

## Arrowhead Library System Book Club Titles

9/18/2008

**Aguero Sisters** by Garcia, Cristina - 30 copies. The story of Reina and Constanca Aguero, Cuban sisters who have been estranged for 30 years. It is in the memories of their parents--dead many years but still powerfully present--that the sisters' lives have remained inextricably bound.

**Ar'n't I a woman?** by White, Deborah Gray - 19 copies. Living with the burden of racism and sexism, slave women in the plantation South assumed roles within the family and community that contrasted sharply with traditional female roles in the larger American society. This work shows how black women experienced freedom in the Reconstruction South.

**Before Women had Wings** by Fowler, Connie May - 11 copies. A nine-year-old narrator whose voice is heavy with sorrow, but who learns truths about the heart, is the focus of Fowler's deeply moving, triumphant third novel.

**Bel Canto** by Patchett, Ann - 19 copies. Opera and terrorism make strange bedfellows, yet in this novel they complement each other nicely.

**Betrayals: Fort William Henry and the "massacre"** by Steele, Ian K. - 20 copies. Explaining the motives for the most notorious massacre of the colonial period, Steele offers a gripping tale of a fledgling America, one which places the tragic events of the Seven Years' War in a fresh historical context.

**Between courses: a culinary love story** by Clark, Karla - 5 copies. Welcome to Mela's Market, a folksy family café in Chicago's Little Italy. Go ahead, eat your pasta and chat with the regulars. Enjoy yourself! From where you sit everything looks and tastes wonderful. But in the kitchen there are other things cooking....

**Beyond 1492** by Axtell, James - 20 copies. In this provocative and timely collection of essays--five published for the first time--one of the most important ethnohistorians writing today, James Axtell, explores the key role of imagination both in our perception of strangers and in the writing of history. Coinciding with the 500th anniversary of Columbus's "discovery" of America, this collection covers a wide range of topics dealing with American history.

**Birds of America** by Moore, Lorie - 12 copies. Though the characters in these 12 stories are seen in such varied settings as Iowa, Ireland, Maryland, Louisiana and Italy, they are all afflicted with ennui, angst and aimlessness. They can't communicate or connect; they have no inner resources; they can't focus; they can't feel love. In every story, Moore empowers her characters with wit, allowing their thoughts and conversation to sparkle with wordplay, sarcastic banter and idioms used with startling originality.

**Caucasia** by Senna, Danzy - 20 copies. The time is the 1970s, the place is Boston, and the story is of a biracial marriage and the two little girls born of it. Cole, the first child, preferred by both parents, is beautifully black like her father. Birdie, the narrator, is light enough to pass as white.

**Ceremony** by Silko, Leslie Marmon - 8 copies. Tayo is a half-white Laguna Indian emotionally stricken by white warfare and almost destroyed by his experiences as a World War II prisoner of the Japanese. Unable to find a place among Native American veterans who are losing themselves in rage and drunkenness, Tayo discovers his connection to the land and to ancient rituals with the help of a medicine man, and comes to understand the need to create ceremonies, to grow and change, in order to survive.

**Children's Story** by Clavell, James - 7 copies. It was a simple incident in the life of James Clavell -- a talk with his young daughter just home from school -- that inspired this chilling tale of what could happen in twenty-five quietly devastating minutes.

**Cider House Rules** by Irving, John - 4 copies. The Cider House Rules is set in rural Maine in the first half of this century. It tells the story of Homer Wells, an orphan who is raised and mentored by Wilbur Larch, the doctor at the orphanage. Dr. Larch teaches Homer everything about medicine. Yet though his capacity for kindness is saintly, Larch is also an ether addict. He and Homer come into conflict, which is typical of many father-son relationships, but in this case their conflict is intensified by their disagreement about abortion. The result is that Homer leaves the only family he has ever known.

**Cold Mountain** by Frazier, Charles - 3 copies. A wounded and disillusioned Confederate soldier decides to walk back to his home in the Blue Ridge Mountains and to Ada, the young woman he left there years before.

**Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood** by Wells, Rebecca - 5 copies. Siddalee Walker won't forgive her mother Vivi for her painful Louisiana childhood. But Vivi's lifelong friends -- the Ya-Yas -- have other ideas.. Locked in a cabin, they present Siddalee with a scrapbook of their childhood mementos, and reveal the secrets of a tangled, emotional relationship between a mother and her daughter. Companion to the beloved bestseller **Little Alters Everywhere**.

