

# COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS: BOOK LIST

## FICTION

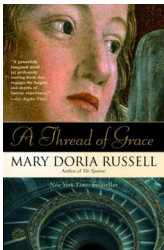


### **A Thousand Splendid Suns**

Khaled Hosseini

Fiction, 2008, 432 pages

Born a generation apart and with very different ideas about love and family, Mariam and Laila are two women brought jarringly together by war, by loss and by fate. As they endure the ever escalating dangers around them -- in their home as well as in the streets of Kabul -- they come to form a bond that makes them both sisters and mother-daughter to each other, and that will ultimately alter the course not just of their own lives but of the next generation. With heart-wrenching power and suspense, Hosseini shows how a woman's love for her family can move her to shocking and heroic acts of self-sacrifice, and that in the end it is love, or even the memory of love, that is often the key to survival. (Amazon.com)



### **A Thread of Grace**

Mary Doria Russell

Fiction, 2005, 464 pages

A Thread of Grace is the story of the Jewish underground near Genoa during the Nazi occupation of Italy. Nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, this thriller “moves swiftly, with impressive authority, jostling dialog, vibrant personalities and meticulous, unexpected historical detail. The intensity and intimacy of Russell’s storytelling, her sharp character writing and fierce sense of humor bring fresh immediacy to this riveting WWII saga,” according to Publisher’s Weekly. (Amazon.com)

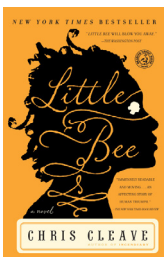


### **In the Sea There are Crocodiles**

Fabio Geda

Fiction, 2012, 224 pages

In early 2002, Enaiatollah Akbari’s village fell prey to the Taliban. His mother, fearing for his life, led him across the border. So began Enaiat’s remarkable and often punishing five-year ordeal—trekking across bitterly cold mountains, riding the suffocating false bottom of a truck, steering an inflatable raft in violent waters—through Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, and Greece, before he eventually sought political asylum in Italy, all before he turned fifteen years old. Here Geda delivers the moving true story of Enaiat’s extraordinary will to survive and of the accidental brotherhood he found with the boys he met along the way. In the Sea There Are Crocodiles brilliantly captures Enaiat’s engaging voice and humor, in what is a truly epic story of hope and survival, for readers of all ages. (Amazon.com)

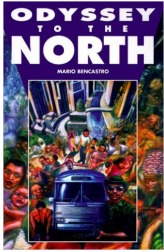


### **Little Bee: A Novel**

Chris Cleave

Fiction, 2008, 271 pages

The Other Hand, also known as Little Bee, is a dual narrative story about a Nigerian asylum-seeker and a British magazine editor who meet during the oil conflict in the Niger Delta, and are re-united in England several years later. Cleave, inspired as a university student by his temporary employment in an asylum detention centre, wrote the book in an attempt to humanize the plight of asylum-seekers in Britain. The novel examines the treatment of refugees by the asylum system, as well as issues of British colonialism, globalization, political violence and personal accountability. (Wikipedia)



### **Odyssey to the North**

Mario Bencastro (Translated from the Spanish by Susan Giersbach Rascon)

Fiction, 1998, 192 pages

Showing both the heartbreak and the humor of life in a strange culture, award-winning author Bencastro creates a caring portrait of Calixto as he seeks not only work, but safety from unjust persecution in his homeland. The even-tempered prose of this quietly resolute political novel gives voice to a generation of Central American immigrants. The novel's dramatic tension emerges through a series of interpolated flashbacks. Through an artful collage of the conversations between [the hero] Calixto and his friends, news reports, courtroom transcripts, love letters, and anecdotes, Bencastro documents the hardships Calixto suffers. Unpretentious and reportorial, Bencastro's tone is welcomingly understated -- and his message is more powerful for it. (Publishers Weekly)

