

# Off the SHELF

The Georgia Library Quarterly reviews books on aspects of life in Georgia and the South, including history, literature, politics, education and genealogy. Materials written by Southern authors or published by regional publishers may also be considered, as well as those on libraries and librarianship.

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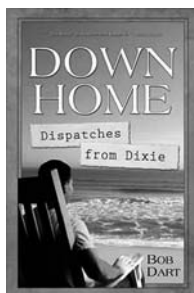
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## NON-FICTION

### **Downhome: Dispatches from Dixie**

by Bob Dart (Southern Lion Books, 2008; ISBN 978-0-9794-2033-7, \$30.00).

Bob Dart, the author of *Downhome: Dispatches from Dixie*, covered the South for the Atlanta Journal and Constitution before moving to the Washington, D.C., bureau of Cox Newspapers as a national correspondent. For four decades, he covered some of America's biggest stories, including the Vietnam War, the invasion of Iraq and the Sept. 11, 2001, tragedy in New York City. However, his favorite stories have always come from the back roads and colorful characters of his native South. In *Downhome*, Dart has collected 50 of these stories, which paint a cultural portrait of 30 years in the South. Dart writes of sometimes funny, sometimes bizarre and sometimes dramatic people, places and events. He talks with survivors of Hurricane Katrina and tells us about interesting people, such as Georgia-born artist David Driskell, Junior Samples (television star of "Hee Haw") and Brownie Wise, creator of the Tupperware party. Dart takes the reader on visits to a North Carolina sanctuary for neurotic, injured and neglected birds; to a very small Virginia town memorializing the 21 young men it lost during the D-Day invasion of France; to South of the Border, a faux-Mexican tourist complex in South Carolina;

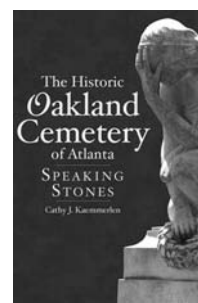


and to several Georgia cities, including Warrenton, Jesup and Brunswick. The author looks at unique events such as the World Invitational Half-rubber Tournament in Savannah and an all-night gospel sing in Waycross as well as horrific ones such as the shootings at Virginia Tech and West Virginia's Sago Mine disaster. This compilation of fascinating and always entertaining stories of the South is recommended for academic and public libraries.

— Reviewed by **Christine Zuger**  
*Georgia College & State University*

**The Historic Oakland Cemetery of Atlanta: Speaking Stones** by Cathy J. Kaemmerlen (The History Press, 2007; ISBN 978-1-59629-330-4, \$19.99).

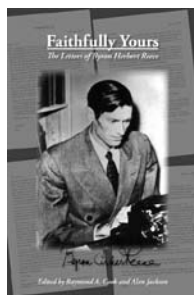
Georgia's cemeteries are sometimes thought of as old, rarely visited places where stately magnolia trees provide shade for the generations who have come before. But to one observant visitor, the Oakland Cemetery provides a treasure trove of tragic history and enduring romance. Cathy Kaemmerlen has used her gift of storytelling just as a weaver would use her loom to weave together the rich textures of Atlanta's Southern history. In her book *The Historic Oakland Cemetery of Atlanta: Speaking Stones*, Kaemmerlen tells that from 1850 to 1884 almost everyone who died in Atlanta was buried in the Atlanta Cemetery, renamed the Oakland Cemetery in 1872. This Victorian garden cemetery was



described as “the most attractive place in the city, where citizens congregated to spend a quiet Sunday in the park among friends and relatives both living and deceased.” Kaemmerlen has filled her book with intriguing and often heartwarming stories of the famous and not-so-famous residents of Oakland Cemetery. She tells the story that Atlanta was named after Gov. Wilson Lumpkin’s daughter Martha not once but twice. She describes the heroic deed of Dr. Noel Pierre as he saved the Confederate hospital in Atlanta from being burned by Sherman’s troops. A wonderful sense of the past unfolds as Kaemmerlen recounts Ransom Montgomery’s courageous act, which resulted in his being the only slave owned by the State of Georgia, and describes the heartbreaking story of Sarah Kugler Dye and her desperation to give her son a proper burial as the war raged around her. She weaves the stories of Julia Collier Harris, who was a dynamic journalist in her own right, and of the Rich brothers, who went on to build Rich’s Department Store. Be prepared to laugh, cheer, cry and sometimes get angry as you relive Georgia’s past through Kaemmerlen’s historically inspired stories. Recommended for all libraries with an interest in the Civil War and Georgia’s history.