**Dreaming in Color** by Allen, Charlotte Vale - 4 copies. Working as a practical nurse, a battered wife flees with her daughter and finds refuge in the home of a writer and her invalid aunt. This tale of four unique women living under one roof is a blend of pathos and suspense. Flashbacks fill in each woman's story.

**Eleanor Roosevelt; the First Lady of American Liberalism** by Scharf, Lois - 19 copies. Few women in American life have exercised the power and influence of Eleanor Roosevelt without ever running for elective office. And few persons continue to hold as strong a place in the emotions of Americans 25 years after their death as Eleanor Roosevelt. This new biography explains Roosevelt's hold upon the consciousness of Americans. It is refreshing to read of the accomplishments of her life without dwelling upon her much publicized tragedies.

**First Ladies** by Caroli, Betty Boyd - 16 copies. Being First Lady is probably the hardest unpaid job in the United States. The thirty-six First Ladies (some of them daughters or other relatives) have been a highly varied group. Three have married an incumbent President; three have died in office. Caroli takes a look at each of them and their effect on the job, and also examines the ways the role of First Lady has changed over the years as American society and public expectations have changed.

**Fleur de Leigh's Life of Crime** by Leslie, Diane - 19 copies. Tucked away in her parents' lavish Beverly Hills mansion, young Fleur de Leigh has all the benefits of a privileged and glamorous upbringing. Or so she is frequently told. Fleur's mother, a flamboyant, ambitious B-movie actress and eponymous star of *The Charmian Leigh Radio Mystery Half-Hour*, and her aloof father, currently reduced to producing the TV game show *Sink or Get Rich*, casually entrust their daughter's welfare to a procession of nannies, cooks, and character actors. Surrounded by falsies, false eyelashes, and lust for fame, Fleur seeks to learn from her eccentric caretakers the difference between genuine love and its many imitations.

**Fools Crow** by Welch, James - 9 copies. The year is 1870. Located in the Two Medicine Territory of northwestern Montana is the camp of the Lone Eaters, a small band of Blackfeet Indians. Fools Crow, a young warrior and medicine man of great vision, has seen the future. He knows his tribe must either fight a brave but futile war of surrender their lands and their way of life.

**Founding Brothers** by Ellis, Joseph J. - 7 copies. In this landmark work of history, the National Book Award—winning author of *American Sphinx* explores how a group of greatly gifted but deeply flawed individuals—Hamilton, Burr, Jefferson, Franklin, Washington, Adams, and Madison—confronted the overwhelming challenges before them to set the course for our nation.

**Gabriel's rebellion: the Virginia slave conspiracies of 1800 and 1802** by Egerton, Douglas R. - 19 copies. According to Egerton, the social, political, and economic disorder of the Revolutionary era weakened some of the harsh controls that held slavery in place during colonial times. Emboldened by these conditions, a small number of literate slaves—most of them highly skilled artisans—planned an armed insurrection aimed at destroying slavery in Virginia. By placing the revolts within the broader context of the volatile political currents of the day, Egerton challenges the conventional understanding of race, class, and politics in the early days of the American republic.

**Home: American Writers Remember Rooms of Their Own** - 8 copies. In **Home**, eighteen of our finest writers evoke different rooms—from their pasts, their present, or simply their imaginations—in order to investigate the ways in which homes contain our lives. The results are touching, provocative, and sometimes hilarious.

**In the Lake of the Woods** by O'Brien, Tim - 7 copies. When long-hidden secrets about the atrocities he committed in Vietnam come to light, a candidate for the U.S. Senate retreats with his wife to a lakeside cabin in northern Minnesota. Within days of their arrival, his wife mysteriously vanishes into the watery wilderness.

**Indians' New World: Catawbas and their neighbors from European contact through the era of removal** by Morrell, James Hart, 1953 - 20 copies. This chronicle of the Catawbas takes note of all of the above. But its center is the Catawbas' encounter with the colonists and their entourage: unfamiliar diseases, crown diplomats, trade goods, and Christian missionaries. Each of those required creative responses, which transformed Catawba life rather than destroyed it. Natives constructed new societies in the aftermath of epidemics, assimilated both traders and their enticing goods into established cultural forms, came to terms with settlers, and fended off missionaries. Through it all, the Catawbas endured—as soldiers in the Revolution, as landlords and landladies on their reservation, as potters and farmers—retaining their Indian identity, remaining in their piedmont home, and becoming a part of the American mosaic.

