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Bet You Missed It

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Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

Column Editor: **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Editor's Note: Hey, are y'all reading this? If you know of an article that should be called to *Against the Grain's* attention ... send an email to <kstrauch@comcast.net>. We're listening! — **KS**

GOODY. LET'S READ ABOUT SEXUAL OBSESSION

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

(1) **Henry Miller**, *Quiet Days in Clichy* (1956); (2) **Junichiro Tanizaki**, *Naomi* (1947) (Roaring Twenties moga or modern girl humiliating her benefactor); (3) **Louis Couperus**, *The Hidden Force* (1900) (Dutch colonial official in eroticized Indonesia); (4) **Bohumil Hrabal**, *Close Watched Trains* (1964); (5) **Pierre Choderlos de Laclos**, *Dangerous Liaisons* (1782) (the earliest exploration of whether sexual pleasure and emotion can be separated) (If you're wondering, it can't.).

See — **Ian Buruma**, "Five Best," *The Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 12-13, 2013, p.C10.

NOW FOR SOME VICTORIAN GORE

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Pull up to the fire for some good Victorian crime reads: (1) **Thomas De Quincey**, *On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts* (1827); (2) **V.A.C. Gatrell**, *The Hanging Tree* (1994) (a thorough study of execution in England); (3) **Ruth Richardson**, *Death, Dissection, and the Destitute* (1987) (nothing like a good grave robbing); (4) **Wilkie Collins**, *Armada* (1864-65) (fiendishly clever but forgotten Collins); (5) **Andrew Forrester**, *The Female Detective* (c. 1864) (the second female detective in lit history).

See — **Judith Flanders**, "Five Best," *The Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 26-27, 2013, p.C10. **Judith** is the author of *The Invention of Murder: How the Victorians Reveled in Death and Detection and Created Modern Crime*.



THE MASTER MUSES

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

The great **Tom Wolfe** is interviewed. He wanted to be a writer from age five even though he couldn't read. But he saw his father publish an agricultural journal, *The Southern Planter*.

"I would see him writing on a big yellow legal pad. And then about two weeks later there would come out a publication in type. I don't know if I can explain it, but when I was young, type was so refined. It had these sharp edges. I wish I could relive the excitement of seeing type for the first time."

He also notes the old saw "write about what you know" is "brilliant advice for your first novel, but it makes you helpless on your second." **Tom** didn't write *Bonfire of the Vanities* until he was 54, and he knew nothing of the subject matter. He had to dig it all up using his skills as a reporter.

See — **George Neumayr**, "The Bizarre and the Jeune," *The American Spectator*, Jan/Feb, 2014, p.10.

HOODS, DIRTBAGS & STUMBLEBUMS

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Let's read about human detritus. (1) **S.E. Hinton**, *The Outsiders* (1967) (switchblades and hot cars); (2) **Saul Bellow**, *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953) (slum rats of the Depression); (3) **Christopher Isherwood**, *Berlin Stories* (1945) (Who knew? **Capote** ripped off one of these stories for "Breakfast at Tiffany's"); (4) **Herbert Asbury**, *Gangs of New York* (1928) (from Dead Rabbits and River Dusters to union goons); (5) **Bill Buford**, *Among the Thugs* (1990) (American tourist falls among British soccer hooligans wrecking an Italian town).

See — **Rich Cohen**, "Five Best," *The Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 7-8, 2013, p.C10.

Notes from Langlois — Prelude to Thoughts on Sustainability

Column Editor: **Scott Alan Smith** (Langlois Public Library, Langlois, Oregon; Phone: 541-348-2066) <scott.alan.smith@langloislibrary.net>

Well, gentle readers, it's been a little over a year since I assumed my duties as library director of the **Langlois Public Library**. Leading a small rural public library has proven in many ways to be very rewarding. There have been some surprises. I have learned a great deal.

Some aspects of the job have proven, not surprisingly, to be very familiar. My nearly thirty years as a book dealer prepared me well to handle selection, acquisitions, collection development, and vendor relations. I have enjoyed this work, and it has been very

gratifying to see my choices in the hands of readers.

Indeed, one of the most rewarding experiences of this appointment has been the opportunity to get to know and to interact with patrons. I know many of them by name, and I've learned their readings and viewing tastes (we check out a lot of DVDs as well as books). Although it has perhaps receded into the dim corners of archaic library practice, readers' advisory is still very much alive here.

Public access computers get a great deal of use, as does wi-fi. Helping people find the

information they seek is fundamental to effective customer service, and again vendor experience is invaluable training for such a role.

Programming is a central function of the job. We have monthly programs that include a book club, language classes, a movie night, favorite readings, and presentations that focus on local and regional culture and history. We also work closely with the **Port Orford Public Library** (Port Orford is only thirteen miles

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