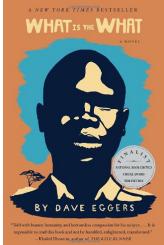


### **The Kite Runner**

Khaled Hosseini

Fiction, 2003, 400 pages

Hosseini's stunning debut novel starts as an eloquent Afghan version of the American immigrant experience in the late 20th century, but betrayal and redemption come to the forefront when the narrator, a writer, returns to his ravaged homeland to rescue the son of his childhood friend after the boy's parents are shot during the Taliban takeover in the mid '90s. Add an incisive, perceptive examination of recent Afghan history and its ramifications in both America and the Middle East, and the result is a complete work of literature that succeeds in exploring the culture of a previously obscure nation that has become a pivot point in the global politics of the new millennium. (Publishers Weekly)



### **What Is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng**

Dave Eggers

Fiction, 2007, 560 pages

What Is the What is an epic novel based on the life of Valentino Achak Deng who, along with thousands of other children —the so-called Lost Boys—was forced to leave his village in Sudan at the age of seven and trek hundreds of miles by foot, pursued by militias, government bombers, and wild animals, and cross the deserts of three countries to find freedom. When he finally is resettled in the United States, he finds a life full of promise, but also heartache and myriad new challenges. Moving, suspenseful, and unexpectedly funny, What Is the What is an astonishing novel that illuminates the lives of millions through one extraordinary man. New York Times Bestseller, New York Times Notable Book (Amazon.com)

## **NONFICTION**

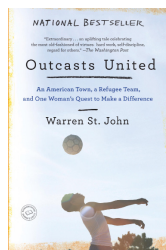


### **Burning Country: Syrians in Revolution and War**

Robin Yassin-Kassab and Leila Al-Shami

Nonfiction, 2016, 280 pages

Burning Country explores the complicated reality of life in present-day Syria with unprecedented detail and sophistication, drawing on new first-hand testimonies from opposition fighters, exiles lost in an archipelago of refugee camps, and courageous human rights activists. Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami expertly interweave these stories with an incisive analysis of the militarization of the uprising, the rise of the Islamists and warfare, and the role of Syria's government in exacerbating the brutalization of the conflict. Through these accounts and a broad range of secondary source material, the authors persuasively argue that the international community has failed in its stated commitments to support the Syrian opposition movements. (Amazon.com)

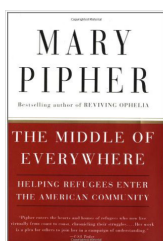


## **Outcasts United: An American Town, a Refugee Team, and One Woman's Quest to Make a Difference**

Warren St. John

Nonfiction, 2009, 320 pages

St. John builds on his 2007 New York Times article about the Fugees, a soccer program for boys from families of refugees from war-torn nations who have been resettled in the town of Clarkston, Georgia, 13 miles east of Atlanta. Led by the founder and coach Luma Mufleh, a strong-willed, Jordanian woman who turned her back on a privileged past to stay in America after attending Smith College, the three youth teams are a conglomeration of players from Africa, the Balkans and the Middle East. The challenges they face are many, including an ongoing fight against city hall for a field on which to play, and getting by with subpar equipment. Their biggest challenge, however, is the difficulty immigrants face in learning the ways of a strange land and living with the memories of tragedy (some players had lost a parent to violence or imprisonment). (Publishers Weekly)

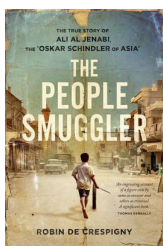


## **The Middle of Everywhere: Helping Refugees Enter the American Community**

Mary Pipher

Nonfiction, 2003, 416 pages

Though Lincoln, Nebraska, seems a strange gathering place for refugees from all corners of the globe, it is the setting for Pipher's *The Middle of Everywhere*, an ardent, anecdotal, and at times moving study of some new arrivals to the United States. Pipher emphasizes the resiliency of the refugees--from Laos, Bosnia, Northern Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan, and the former Soviet Union--whose homeland tales of death, privation, torture, and multi-pronged persecution vary only in the details. In America, the refugees must learn a new language and pick their way among the temptations and wonders of a complex land. Pipher visits classrooms and homes and offers extended portraits of a female family of Kurds and a bewildered clan of Sudanese, as well as snapshots of many other refugees. (Amazon.com Review)