**Jewel** by Lott, Bret - 4 copies. In the backwoods of Mississippi, a land of honeysuckle and grapevine, Jewel and her husband, Leston, are truly blessed; they have five fine children. When Brenda Kay is born in 1943, Jewel gives thanks for a healthy baby, last-born and most welcome. *Jewel* is the story of how quickly a life can change; how, like lightning, an unforeseen event can set us on a course without reason or compass. In this story of a woman's devotion to the child who is both her burden and God's singular way of smiling on her, Bret Lott has created a mother-daughter relationship of matchless intensity and beauty, and one of the finest, most indomitable heroines in contemporary American fiction.

**Leah's way** by Botelho, Richard - 10 copies. An intriguing story of one woman's journey through life and her search to find justification and love.

**Madeleine's Ghost** by Girardi, Robert - 12 regular copies, 1 large print copy. Brooklyn needs a saint. Ned Conti needs a stipend. So the struggling young historian agrees to trace the mysterious past of a Brooklyn nun for evidence of miracles. Trapped in a neighborhood of cheap rents and failed promise, in a rent-controlled apartment suddenly, inexplicably seized by a beautiful and angry ghost, Ned's only refuge is the F train to Manhattan's East Village bars, where he and his friends drown their sorrows in drink....

**Many thousands gone: the first two centuries of slavery in north America** by Berlin, Ira - 19 copies. Today most Americans, black and white, identify slavery with cotton, the deep South, and the African-American church. But at the beginning of the nineteenth century, after almost two hundred years of African-American life in mainland North America, few slaves grew cotton, lived in the deep South, or embraced Christianity. *Many Thousands Gone* traces the evolution of black society from the first arrivals in the early seventeenth century through the Revolution. In telling their story, Ira Berlin, a leading historian

of southern and African-American life, reintegrates slaves into the history of the American working class and into the tapestry of our nation.

**Map of the World** by Hamilton, Jane - 5 copies. The Goodwins, Howard, Alice, and their little girls, Emma and Claire, live on a dairy farm in Wisconsin. Although suspiciously regarded by their neighbors as "that hippie couple" because of their well-educated, urban background, Howard and Alice believe they have found a source of emotional strength in the farm, he tending the barn while Alice works as a nurse in the local elementary school. But their peaceful life is shattered one day when a neighbor's two-year-old daughter drowns in the Goodwins' pond while under Alice's care. Tormented by the accident, Alice descends even further into darkness when she is accused of sexually abusing of a student at the elementary school. Soon, Alice is arrested, incarcerated, and as good as convicted in the eyes of a suspicious community. As a child, Alice designed her own map of the world to find her bearings. Now, as an adult, she must find her way again, through a maze of lies, doubt and ill will.

**The Meadow** by Galvin, James - 14 copies. In discrete disclosures joined with the intricacy of a spider's web, James Galvin depicts the hundred-year history of a meadow in the arid mountains of the Colorado/Wyoming border. Galvin describes the seasons, the weather, the wildlife, and the few people who do not possess but are themselves possessed by this terrain. In so doing he reveals an experience that is part of our heritage and mythology.

**Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil** by Berendt, John - 6 copies. Shots rang out in Savannah's grandest mansion in the misty, early morning hours of May 2, 1981. Was it murder or self-defense? For nearly a decade, the shooting and its aftermath reverberated throughout this hauntingly beautiful city of moss-hung oaks and shaded squares.

**Modern American Poets** - 14 copies. A rich collection of American poetry from the 20-century and includes an extensive selection of poems by thirteen poets.

**Night Ride Home** by Esstman, Barbara - 4 copies. Nora Mahler leads a perfect life. With her two teenage children, Simon and Clea, and her husband, she thrives on running the family horse ranch on the banks of the Missouri until Simon is killed in a riding accident. Nora's husband Neal sends the horses away, and when Nora refuses his orders to sell the farm, he moves to Chicago, taking Clea with him. Soon after, Ozzie Kline, a horse wrangler who has longed for Nora since they were teenage lovers, helps Nora and her mother rebuild their farm. Alongside Ozzie, Nora finds a happiness she never knew with her husband and wonders, "What if we had the opportunity to love each other again?"--until Neal returns to claim what he considers his.

