfolds—with humor, edge-of-your-seat suspense, and penetrating insights about love in the twenty-first century—the dreams of daughter, mother, and father chart an inevitable...collision. **Publisher**

***Yokota Officers Club*** Set in the late 1960s, the story is narrated by 18-year-old Bernie, the eldest of six children in the... Root family. After her freshman year in college, Bernie joins her nomadic kin at their current home, an Okinawan air force base...her younger sister, Kit, is out of control and "now being played by Lolita"; her once glamorous mother, Moe, is overweight and

depressed; her father, who was a heroic and swaggering fighter pilot, has become a distant, self-loathing "ground pounder"... Before being sucked into the family's torpor, Bernie escapes by winning a dance contest that lands her in Tokyo as the stage partner of Bobby Moses, a third-rate borscht belt comedian. There she delves into the past to solve the mystery [of]...her family's deterioration...The dialogue is first-rate, and all the '60s brand-name dropping is amusing; the decade becomes fresh again when seen from the unusual perspective of a military family. **PW**

### **James Lee Burke:**

***The Glass Rainbow (hardback)*** A gruesome series of murders drags Dave Robicheaux, of the Iberia Parish Sheriff's Department, out of his jurisdiction and onto the track of another harrowing cluster of high crimes and misdemeanors. The officers in Jeff Davis Parish say all seven victims of a faceless killer were prostitutes. But convict Elmore Latiolais insists that his sister Bernadette, an honors student headed for a nursing scholarship, didn't fit that pattern. Burke, whose sonorous cadences and obsession with the past have often recalled Faulkner, has never resembled the sage of Yoknapatawpha more closely than in this magnificent attempt to get it all down between one cap and one period. **PW**

***Tin Roof Blowdown*** A storm with greater impact than the bomb that struck Hiroshima peels the face off southern Louisiana. This is the gruesome reality Iberia Parish Sheriff's Detective Dave Robicheaux discovers as he is deployed to New Orleans. Hurricane Katrina has left the commercial district and residential neighborhoods awash with looters and predators. The power grid has been destroyed. There is no law, no order, no sanctuary. In this apocalyptic nightmare, Robicheaux must find two serial rapists, a morphine-addicted priest, and a vigilante who may be more dangerous than the looting criminals. **PW**

### **Jennifer Crusie**

***Bet Me*** Thirty-three-year-old Minerva Dobbs is annoyed when her current boyfriend dumps her three weeks before her sisters' wedding. But she's downright furious a few moments later when she overhears her now "ex" boyfriend bet hunky Calvin Morrisey that he can't take her home and bed her. In fact, she's so angry at them both that she lets Cal take her to dinner and decides to string him along until after her sisters' wedding...But Minerva's hormones keep whispering "this one...Cal is blindsided by the lust he feels for the voluptuous, sensual woman he glimpses behind Min's actuary exterior... *Bet Me* is unabashedly, irrepressibly romantic... Jennifer Crusie leaves no humorous situation unexplored--no potential comedic cauldron left unstirred--no hysterically funny complication left undeveloped.

***Crazy for You*** High school art teacher Quinn McKenzie's life is perfectly normal--and it's making her insane. She's living with Bill, the nicest guy in Tibbett, Ohio, and he's crazy about her. Quinn is already having serious doubts about the future of their relationship when Fate intervenes, in the form of the scrawniest, squirmiest scrap of a dog you'd ever want to lay eyes on. She figures if the dog has the good sense to detest Bill on first sight, she ought to pay attention. And besides, there's Nick Ziegler, local mechanic ...But getting rid of Bill is harder than Quinn ever expected. In fact, Bill was the last person she would have thought would try to hurt her. Thank God Nick is as capable with a two-by-four as he is with an automobile engine! **Amazon Review**

### **Sarah Dessen**

***Along For the Ride*** ...a girl named Auden... always thought that her parents didn't have time to deal with her...differences in her parents caused a divorce, which Auden pretends she does not care about. Auden also never had any real friends. This all changes when she goes to visit her dad and his new wife and baby in a small beach town the summer before college. She finds a new job, new friends, and a romance...Eli, a former bike star, helps Auden get back her childhood and do everything that she never could [before]..." **B&N Reader Review**

***What Happened to Goodbye (hardback)*** In the past two years, Mclean Sweet has moved four times. At each stop, she assumes a new persona, but it never quite works. Whether she's an effervescent cheerleader or an intense drama queen, nothing can permanently dispel the turmoil and rage at her mother since her parents' divorce. Sarah Dessen's novel about a teenager and her restaurant manager father captures the vulnerability that young people often experience after the dissolution of their family. **Publisher**