— Reviewed by **Ronda Sanders**  
Hall County Library System

**Faithfully Yours: The Letters of Byron Herbert Reece** edited by Raymond A. Cook and Alan Jackson (Cherokee Publishing Company, 2007; ISBN 978-0-8779-7374-4, \$17.00).



By the early 1940s, Byron Herbert Reece, then in his 20s, was already a published writer of columns, poems, prose and numerous book reviews. During this same time, he also worked on his family’s farm, taught at a local school, was invited to speak at a poetry forum and won a newspaper poetry contest. By the time he took his own life in 1958, Reece had taught at UCLA, Emory University and Young Harris College; his work had appeared in numerous publications; he had written two novels, had published four books of poetry and had won a Guggenheim Fellowship twice. All of these facts can be gleaned from the letters found in *Faithfully Yours*. But these letters reveal much more than basic facts about his life and works. As the editors say in the introduction, “Nowhere does Reece reveal his intense personality more compellingly than in his letters.” *Faithfully Yours* does not contain a complete set of Reece’s letters. But the letters included paint a vivid picture of the last 18 years of his life. The majority of the letters were written to several close friends he had met as

a student at Young Harris College, but the most letters sent to a single person were to a young writer he never met. As could be expected, many letters discuss literary topics, such as the progress of his work, books he had read recently, opinions about his own works and those of others and writing advice. But, throughout his letters, Reece also reveals his feelings about teaching, classical music, politics, farming, nature and more. *Faithfully Yours* seems to be the only existing print collection of his letters and is especially recommended for libraries that maintain a collection of Georgia author materials. If adding this book to your collection, be sure to have some of Byron Herbert Reece’s works available, because his letters are likely to create interest in the works he mentions.

— Reviewed by **Julie Camp**  
FSU MSLIS Distance Student

**Circling Home** by John Lane (University of Georgia Press, 2007; ISBN 978-0-8203-3040-2, \$24.95).

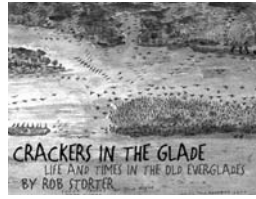


After settling down in Spartanburg, S.C., author John Lane traced an old, chipped plate on a topological map to draw an arbitrary radius around his home and set out to explore his neighborhood. Traveling on foot, by kayak, bicycle and car, Lane navigates the rich history, ecological diversity and social constructs of this Southern city. With a voice that resonates with love for the natural history of the area, he reconstructs the geography from ancient history through the 21st century, providing readers with a clear vision of the effect that humans have had on the landscape through the centuries. Alternating between wistful reveries on the original native inhabitants of the land and his personal protectiveness of the remaining wildness, Lane vividly describes the terrain. While Lane’s focus is on natural history, the strength of his observations lies in his personal struggle to come to terms with the many dichotomies present within his neighborhood — between the Southern locals and new transplants, blue-collar workers and country club members, environmentalists and developers. Exploring the complicated intersections of class, economics, biology and sustainability, Lane merges the personal, the present and the past in a way that creates a rich sense of history of place – all within a short radius of his home in one small part of the world. *Circling Home* is recommended for any collection with a focus on Southern history, anthropology and natural history.

— Reviewed by **Kate Farley**  
Lane Library, Armstrong Atlantic State University

**Crackers in the Glade: Life and Times in the Old Everglades** by

Rob Storter, edited by Betty Savidge Briggs (University of Georgia Press, 2007; ISBN 978-0-8203-3043-3, \$22.95).