**The Once and Future King** by White, T. H. - 9 copies. Quartet of novels by T.H. White, published in a single volume in 1958. The quartet comprises *The Sword in the Stone* (1938), *The Queen of Air and Darkness*--first published as *The Witch in the Wood* (1939)--*The Ill-Made Knight* (1940), and *The Candle in the Wind* (published in the composite volume, 1958). The series is a retelling of the Arthurian legend, from Arthur's birth to the end of his reign, and is based largely on Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*.

**Ordeal by Fire. v.II the Civil War** by McPherson, James M. - 8 copies. Written by a leading Civil War historian and Pulitzer Prize winner, this text describes the social, economic, political, and ideological conflicts that led to a unique, tragic, and transitional event in American history.

**Oresteia** by Aeschylus - 7 copies. *The Oresteia*--*Agamemnon*, *Choephoroi*, and the *Eumenides*--tell the story of the house of Atreus: After King Agamemnon is murdered by his wife, Clytemnestra, their son, Orestes, is commanded by Apollo to avenge the crime by killing his mother, and he returns from exile to do so, bringing on himself the wrath of the Furies and the judgment of the court of Athens.

**Patchwork Planet** by Tyler, Anne- 38 regular copies, 1 book on audiocassette. Anne Tyler tells the story of a lovable loser who's trying to get his life in order.

**Pilot's Wife** by Shreve, Anita - 10 regular copies, 1 book on audiocassette. News of Jack Lyons's fatal crash sends his wife into shock and emotional numbness: "Kathryn wished she could manage a coma. Instead, it seemed that quite the opposite had happened: She felt herself to be inside of a private weather system, one in which she was continuously tossed and buffeted by bits of news and information, sometimes chilled by thoughts of what lay immediately ahead, thawed by the kindness of others ... frequently drenched by memories that seemed to have no regard for circumstance or place, and then subjected to the nearly intolerable heat of reporters, photographers and curious on-lookers. It was a weather system with no logic, she had decided, no pattern, no progression, no form." The situation becomes even more dire when the plane's black box is recovered, pinning responsibility for the crash on Jack. In an attempt to clear his name, Kathryn searches for any and all clues to the hours before the flight. Yet each discovery forces her to realize that she didn't know her husband of 16 years at all.

**Poets in Person** - 9 copies book and audiotapes. We wanted to help dispel the mystery and untangle the confusion by outlining the primary sources and several strands of contemporary poetry....we wished to trace its complex history since World War II through the lives and works of the writers who have shaped it. The most effective way to do so, we believed, was through the voices of those poets themselves...selected thirteen writers who have been instrumental in launching major movements and represent principal trends in the art today."

**Poisonwood Bible** by Kingsolver, Barbara - 12 copies. a story told by the wife and four daughters of Nathan Price, a fierce, evangelical Baptist who takes his family and mission to the Belgian Congo in 1959. They carry with them everything they believe they will need from home, but soon find that all of it -- from garden seeds to Scripture -- is calamitously transformed on African soil. What follows is a suspenseful epic of one family's tragic undoing and remarkable reconstruction over the course of three decades in postcolonial Africa.

**Portia: the World of Abigail Adams** by Gelles, Edith B. - 38 copies. This fascinating biography of one of the original first ladies presents a strong character in the context of her eighteenth century and recent feminist thought. Compassionate yet scholarly, intimate yet important, this book offers a refreshing addition to the biographical canon.

**Private Mary Chesnut** by Chesnut, Mary Boykin Miller - 13 copies. The ideal diarist, Mary Chesnut was at the right place at the right time with the right connections. Daughter of one senator from South Carolina and wife of another, she had kin and friends all over the Confederacy and knew intimately its political and military leaders. At Montgomery when the new nation was founded, at Charleston when the war started, and at Richmond during many crises, she traveled extensively during the war. She watched a world "literally kicked to pieces" and left the most vivid account we have of the death throes of a society. The diaries, filled with personal revelations and indiscretions, are indispensable to an appreciation of our most famous Southern literary insight into the Civil War experience.