### **Paula Froelich**

***Mercury in Retrograde*** Three down-on-their-luck Manhattan women form an unlikely fellowship in Page Six deputy editor Froelich's formulaic-though sometimes funny-debut. Anxious socialite Lena Lippencrass, smalltown transplant-cum-intrepid reporter Penelope Mercury and high-powered lawyer Dana Gluck end up in the same former SoHo tenement building at low points in their lives... the book's message of rejecting gossip and hierarchy is sweetly unexpected, even if everything else is by the numbers.**PW**

***It! 9 Secrets of the Rich and Famous...*** Paula Froehlich has a true insider's knowledge of what it takes to be a major (or even minor) celebrity. Now she uses her experience as an arbiter of the club of bold-faced names to advise the rest of us on what it takes to attain stardom in any field. With her trademark brash honesty ...Froehlich cracks the secrets of top publicists, fashion designers, moguls, entertainers... to show us the way to get noticed. **[publisher]**

## Charlaine Harris

***Dead Reckoning (hardback)*** With her knack for being in trouble's way, Sookie witnesses the firebombing of Merlotte's, the bar where she works. Since Sam Merlotte is now known to be two-natured, suspicion falls immediately on the anti-shifters in the area. Sookie suspects otherwise, but her attention is divided when she realizes that her lover Eric Northman and his "child" Pam are plotting to kill the vampire who is now their master. Gradually, Sookie is drawn into the plot—which is much more complicated than she knows...Publisher

***Dead in the Family*** Still reeling from the deaths of her fairy cousin, Claudine, and many others in 2009's *Dead and Gone*, Sookie Stackhouse struggles with paranormal politics...When Claudine's triplet, Claude, appears at her doorstep, Sookie reluctantly allows him to move in. The government threatens two-natures with mandatory registration, and tensions run high in the local Were pack. Then Eric's maker, a Roman named Appius Livius Ocella, arrives without warning, bringing along Alexei Romanov, whom he rescued from the Bolsheviks and turned into a vampire. **PW**

## Joanne Harris:

***The Girl with No Shadow*** Harris revisits characters from 1999's bestselling *Chocolat* in this equally delectable modern fairy tale. More than four years have passed since Vianne Rocher pitted her enchanted chocolate confections against the local clergy's interpretation of Lent in smalltown France; since then, Vianne has renounced magic, changed her name to Yanne Charbonneau and moved with her two daughters to Paris's Montmartre district. There, Yanne embraces conformity and safety, much to the dismay of her increasingly troubled older daughter, Anouk. When Anouk becomes entranced with Zozie de l'Alba, an exotic itinerant who happens upon a job at the new shop, and the relationship grows increasingly sinister, Yanne must call up all of Vianne's powers, culinary and mystical, to save her family...Harris gives fans much to savor in this multilayered novel, from the descriptions (including Yanne's mouthwatering chocolate confections, Zozie's whimsical footwear and Anouk's artistic efforts) to the novel's classic, enduring theme of good vs. evil—and the difficulty of telling the difference. **PW**

***Five Quarters of the Orange*** When Framboise Simon returns to a small village on the banks of the Loire, the locals do not recognize her as the daughter of the infamous woman they hold responsible for a tragedy during the German occupation years ago. But the past and present are inextricably entwined, particularly in a scrapbook of recipes and memories that Framboise has inherited from her mother. And soon Framboise will realize that the journal also contains the key to the tragedy that indelibly marked that summer of her ninth year...**Publisher**

### **Craig Johnson:**

***Junkyard Dogs*** Johnson's sixth mystery featuring Wyoming sheriff Walt will remind readers that a big city isn't necessary for a compelling crime story and enduring hero. One blizzardy February day, Walt and his deputies...visit the Durant, Wyo., dump...to investigate a severed thumb found in a discarded cooler. There they discover that the Stewart family patriarch, George, was almost killed after someone dragged him behind a '68 Toronado. Walt winds up playing peacemaker between the cantankerous Stewarts...and the owner of a new housing development bordering the junkyard. When a search of the dump unearths a surprising side business and two deaths follow, Walt realizes he has bigger problems on his hands.**PW**

***The Dark Horse*** In Johnson's superb fifth contemporary mystery...Walt has his doubts about Mary Barsad's guilt when she confesses to shooting her husband...after [he] allegedly burned down their barn with all Mary's horses inside...Walt can't shake the feeling that there's more to Mary's story. Posing as an insurance agent, Walt starts poking around the tiny town of Absalom.... He meets an illegal immigrant bartender with a knack for crime solving, the Barsads' loyal cowhand, and some ranchers who may have had their own reasons for wanting Wade dead. Walt digs deep into the dilapidated town's history, unearthing secrets that might be better left buried.