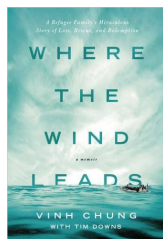


## **The People Smuggler: The True Story of Ali Al Jenabi**

Robin de Crespigny

Nonfiction, 2012, 335 pages

At once a nonfiction thriller and a moral maze, this is one man's epic story of trying to find a safe place in the world. When Ali Al Jenabi flees Saddam Hussein's torture chambers, he is forced to leave his family behind in Iraq. What follows is an incredible international odyssey through the shadow world of fake passports, crowded camps and illegal border crossings, living every day with excruciating uncertainty about what the next will bring. Through betrayal, triumph, misfortune even romance and heartbreak Ali is sustained by his fierce love of freedom and family. Continually pushed to the limits of his endurance, eventually he must confront what he has been forced to become. (Amazon.com)



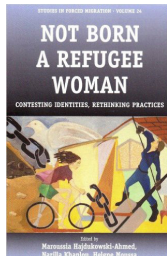
## **Where the Wind Leads: A Refugee Family's Miraculous Story of Loss, Rescue, and Redemption**

Dr. Vinh Chung and Tim Downs

Nonfiction, 2015, 368 pages

*Where the Wind Leads* follows Vinh Chung and his family on their desperate journey from pre-war Vietnam, through pirate attacks on a lawless sea, to a miraculous rescue and a new home in the unlikely town of Fort Smith, Arkansas. There Vinh struggles against poverty, discrimination, and a bewildering language barrier—yet still manages to graduate from Harvard Medical School. *Where the Wind Leads* is Vinh's tribute to the courage and sacrifice of his parents, a testimony to his family's faith, and a reminder to people everywhere that the American dream, while still possible, carries with it a greater responsibility. (Amazon.com)

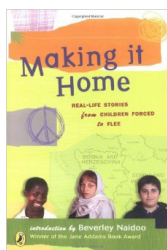
## SHORT STORIES & ESSAYS



### **Not Born a Refugee Woman: Contesting Identities, Rethinking Practices (Studies in Forced Migration)**

Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed (Editor), Nazilla Khanlou (Editor), Helene Moussa (Editor)  
Academic Collection of Essays, 2008, 336 pages

Not Born a Refugee Woman is an in-depth inquiry into the identity construction of refugee women. It challenges and rethinks current identity concepts, policies, and practices in the context of a globalizing environment, and in the increasingly racialized post-September 11th context, from the perspective of refugee women. This collection brings together scholar practitioners from across a wide range of disciplines. The authors emphasize refugee women's agency, resilience, and creativity, in the continuum of domestic, civil, and transnational violence and conflicts, whether in flight or in resettlement, during their uprooted journey and beyond. (Amazon.com)



### **Making It Home: Real-Life Stories from Children Forced to Flee**

Beverly Naidoo  
Collection of Stories (Ages 8+), 2005, 128 pages

In this inspiring collection, children living all over the world speak about being forced to flee their homes as refugees. With original, autobiographical accounts, Making It Home gives a poignant voice to the millions of young people whose lives have been disrupted by war but who have escaped. With maps, brief histories of each country, and an eight-page photo insert, this book helps young people understand the world and the children who share the dream of freedom. (Amazon.com)

