



### Five Things to Ponder

#### Think about This

1. From “The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Reader” by Colin Robinson, *New York Times*, January 5, 2014.

Budgets (in book companies) have been trimmed in various ways:

Author advances, except for the biggest names, have slumped sharply since the 2008 financial crash, declining by more than half, according to one recent survey. It’s hard to imagine that the quality of manuscripts from writers who have been forced either to eat less or write faster isn’t deteriorating. Meanwhile, spending on editing and promotion has also been pared away.

Things don’t get better after the book leaves the publisher. Price cutting, led primarily by Amazon, has reduced many brick-and-mortar bookstores to rubble, depriving readers of direct interaction with booksellers. Despite some recent good news, the number of independents has been halved in the last two decades, and the chain stores that survive increasingly employ part-time, unskilled staff.

The decline in libraries weakens another vital prop for read-

ers. Librarians, described by the novelist Richard Powers as “gas attendant[s] of the mind,” saw a national decrease in their numbers of nearly 100,000 over the two decades to 2009. Two-thirds of public libraries reported flat or decreasing budgets in 2012.

2. Elizabeth Suneby, with illustrator Suana Verelet, has written *Razia’s Ray of Hope: One Girl’s Dream of an Education* (Kids Can Press, 2013). While this is a book intended for elementary students, its message of hope is for all ages. A young Afghanistan girl would love to go to school, but it is not usually permitted in this culture. “Our girls are needed to help their mothers at home.” The author points out “only about 13 percent of girls living in Afghanistan are literate.” What does it mean not to be able to read or write?

3. Michael Sokolove, a feature writer for the *New York Times*, is the author of *Drama High* (Riverhead Press, 2013). This book is a tribute to English/Drama teacher Lou Volpe, an outstanding personality at Harry S. Truman High School in the blue collar section

of Levittown, PA. There is hardly any censorship in the productions Volpe presents in this school. He is a perfectionist, and he wants his productions to be of Broadway quality, and he is able to inspire his students to be “professional.” His productions have won many awards and caused Cameron Mackintosh, a major Broadway producer, among others, to visit the school to see what Volpe is able to do.

Over time, one of the things that I come to see is how deeply Volpe knows his students. How couldn’t he? They take chances onstage that reveal their inner selves. But it is also true that the very things they learn from being in theater—empathy, the ability to imagine lives other than their own; the actor’s gift for giving a character a backstory, a biography beyond what the playwright put on the paper—allow *them* to know *him*.

You have to “find your character,” he tells them, meaning they have to imagine lives they cannot fully know. Not the prosaic biographical details, but beyond that. What is it like to *be* that person? What resides deep within, and what is missing? Volpe gives his students only hints of his personal

life—tells them about the show he just saw in New York, the purchase he made at the mall—so they have to imagine the rest, intuit it, figure out what’s it like to be Louis T. Volpe, high school theater teacher. (p. 39)

4. From *The Rights of the Reader* by Daniel Pennac, illustrated by Quentin Blake (Candlewick, 2008).

1. The right not to read.
2. The right to skip.
3. The right not to finish a book.
4. The right to read it again.
5. The right to read anything.
6. The right to mistake a book for real life.
7. The right to read anywhere.
8. The right to dip in.
9. The right to read out loud.
10. The right to be quiet. (p. 135)

5. How does one thank all of the authors, teachers, publishers who made the 40th anniversary of ALAN a celebration in Boston? So many good presentations. The Program Committee did an amazing job. In the boxes each participant received were a multitude of fine new books. Now is the time to order books for classrooms, school libraries, public libraries to support the efforts of authors and publishers. Now is the time to recognize that giving students a variety of choices will develop a love of reading for the rest of their lives.

### **And Think More with These Books**

To encourage such an activity, here are some themes worthy of consideration.

#### **Another Time**

Bradbury, Jennifer. *A Moment*

*Comes*. Atheneum, 2013.

Brendler, Carol. *Radio Girl*. Holiday House, 2013.