### **Victor LaValle**

***Big Machine*** LaValle has garnered critical acclaim...his second novel is sure to up his critical standing while furthering comparisons to Murakami...Toole and...Poe. Gritty, mostly honest-hearted ex-heroin addict...Ricky Rice takes a chance on an anonymous note delivered to him at the cruddy upstate New York bus depot where he works as a porter... Ricky finds himself among the Unlikely Scholars, a secret society of ex-addicts and petty criminals, all black like him, living in remote Vermont and sifting through stacks of articles in a library devoted to investigating the supernatural; the existence of a god...the Unlikely Scholars now call the Voice. Ricky's intoxicating voice—robust, organic, wily—is perfect for narrating LaValle's high-stakes mashup of thrilling paranormal and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*...

### **Barbara O'Neal**

***How to Bake a Perfect Life (hardback)***The Rita Award-winning author...of *The Lost Recipe for Happiness* returns with the absorbing story of Ramona Gallagher, a 40-year-old woman whose joy in running a bakery in Colorado Springs helps her transcend a life that's anything but perfect. Ramona has a prickly relationship with her large, restaurant-owning family and a deep love for her daughter, Sofia, who Ramona had as a teenager and is now grown and pregnant. When Sofia's husband is injured in Afghanistan and she flies to Germany to be with him, Ramona is left to care for Sofia's 13-year-old stepdaughter Katie...Over the summer, Ramona

struggles to keep her business afloat and find some solid footing with her family, bonds with Katie...and rekindles a romance from 25 years earlier. O'Neal's tale of strong-willed women and torn family loyalties is a cut above the standard women's fiction fare, held together by lovingly sketched characters and real emotion. **PW**

### **Anne Patchett:**

***State of Wonder (hardback)*** Sometimes being on the vanguard of scientific progress thrusts you into the teeth of danger. For Minnesota pharmaceutical researcher Dr. Marina Singh, that means being sent into the remotest region of the Amazon jungle to track down her former mentor. Finding Dr. Annick Swenson promises to be perilous: The last scientist assigned to find her has disappeared too. What follows is the most ambitious novel yet by *Bel Canto* author Ann Patchett... **B&N**

***Magician's Assistant...***When Parsifal, Sabine's husband of more than 20 years and the magician of the title, suddenly dies, Sabine begins to discover how she's glimpsed him only through smoke and mirrors. He has managed to keep hidden the existence of a family in Nebraska--his mother, two sisters, and two nephews. Sabine approaches them hungrily, as if they are a bridge to her beloved husband and a key to the mysteries he left behind. **Amazon Review**

### **Luanne Rice**

***The Silver Boat (hardback)*** Dar McCarthy is expecting her sisters, Delia and Rory, to join her in Martha's Vineyard for a final visit to the family home before it has to be sold for taxes...The house has been in the family for generations, and as the sisters reunite to pack up mementos, they broach the one subject that has haunted them, the disappearance of their father when they were young. Driven by the need to prove his worth, he sailed to Ireland...Dar and her sisters go to Ireland on their own quest. Rice...captures the essence of family and sisterhood as each character deals with love and loss. **Booklist**

### **Helen Simonson**

***Major Pettigrew's Last Stand...***Simonson tells the tale of Maj. Ernest Pettigrew, an honor-bound Englishman and widower...As the novel opens, the major is mourning the loss of his younger brother, Bertie, and attempting to get his hands on Bertie's antique Churchill shotgun—part of a set that the boys' father split between them...While the major is eager to reunite the pair for tradition's sake, his son, Roger, has plans to sell the heirloom ...the major's friendship with Jasmina Ali—the Pakistani widow of the local food shop owner—takes a turn unexpected by the major (but not the reader).The author's dense, descriptive prose wraps around the reader like a comforting cloak...**PW**

## **Brady Udall**

***The Lonely Polygamist*** A family drama with stinging turns of dark comedy, the latest from Udall...is a superb performance and as comic as it is sublimely catastrophic. Golden Richards is a polygamist Mormon with four wives, 28 children, a struggling construction business, and a few secrets. He tells his wives that the brothel he's building in Nevada is actually a senior center, and, more importantly, [hides his] infatuation with a woman he sees near the job site. Golden, perpetually on edge, has become increasingly isolated from his massive family...his newest and youngest wife, Trish, is wondering if there is more to life than the polygamist lifestyle, and one of his sons, Rusty... hatches a revenge plot that will have dire consequences. Udall's polished storytelling and sterling cast of perfectly realized and flawed characters make this a serious contender for Great American Novel **PW**