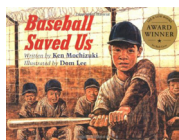


### **Give Me Shelter: Stories About Children Who Seek Asylum**

Tony Bradman (Editor)  
Collection of Short Stories (Ages 9+), 2007, 127 pages

The phrase "asylum seeker" is one heard in the media all the time. It stimulates fierce and controversial debate in arguments about migration, race, and religion. The movement of people from poor or struggling countries to those where there may be opportunities for a better life has been a constant in human history, but it is something with particular relevance in this time of wide-scale political and social upheaval. Featuring stories from youth based in trouble spots around the world — including Kosovo, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Eritrea, Zaire, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Zimbabwe, and Kurdistan — this collection of stories spotlights people who have been forced to leave their homes or families to seek help and shelter elsewhere. (Amazon.com publisher blurb)

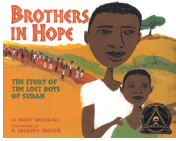
## CHILDREN'S BOOKS



### **Baseball Saved Us**

Ken Mochizuki (Author), Dom Lee (Illustrator)  
Picture Book (Ages 6+), 1995, 30 pages

Shorty and his family, along with thousands of Japanese Americans, are sent to an internment camp after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Fighting the heat and dust of the desert, Shorty and his father decide to build a baseball diamond and form a league in order to boost the spirits of the internees. Shorty quickly learns that he is playing not only to win, but to gain dignity and self-respect as well. (Amazon.com)

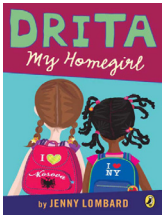


### **Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan**

Mary Williams (Author), R. Gregory Christie (Author), Gregory Christie (Illustrator)

Picture Book (Ages 7+), 2005, 40 pages

Since 2000, the United States has taken in about 3,000 “Lost Boys of Sudan,” orphaned by the ethnic and religious wars that have left two million dead. Through the fictionalized first-person account of one boy, Garang, this moving picture book tells the big story of children at war. Driven from his village home by the soldiers, Garang treks with other boys nearly 1,000 miles across the border, first to Ethiopia, and later to Kenya. He finds shelter in refugee camps, but many other refugees die along the way. (Booklist review)

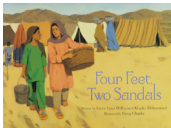


### **Drita, My Homegirl**

Jenny Lombard

Fiction (Ages 8+), 2008, 144 pages

Fleeing war-torn Kosovo, ten-year-old Drita and her family move to America with the dream of living a typical American life. But with this hope comes the struggle to adapt and fit in. How can Drita find her place at school and in her new neighborhood when she doesn't speak any English? Meanwhile, Maxie and her group of fourth-grade friends are popular in their class, and make an effort to ignore Drita. So when their teacher puts Maxie and Drita together for a class project, things get off to a rocky start. But sometimes, when you least expect it, friendship can bloom and overcome even a vast cultural divide. (Amazon.com)

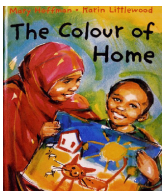


### **Four Feet, Two Sandals**

Karen Lynn Williams (Author), Khadra Mohammed (Author), Doug Chayka (Illustrator)

Picture Book (Ages 7+), 2007, 32 pages

When relief workers bring used clothing to a refugee camp in Pakistan, ten-year-old Lina is thrilled when she finds a sandal that fits her foot perfectly - until she sees that another girl has the matching shoe. But soon Lina and Feroza meet and decide that it is better to share the sandals than for each to wear only one. The girls discover the true meaning of friendship and sacrifice. Four Feet, Two Sandals honors the experiences of refugee children around the world, whose daily existence is marked by uncertainty and fear. (Amazon.com)



### **The Colour of Home**

Mary Hoffman (Author), Karin Littlewood (Illustrator)

Picture Book (Ages 5+), 2012, 32 pages

This remarkably moving picture book follows first-grader Hassan through his first few days at school. Hassan has only recently arrived in the United States after he and his family were forced to flee Somalia, and he deeply misses the colorful landscape of his former home in Africa. But with the help of his parents, an understanding teacher, and a school art project, Hassan finds his homesickness and the trauma of leaving a war-torn country lessen when he paints a picture of his old home and shares his story. He also finds many things to like about his new home in America. (Amazon.com)