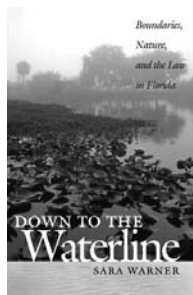


Robert Storter wrote *Crackers in the Glade: Life and Times in the Old Everglades* at the age of 91. His descriptions of the beautiful wonders of sea life are just as I remember them from growing up in Coden, Ala. This book reminded me of my dad, Leophas, who often scribbled on everything in sight to recall his experiences of fishing, storms and horseback riding. Storter describes coastal life as one filled with sand flies, ferryboats and mosquitoes. Folks burned rags to keep these “swamp angels” away, and rattlesnakes swam in the channel. Fathers allowed their young sons to be involved in working activities such as steering a boat, going on a mail route, riding a horse or going fishing. Late at night, the singing of “Amazing Grace” or another hymn could be heard as these were baptized, praying people. Every family had a sailboat. Weathering frequent “squalls” was often pure excitement, but Storter also talks about the awful destruction of tremendous hurricanes. School classes at the time were quite small; classes were made up mostly of family and the children of teachers. Shoes were worn only occasionally — to church — but not to school. School lunches consisted of great northern beans and biscuits, bananas and mayonnaise sandwiches every day. Storter’s view can best be summed up in his own words: “We are like little mangrove twigs and are drifting somewhere to find a lodging place. Let’s hope we will not stop on the mudflat or drift out to sea but will find the rock, and there we will be rooted to stay.” *Crackers in the Glade: Life and Times in the Old Everglades* is highly recommended to anyone interested in family oral history, traditions, rural coastal living, fishing, photography and art.

— Reviewed by **Regina W. Cannon**  
UGA Griffin Research Facility Library

**Down to the Waterline: Boundaries, Nature, and the Law in Florida** by Sara Warner (University of Georgia Press, ISBN 0-8203-2703-4, \$24.95.)

*Down to the Waterline* is a comprehensive review of Florida’s water boundary ownership issues from the early days of statehood (1845) to the present. It includes extensive research of legislation, legal and municipal hearings, land records, first-person accounts and innumerable historical events



that have shaped the ongoing controversy. Warner, a lifelong Floridian, brings more than 20 years of experience to compiling, analyzing and interpreting the information collected in this book. The author’s quest to understand the struggle to preserve private ownership rights while preserving public access and maintenance of navigable bodies of water began in 1989 as a research project for her Ph.D. from Emory University, after hearing an NPR report on the channelizing of, and subsequent work to restore, the Kissimmee River. Several chapters are devoted to the Kissimmee debacle and the slow, painful lessons sometimes learned from overmanipulating nature. Runoff pollutants from the work on the Kissimmee contaminated agricultural acreage, while poisonous gases produced by organic decomposition in the oxygen-depleted water proved lethal to river inhabitants. In *Waterline*, Warner also discusses the definition of the “ordinary high water line (OHWL).” For hundreds of years, the OHWL was accepted as a line discernable “without scientific exploration” and was considered a protected property of the state, preserved for the use of all. Now it is a battle line, requiring frequent examination by both legal and technological means. Woven within the narrative of the struggle to clearly understand and define the OHWL are important ecological lessons. Warner’s reflections on the plight of indigenous wildlife, for example, misguided attempts to remove the alligator from the endangered species list, are particularly poignant and not easily dismissed. *Down to the Waterline* provides globally applicable perspectives of interest to ecologists, students in environmental studies at all levels and the general public.

— Reviewed by **Lori Critz**  
Georgia Institute of Technology

**Man Food: Recipes from the Iron Trade** *Forward* by Karen R. Utz.

(University of Alabama Press, 2007; ISBN 978-0-8173-5451-0, \$14.95).

This is a quirky but engaging book. The connection between the flourishing iron trade in Alabama and cooking was, at first, lost on this reviewer. The answer goes like this:

The iron industry emerged in the Birmingham area beginning in the late 19th century, built upon the proximity of ore, coal, railroads and entrepreneurs. In the late 1920s, a magazine was launched to bring technical developments to the widespread foundry trade. *Pig Iron Rough Notes* (from the adage, “rough as pig iron”) informed, educated and promoted. In 1939, editor Russell Hunt added “soft” journalism about iron trade people, their communities, their hobbies. And recipes. Pig iron,



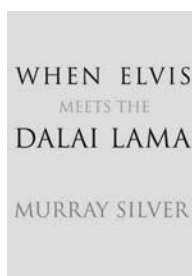
Hunt explained, figured in the food industry from farm implements to cast-iron skillets. Hunt's readers were the source of most recipes. The opener is bean hole beans, a ritualistic preparation of baked beans in an underground fire pit. And the closer is your traditional fried green tomatoes accompanied by cornbread Southern-style. Hunt was a gregarious fellow, happiest when he was marketing iron and enjoying the hospitality of his clients. A day spent with Gus Tindall of Chattanooga gave us Tennessee Squirrel Stew (12 of the critters required), best enjoyed "under some giant oak or beech tree." Most of the recipes remain doable across the years, even to the clumsy-in-the-kitchen types. Each carries a chatty narrative echoing Hunt's on-the-road research. Karen R. Utz of the Sloss Furnace National Historic Landmark in Birmingham wrote an introduction that sets Hunt's magazine in the historical context of the industry. It's not clear who edited the selections, and we wished for more specific citations for individual segments, extracted from decades of issues. As it is, things just run together. That aside, we're getting ready to whip up some hobo stew (serves 10 hoboes and probably twice as many librarians) (p. 22) or maybe a spicy, one-dish meal, Jambalaya (p. 38.) Yummy.