Kline, Christina Baker. *Orphan Train*. Morrow, 2013.

Laskey, Kathryn. *The Extra*. Candlewick, 2013.

Longshore, Katherine. *Tarnish*. Viking, 2013.

MacColl, Michaela. *Nobody’s Secret*. Chronicle, 2013.

Westrich, A. B. *Brotherhood*. Viking, 2013.

Whelan, Gloria. *All My Noble Dreams and Then What Happens*. Simon & Schuster, 2013.

#### **When One Dies**

Arntson, Steven. *The Wrap-Up List*. Houghton Mifflin, 2013

Coriell, Shelly. *Goodbye, Rebel Blue*. Amulet, 2013.

Davis, Lane. *I Swear*. Simon & Schuster, 2013.

Koertge, Ron. *Coaltown Jesus*. Candlewick, 2013.

Lynch, Chris. *Pieces*. Simon & Schuster, 2013.

Ness, Patrick. *More than This*. Candlewick, 2013.

Seamon, Hollis. *Somebody up There Hates You*. Algonquin, 2013.

Sones, Sonya. *One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies*. Simon & Schuster, 2013.

Whitney, Daisy. *When You Were Here*. Little, Brown, 2013.

#### **Autobiography and Biography**

Freedman, Russell. *Abraham Lincoln & Frederick Douglass*. Clarion, 2012.

Harden, Blaine. *Escape from Camp 14*. Penguin, 2012.

Hapter-Gault, Charlayne. *To the Mountain Top: My Journey through the Civil Rights Movement*. Roaring Brook, 2012.

Hartzler, Aaron. *Rapture Practice*. Little, Brown, 2013.

Ko, Alex. *From Iowa to Broadway: My Billy Elliot Story*. Harper, 2013.

Nazario, Sonia. *Enrique’s Journey*. Delacorte, 2013.

Scieszka, Casey, and Steven Weinberg. *To Timbuktu*. Roaring Brook, 2011.

Wallace, Rich, and Sandra Neil Wallace. *Babe Conquers the World: The Legendary Life of Babe Didrikson Zaharias*. Calkins Creek, 2014.

#### **Family Matters**

Anderson, Laurie Halse. *The Impossible Knife of Memory*. Viking, 2014.

Gewirtz, Adina Rische. *Zebra Forest*. Candlewick, 2013.

Griffin, N. *The Whole Stupid Way We Are*. Atheneum, 2013.

Halpern, Julie. *Have A Nice Day*. Feiwel, 2012.

King, A. S. *Reality Boy*. Little, Brown, 2013.

Klass, David. *Grandmaster*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2014.

Mack, W. S. *Athlete vs. Mathlete*. Bloomsbury, 2013.

Manzano, Sonia. *The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano*. Scholastic, 2012.

McInnes, Nicole. *Briana on the Brink*. Holiday House, 2013.

Roskus, Evan. *Dr. Bird’s Advice for Sad Poets*. Houghton Mifflin, 2013.

Sitomer, Alan Lawrence. *Caged Warrior*. Hyperion, 2013.

Tracy, Kristen. *Too Cool for This School*. Delacorte, 2013.

#### **Multiculturalism**

Ada, Alma Flor, and F. Isabel Campoy, with pictures by David Diaz. *Yes, We Are Latinos*.

Charlesbridge, 2013.  
 Ellis, Leanne Statland. *The Ugly One*. Clarion, 2013.  
 Farrar, Josh. *A Song for Bijou*. Walker, 2013.  
 Freedman, Paula J. *My Basmati Bat Mitzvah*. Amulet, 2013.  
 Gansworth, Eric. *If I Ever Get Out of Here*. Scholastic, 2013.  
 La Valley, Jasmine. *The Vine Basket*. Clarion, 2013.  
 Rhodes, Jewell. *Sugar*. Little, Brown, 2013.  
 Sullivan, Tara. *Golden Boy*. Putnam, 2013.