**Rapture of Canaan** by Reynolds, Sheri - 8 regular copies, 1 large type copy. At the Church of Fire and Brimstone and Gods Almighty Baptizing Wind, Grandpa Herman makes the rules for everyone, and everyone obeys, or else. Try as she might, Ninah can't resist her prayer partner, James, and finds herself pregnant. She fears the wrath of Grandpa Herman, the congregation and God Himself. But the events that follow show Ninah that God's ways are more mysterious than even Grandpa Herman understands.

**Reconstruction after the Civil War** by Franklin, John Hope - 7 copies. Ever since it's original publication in 1961, *Reconstruction after the Civil War* has been praised for cutting through the controversial scholarship and popular myths of the time to provide an accurate account of the role of former slaves during this period in American history. Now Franklin has updated his work to acknowledge the enormous body of research and scholarship that followed in the wake of the first edition. New are Franklin's references to important, later texts that enrich the original narrative. In addition, the extensive bibliography has been thoroughly revised. What has not changed, however, is the foundation Franklin has laid. Still compelling are his arguments concerning the brevity of the North's military occupation of the South, the limited amount of power wielded by former slaves, the influence of moderate southerners, the flaws of the constitutions drawn up by the Radical state governments, and the reasons for the downfall of Reconstruction.

**The Red Tent** by Diamant, Anita - 3 copies. Her name is Dinah. In the Bible, her life is only hinted at in a brief and violent detour within the more familiar chapters of the Book of Genesis that tell of her father, Jacob, and his twelve sons. Told in Dinah's voice, Anita Diamant imagines the traditions and turmoils of ancient womanhood--the world of the red tent. It begins with the story of the mothers--Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah--the four wives of Jacob. They love Dinah and give her gifts that sustain her through childhood, a calling to midwifery, and a new home in a foreign land. Dinah's story reaches out from a remarkable period of early history and creates an intimate connection with the past.

**Sharpest Sight** by Owens, Louis - 10 copies. Attis McCurtain, mixed-blood Vietnam vet, is floating down a California river with a bullet through his heart. Others assume he is a suicide, but his friend Mundo Morales suspects foul play.

**She's Come Undone** by Lamb, Wally - 5 copies. Meet Dolores Price. She's 13, wise-mouthed but wounded, having bid her childhood goodbye. Stranded in front of her bedroom TV, she spends the next few years nourishing herself with the Mallomars, potato chips, and Pepsi her anxious mother supplies. When she finally orbits into young womanhood at 257 pounds, Dolores is no stronger and life is no kinder. But this time she's determined to rise to the occasion and give herself one more chance before she *really* goes under.

**Shining thread of hope: the history of black women in America** by Hine, Darlene Clark - 18 copies. At the greatest moments and in the cruelest times, black women have been a crucial part of America's history. Now, the inspiring history of black women in America is explored in vivid detail by two leaders in the fields of African American and women's history.

**Snow Falling on Cedars** by Guterson, David - 5 regular copies, 1 audiocassette, 1 large type. As a Japanese-American fisherman stands trail for murder on an island in Puget Sound, snow blankets the countryside. The whiteness covers the courthouse, but it cannot conceal the memories at work inside: the internment of Japanese-American during World War II, an unrequited love, and the ghosts of racism that still haunt the islanders. David Guterson creates a mounting tension through the fine details of his physical and psychological landscapes, yet he tells the tale with great tenderness.

**Songs in Ordinary Time** by Morris, Mary McGarry - 4 copies. A dark secret lies at the heart of Mary McGarry Morris's extraordinary novel, *Songs in Ordinary Time*. Rooted in the delicate web of emotions, lies, and truths that bind people together, the story takes place in the primarily Catholic town of Atkinson, Vermont, during the summer of 1960.

**Surrounded** by McNickle, D'Arcy - 10 copies. Educated at a federal Indian boarding school, Archilde is torn not only between white and Indian cultures but also between love for his Spanish father and his

Indian mother, who in her old age is rejecting white culture and religion to return to the ways of her people.

**Talk Before Sleep** by Berg, Elizabeth - 11 copies. They met at a party. It was hate at first sight. Ruth was far too beautiful, too flamboyant. Not at all Ann's kind of person. Until a chance encounter in the bathroom led to an alliance of souls. Soon they were sharing hankies during the late showing of "Sophie's Choice," wolfing down sundaes sodden with whipped cream, telling truths of marriage, mortality, and love, secure in a kind of intimacy no man could ever know. Only best friends understand devil's food cake for breakfast when nothing else will do. After years of shared secrets, guilty pleasures, family life and divorce, they face a crisis that redefines the meaning of friendship and unconditional love.