— Reviewed by **Dr. Wally Eberhard**  
*University of Georgia (Emeritus)*

### When Elvis Meets the Dalai Lama

by Murray Silver (Bonaventure Books, 2003; ISBN 978-0-9724224-4-4, \$24.90).

Murray Silver, the author of *Great Balls of Fire: The Uncensored Story of Jerry Lee Lewis*, has now written an autobiography. A recollection of his varied career, the book spans his time as a teenage concert promoter in Atlanta in the 1960s through his job as tour manager for a group of Tibetan Buddhist monks from the Drepung Loseling Monastery in the 1990s. Early chapters detail his years writing *Great Balls of Fire* and the development of that book into a movie. Silver reminisces about his work with Myra Lewis on the book, meetings with Jerry Lee Lewis and the torturous experience of the movie production. Not a fan of the resulting film, Silver provides numerous explanations for what went wrong in the movie adaptation. Other projects never came to fruition, including a book about the early days of professional wrestling, one on the porn industry and a book written with the assistance of Dr. George Nichopoulos, Elvis Presley's physician, about what really caused the King's death. During his work on the Presley project, Silver reports receiving death threats that drove him into hiding.

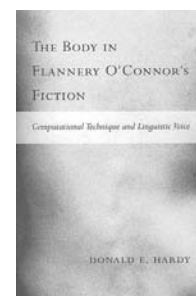


These varied tales are interspersed with memories of his teenage years and his father's law career, sidetracks that tend to confuse the timeline and the reader. The final, and most interesting, part of Silver's autobiography deals with his introduction to Buddhism as well as his involvement with Tibetan monks from the Drepung Loseling Monastery. He recounts the years he assisted the monks by selling Tibetan rugs, driving a truck for *The Mystical Arts of Tibet* exhibit and managing the U.S. tour of *Sacred Music, Sacred Dance*, which shares the Tibetan Buddhist culture through chant and dance. The book concludes with the author's return to his native Savannah and some reflections on his life. Included throughout the book are several of the author's personal photographs. Optional purchase for a public library.

— Reviewed by **Gretchen M. Smith**  
*Georgia Southwestern State University*

### The Body in Flannery O'Connor's Fiction: Computational Technique and Linguistic Voice

by Donald E. Hardy (University of South Carolina Press, 2007; ISBN 978-1-5700-3698-9, \$39.95).



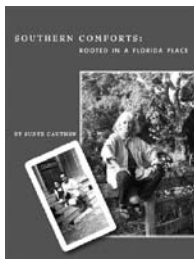
*The Body in Flannery O'Connor's Fiction: Computational Technique and Linguistic Voice* by Donald E. Hardy is

a meticulously researched work that combines the study of Flannery O'Connor's fiction with statistical analysis and linguistics. Hardy's approach to the literary analysis of O'Connor's thematic representation of the relationship between man's physical and spiritual aspects includes using computer concordancing software to determine the frequency of words and phrases in O'Connor's work that refer to the physical body. Through detailed analysis of this data, along with attention to the grammatical category of the middle voice as described in the study of linguistics, Hardy conducts a "close examination of the interactions of grammatical voice and the body at both the macrolevel and the microlevel of the narrative." Hardy's central discussion deals with the way in which specific body parts as represented in O'Connor's fiction contain the spiritual within the physical. Hardy's opinions are supported by examples from the source material, and his microanalysis of the workings of O'Connor's sentences reveals a deep understanding of the way in which the author communicates incarnational themes at the most fundamental level. *The Body in Flannery O'Connor's Fiction: Computational Technique and Linguistic Voice* delves beyond O'Connor's work to include a varied account of different linguistic theories used to examine narrative techniques. Although the author states that his book "is written with a general educated audience in

mind," the highly technical presentation of ideas demands a specialized vocabulary and a somewhat rarefied openness to applying statistics to the study of literature. This book would be a good addition to academic libraries where linguistics is a primary focus. It would also be appropriate for inclusion in collections with an emphasis on Georgia studies or Southern literature.