### **Mystery and Suspense**

Balliett, Blue. *Hold Fast*. Scholastic, 2012.  
 Barnes, Jennifer Lynn. *The Naturals*. Hyperion, 2013.  
 Berk, Josh. *Strike Three You're Dead*. Knopf, 2012.  
 Gleason, Colleen. *The Clockwork Scarab*. Chronicle, 2013.  
 Lane, Andrew. *Black Ice*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2013.  
 Lane, Andrew. *Fire Storm*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2013.  
 MacColl, Michaela. *Nobody's Secret*. Chronicle, 2013.  
 Price, Charlie. *Dead Girl Moon*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2012.  
 Sharp, Tim. *Mojo*. Knopf, 2013.  
 Wasserman, Robin. *The Book of Blood and Shadow*. Knopf, 2012.

### **Nonfiction**

Bascomb, Neal. *The Nazi Hunters*. Scholastic, 2013.  
 Heos, Bridget, with photographs by Andy Comins. *Stronger than Steel*. Houghton Mifflin, 2012.  
 Hoose, Phillip. *Moonbird: A Year on the Wind with the Great Survivor B95*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2012.  
 Meisner, David, and Kim Richard-

son. *Call of the Klondike*. Calkins Creek, 2013.  
 Newquist, H. P. *The Book of Blood*. Houghton Mifflin, 2012.  
 O'Reilly, Bill. *Lincoln's Last Days*. Holt, 2012.  
 O'Reilly, Bill. *Kennedy's Last Days*. Holt, 2013.  
 Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw, with photographs by William Munoz. *The Horse and the Plains Indians*. Clarion, 2012.  
 Rusch Elizabeth, with photographs by Tom Uhlman. *Eruptions; Volcanoes and the Science of Saving Lives*. Houghton Mifflin, 2013.  
 Sandler, Martin W. *Imprisoned: The Betrayal of Japanese Americans during World War II*. Walker, 2013.

### **Romance**

Arnold, Elana. *Burning*. Clarion, 2013.  
 Block, Francesca Lia. *Love in the Time of Global Warming*. Holt, 2013.  
 Lynch, Nicholas. *My Beautiful Hippie*. Holiday House, 2013.  
 Myracle, Lauren. *The Infinite Moment of Us*. Amulet, 2013.  
 Rowell, Rainbow. *Eleanor & Park*. St. Martin's Press, 2013.  
 Sheldon, Dyan. *One or Two Things I Learned about Love*. Candlewick, 2013.  
 Smith, Jennifer E. *This Is What Happy Looks Like*. Little, Brown, 2013.

### **School Matters**

Alexander, Kwame. *He Said, She Said*. Amistad, 2013.  
 Baskin, Nora Raleigh. *Runt*. Simon & Schuster, 2013.  
 Crane, Caprice. *Confessions of a Hater*. Feiwel, 2013.  
 Crutcher, Chris. *Period 8*. Greenwil-

low, 2013.  
 Flores-Scott, Patrick. *Jumped In*. Holt, 2013.  
 Medina, Meg. *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass*. Candlewick, 2013.  
 Smith, Andrew. *Winger*. Simon & Schuster, 2013.  
 Steinkellner, Teddy. *Trash Can Days*. Hyperion, 2013.

### **Science Fiction**

Barnes, Jennifer Lynn. *Nobody*. Egmont, 2012.  
 Bruchac, Joseph. *Killer of Enemies*. Tu, 2013.  
 Colfer, Eoin. *Warp Book 1: The Reluctant*. Hyperion, 2013.  
 Deebs, Tracy. *Doomed*. Walker, 2013.  
 Grant, Michael. *Bzrk Reloaded*. Egmont, 2013.  
 Hirsch, Jeff. *The Darkest Path*. Scholastic, 2013.  
 London, Alex. *Proxy*. Philomel, 2013.  
 Meyer, Marissa. *Scarlet: The Lunar Chronicles*. Feiwel, 2013.  
 Rosenblum, Gregg. *Fugitive X*. Harper, 2014.  
 Shusterman, Neal. *The Dark Side of Nowhere*. Simon & Schuster, 2012.  
 Thomas, Lex. *Quarantine: The Loners*. Egmont, 2012.  
 Thomas, Lex. *Quarantine: The Saints*. Egmont, 2013.  
 Waggoner, Susan. *Neptune's Tears*. Holt, 2013.  
 Yancy, Rick. *The 5th Wave*. Putnam, 2013.  
 Yansky, Brian. *Homicidal Aliens and Other Disappointments*. Candlewick, 2013.