**Things They Carried** by O'Brien, Tim - 13. **The Things They Carried** depicts the men of Alpha Company: Jimmy Cross, Henry Dobbins, Rat Kiley, Mitchell Sanders, Norman Bowker, Kiowa, and of course, the character Tim O'Brien who has survived his tour in Vietnam to become a father and writer at the age of forty-three. They battle the enemy (or maybe more the idea of the enemy), and occasionally each other. In their relationships we see their isolation and loneliness, their rage and fear. They miss their families, their girlfriends and buddies; they miss the lives they left back home. Yet they find sympathy and kindness for strangers (the old man who leads them unscathed through the mine field, the girl who grieves while she dances), and love for each other, because in Vietnam they are the only family they have. We hear the voices of the men and build images upon their dialogue. The way they tell stories about others, we hear them telling stories about themselves.

**Tracks** by Erdrich, Louise - 11 copies. Set in North Dakota at a time in this century when Indian tribes were struggling to keep what little remained of their lands, *Tracks* is a tale of passion and deep unrest. Over the course of ten crucial years, as tribal land and trust between people erode ceaselessly, men and women are pushed to the brink of their endurance--yet their pride and humor prohibit surrender. The reader will experience shock and pleasure in encountering a group of characters that are compelling and rich in their vigor, clarity, and indomitable vitality.

**Two Roads to Sumter** by Catton, Bruce & William - 4 copies. Using the early lives and careers of Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis as theme and framework, two of America's finest historians outline each step in the tragic march to the Civil War. By showing how these two major figures--both Kentucky-born--developed divergent attitudes, the Cattons simultaneously reveal why the North and South became increasingly isolated from each other during the 1850s, and why war became inevitable.

**Unredeemed Captive** by Demos, John - 20 copies. Nominated for the National Book Award, this book is set in colonial Massachusetts where, in 1704, a French and Indian war party descended on the village of Deerfield, abducting a Puritan minister and his children. Although John Williams was eventually released, his daughter horrified the family by staying with her captors and marrying a Mohawk husband.

**Vinegar Hill** by Ansay, A. Manette - 6 copies. It is 1972 when circumstance carries Ellen Grier and her family back to Holly's Field, Wisconsin. Dutifully accompanying her newly unemployed husband, Ellen has brought her two children into the home of her in-laws on Vinegar Hill -- a loveless house suffused with the settling dust of bitterness and routine -- where calculated cruelty is a way of life preserved and perpetuated in the service of a rigid, exacting and angry God. Behind a facade of false piety, there are sins and secrets in this place that could crush a vibrant young woman's passionate spirit. And here Ellen must find the straight to endure, change, and grow in the all-pervading darkness that threatens to destroy everything she is and everyone she loves.

**The Wedding** by West, Dorothy - 14 copies. On the island of Martha's Vineyard in the 1950s there exists a proud, insular, nearly unassailable community known as the Oval, made up of the best and brightest of New York's and Boston's black bourgeoisie. Dr. Clark Coles and his wife Corinne, pillars of this community, are mortified that their youngest daughter Shelby is set on marrying Meade Wyler, a white jazz musician from New York. Equally alarmed is Lute McNeil, a successful black furniture maker from Boston who is new to Oak Bluffs and desperate for social acceptance. Lute has fallen in love with Shelby Coles, or at least the way of life she represents, and he will stop at nothing to pull her away from Meade. As the day of the wedding approaches, the tension surrounding Shelby, Lute, and Meade builds, climaxing in a single tragic act that will forever change the lives of three American families.

**Where the Heart Is** by Letts, Billie - 5 regular copies, 1 large type copy. A funny thing happens to Novalee Nation on her way to Bakersfield, California. Her ne'er-do-well boyfriend, Willie Jack Pickens, abandons her in an Oklahoma Wal-Mart and takes off on his own, leaving her with just 10 dollars and the clothes on her back. Not that hard luck is anything new to Novalee, who is "seventeen, seven months pregnant, thirty-seven pounds overweight--and superstitious about sevens.... For most people, sevens were lucky. But not for her.