— Reviewed by **Leslie R. G. Bullington**  
Augusta, Georgia

**Southern Comforts: Rooted in a Southern Place** by *Sudye Cauthen* (University of Georgia Press, 2007; ISBN 1-9300-6658-9, \$29.95).

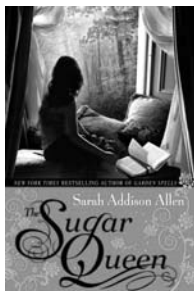


In 1974, following a divorce and the death of her father, Sudye Cauthen moved herself and her 9-year-old son to a cabin on Waters Pond, near her childhood home in Alachua in the interior of northern Florida. Eventually, at the urging of her mother, she moved all the way back to Alachua, prompting a re-examination of her childhood. Disheartened by the changes in her hometown, Cauthen subsequently spent years driving back roads, sometimes at random, sometimes deliberately, seeking the people and places she had known. The author filled in gaps in her understanding of her own family history as well as the history of the region and its people. The result, *Southern Comforts*, is a combination of memoir, interviews, natural history and folklore. These individual elements combine to form a snapshot of a time when tobacco was king, and people both shaped the land and were shaped by it. Pair this with Janisse Ray's *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood* for a portrait of southern Georgia and northern Florida before Disney and interstate highways forever altered the identity of the region. Recommended for academic and larger public libraries.

— Reviewed by **Kathy Pillatzki**  
Henry County Public Library System

## FICTION

**The Sugar Queen** by *Sarah Addison Allen* (Bantam, 2008; ISBN 978-0-5538-0549-9, \$22.00).



Most of us have never woken up and found a woman living in our closet, but this does happen to Josey, the main character of Allen's engrossing second novel. As surprising and unusual as this event is, Josey has an even more challenging concern: serving as a personal

assistant to her elderly mother. Given her willful and unpleasant behavior as a child, Josey feels obligated to be at her mother's constant beck and call, and her mother happily accepts Josey's feelings of obligation. Interspersed with her daughterly duties, Josey goes on a sandwich run for the woman in the closet, Della Lee, and meets Chloe, who has her own unique situation. Books literally appear to Chloe: They follow her, turn up when she most needs them. Josey and Chloe bond over their respective love troubles: Josey is in love with the enigmatic mailman, and Chloe is on the verge of a breakup with her lawyer boyfriend due to his cheating on her one night after a particularly difficult case. The mailman and the lawyer are best friends, a fact that further complicates matters yet also ties them together even more closely. In the small ski town of Bald Slope, N.C., everyone knows everybody else. Josey's father was the founder of the town, resulting in most of the residents knowing her from the time of her birth, witnessing her disagreeable behavior as a child and seemingly unwilling to forget any of it. This relationship between Josey and the town illustrates a disadvantage of small-town life. Throughout the course of the novel, Allen deftly employs magical realism, adding an element of mystery and beauty to the compulsively readable story. Recommended for public libraries and academic libraries with a contemporary fiction section.

— Reviewed by **Carol Malcolm**  
Riverside Military Academy

**Orange Mint and Honey** by *Carleen Brice* (One World Ballantine Books, 2008; ISBN 978-0-345-49906-6, \$14.00).



Carleen Brice's first novel is a heartwarming story about redemption, forgiveness and finding that going back home again can be less bitter when it is followed by something sweet. Shay Dixon is a graduate student who is on the verge of a nervous breakdown and broke. Taking the advice of blues singer Nina Simone, her spiritual adviser, Shay goes back home to a mother whom she had written off. Nona, Shay's mother, was once an alcoholic who left Shay alone a lot and when around was either drunk or hungover. However, after Shay returns home, she meets the new Nona who loves to garden, has a 5-year-old daughter and a new lease on life. This novel takes a look at the relationship between a mother and daughter who have a past that needs forgiveness in order to heal and move on. The novel addresses many issues in a way that will be engaging and endearing to the reader. Brice's storytelling will have the reader crying one minute and laughing the

next. The journey of Shay and Nona is a lighthearted read that will allow the reader to see the importance of facing and embracing our past hurts in order to enjoy what life has in store for us. This book will appeal to women of all ages, races and economic classes. This book of fiction also supplies the reader with a small treat: Nona's Orange Mint Tea and Orange Mint and Honey Butter Cookie recipes.