### **Special Problems**

Chapman, Clay McLeod. *The Tribe: Homeroom Headhunters*. Hyperion, 2013.

Deen, Carolee. *Forget Me Not*. Simon Pulse, 2012.

Ellen, Laura. *Blind Spot*. Harcourt, 2012.

Leavitt, Martine. *My Book of Life by Angel*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2012.

Rees, Celia. *This Is Not Forgiveness*. Bloomsbury, 2012.

Sloan, Holly Goldberg. *Counting by 7s*. Dial, 2013.

Takoudes, Greg. *When We Wuz Famous*. Holt, 2013.

Thorp, Tim. *Badd*. Knopf, 2011.

Vawter, Vince. *Paperboy*. Delacorte, 2013.

Vernick, Shirley Reva. *Remember Dippy*. Cinco Puntos Press, 2013.

### Sports

Brown, Daniel James. *The Boys in the Boat*. Viking, 2013.

Coughlin, T. Glen. *One Shot Away*. Harper, 2012.

Deuker, Carl. *Swagger*. Houghton Mifflin, 2013.

Feinstein, John. *Foul Trouble*. Knopf, 2013.

Green, Tim. *Force Out*. Harper, 2013.

Heldring, Thatcher. *The League*. Delacorte, 2013.

Klass, David, and Peter Klass. *Second Impact*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2013.

Lupica, Mike. *Game Changers—Play Makers*. Scholastic, 2013.

Seles, Monica, and James LaRosa. *The Academy: Game On*. Bloomsbury, 2013.

Wallace, Sandra Neil. *Muckers*. Knopf, 2012.

### Supernatural

Blythe, Daniel. *Shadow Breakers*. Chicken House, 2013.

Grant, Michael. *Fear*. Katherine Tegen, 2012.

Grant, Michael. *Light*. Katherine Tegen, 2013.

Hawkins, Rachel. *School Spirits*. Hyperion, 2013.

Hodkin, Michelle. *The Evolution of Mara Dyer*. Simon & Schuster, 2012.

Kotecki, Nathan. *Pull Down the Night*. Houghton Mifflin, 2013.

Lettrick, Robert. *Frenzy*. Hyperion, 2014.

Leveen, Tom. *Sick*. Amulet, 2013.

McNeal, Tom. *Far from Away*. Knopf, 2013.

Perez, Marlene. *Dead Is Just a Dream*. Houghton Mifflin/Harcourt, 2013.

Ruby, Lois. *Rebel Spirits*. Point, 2013.

Toffler-Corrie, Laura. *The Totally Awkward Supernatural Crush*. Roaring Brook, 2013.

### War

Boyden, Joseph. *Three Day Road*. Penguin, 2006.

Elliott, L. M. *Across a War-Tossed Sea*. Hyperion, 2014.

Frost, Helen. *Salt*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2013.

Gratz, Alan. *Prisoner B-3087*. Scholastic, 2013.

Patterson, Valerie O. *Operation Oleander*. Clarion, 2013.

Sutcliffe, William. *The Wall*. Walker, 2013.

Voorhoeve, Anne C. *My Family for the War*. Dial, 2012.

Wein, Elizabeth. *Rose under Fire*. Hyperion, 2013.

Witterick, J. L. *My Mother's Secret*. Putnam, 2013.

Yang, Gene Luen. *Boxers*. First Second, 2013.

Yang, Gene Luen. *Saints*. First Second, 2013.

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