— Reviewed by **Katrina Cooks**  
*Augusta Technical College Library*

## JUVENILE

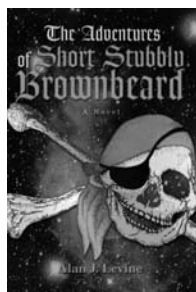
**Flamingo's First Christmas** by Nancy Raines Day; Illustrated by Fiona Robinson (Harry N. Abrams, 2005; ISBN: 0-8109-5765-5, \$15.95).



Red and green lights at Christmas time — what's so strange about that? Well, if you're a flamingo living in the bright, hot sands of Miami, it's all new to you. In this charming story, author Nancy Day's character, Flamingo, sets out to answer the question, "What is Christmas?" The reader journeys along with Flamingo as he searches for Christmas in a line of children waiting to see Santa, in busy holiday shopping traffic, and in an expensive department store. It isn't until Flamingo stumbles upon a live Nativity play that he truly begins to understand the meaning of Christmas. Day's humorous take on the frustrations of the season through the eyes of her feathered protagonist is a joy and provides a nice juxtaposition to the poignancy of the Nativity scene ending the story. Illustrator Fiona Robinson uses interesting techniques, such as transferring pencil drawings via carbon, which she fills in with oil paints. The illustrations reflect the bright, whimsical atmosphere of Miami at Christmas time and are perfect for Flamingo's adventures. In the Nativity scene, Donkey comments that, "Maybe a flamingo is exactly what we need in our Nativity play." Donkey has the right idea. Recommended for most children's collections.

— Reviewed by **Tracy Walker**  
*Dawson County Public Library*

**The Adventures of Short Stubbly Brownbeard** by Alan J. Levine (iUniverse, Inc., 2006, ISBN 0-595-39248-2, \$17.95).



Get ready to set sail for adventure! Atlanta author Alan J. Levine has written an exciting book that combines science fiction and pirate adventure. Short Stubbly Brownbeard

is the lesser-known cousin of Blackbeard the Pirate. Brownbeard begins life as an accountant, but a late-night sword fight with an angry group of numbers prompts him to become a pirate. He locates a ship, the *For Sale*, and gathers a crew consisting of a Sand Witch, a Troll, a Sock Gremlin and a talking cat. Brownbeard and his dysfunctional crew head to the galaxy of Sa'Laam, where they plan to rob the wealthy emperor. They meet some unusual characters along the way and uncover a terrible secret behind the vast wealth of Sa'Laam. Brownbeard and his crew must search within themselves for the courage to fight for what is right, even if it means a fight to the death. Although the story itself is wildly fantastical, there are many parallels to the real world. This book would be enjoyed by anyone who reads science fiction and would be right at home in either a high school media center or a public library.

— Reviewed by **Andrea Thigpen**  
*Wacona Elementary School*

**The Sorta Sisters** by Adrian Fogelin (Peachtree Publishers, 2007; ISBN 978-1-5614-5424-2, \$15.95).



Mica Delano lives onboard the *Martina* with her father, Dr. Robin Michael Delano, an alcoholic marine biologist who is so wrapped up in his work he rarely notices his daughter. Anna Casey lives in Tallahassee, Fla., with her foster mother, Miss Johnette, a high school biology teacher. Though the girls have never met, they have a lot in common. Both girls have moved many times and have difficulty making friends. They are both very intelligent and have a love of science. Both long to have a real friend and to be a part of the crowd. At the beginning of the book, Anna receives a letter from Mica by way of Ben Floyd, who met Mica while visiting his Aunt Emma in Key West. Aunt Emma runs the marina where the *Martina* is currently docked and serves as somewhat of a surrogate mother to Mica. While Ben is visiting in Key West, he realizes that Mica reminds him of Anna and tells her all about the girl back home. Mica thinks that Anna sounds like her kindred spirit and decides they need to become friends. She writes the letter to Anna and includes a janthina shell as a gift. The girls begin to exchange letters and scientific specimens and develop a great bond. Since neither has siblings, they agree they should be sorta sisters. Through letters, they share their hopes, fears, struggles and insecurities and hope to one day meet. This book is highly recommended for middle school girls and Fogelin fans. The characters are real, and readers will be drawn in by the vivid descriptions of the Florida scenery.

— Reviewed by **Nikki Terrell**  
*Lowndes Middle School Media Center*