

IDAHO LET'S TALK ABOUT IT THEMES (2009)

Across Cultures and Continents

Writers of fiction and memoir often convey the most direct and authentic sort of information about what life is like in a certain locale, the sights, sounds, and smells of the place and the beliefs and customs of the people. The books in this series take readers outside of their own experience and comfort zone to gain insights into other cultures.

- **Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress** by Dai Sijie (China)
- **Disgrace** by J. M. Coetzee (South Africa)
- **Eva Luna** by Isabel Allende (Chile)
- **Graceland** by Chris Abani (Nigeria)
- **The Kite Runner** by Khaled Hosseini (Afghanistan)
- **The Road from Coorain** by Jill Ker Conway (Australia)
- **The Space between Us** by Thrity Umrigar (India)
- **Waiting for Snow in Havana** by Carlos Eire (Cuba)

American Characters

Explore the search for an American identity and the "American Dream" and how this concept is perceived within the diverse American culture.

- **Huckleberry Finn**, by Mark Twain
- **Walden**, by Henry David Thoreau
- **Their Eyes Were Watching God**, by Zora Neale Hurston
- **Final Harvest: Emily Dickinson's Poems**
- **The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway**
- **The Great Gatsby**, by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Autobiography

Follow the inward journey of these exceptional people—some famous, some ordinary—on their life's journey.

- **Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin**
- **Blackberry Winter** by Margaret Mead
- **Desert Exile** by Yoshiko Uchida
- **Dust Tracks on a Road** by Zora Neale Hurston
- **Having Our Say** by Sarah L. Delany and A. Elizabeth Delany with Amy Hill Hearth
- **I Know Why a Caged Bird Sings** by Maya Angelou
- **Letters of a Woman Homesteader** by Elinore Stewart
- **Mormon Mother: An Autobiography**, by Annie Clark Tanner
- **One Writer's Beginnings** by Eudora Welty
- **West with the Night** by Beryl Markham

Balancing Acts

The five works in this series deal with women of many different backgrounds and personalities as they struggle to create and maintain that difficult balance among the pushes and pulls of society's and their family's expectations and self actualization. And if there is no final answer offered by any of them, there is always, in each work, the possibility of achieving a satisfying, though perhaps temporary, balance day by day.

- **Bean Trees, The** by Barbara Kingsolver
- **Housekeeping** by Marilynne Robinson
- **Jailing of Cecelia Capture** by Janet Campbell Hale
- **Woman Hollering Creek** by Sandra Cisneros
- **Women of Brewster Place** by Gloria Naylor

Growing Older, Growing Wiser

This theme addresses this paradox. On the one hand is the fear and the inconvenience of growing older; on the other is the revealed wisdom and confidence of age. Each novel in this series speaks to us as individuals who are part of the growing number of aging and elderly in this country, whether we ourselves are elderly or whether we have parents, grandparents or other relatives who are aging. Reading, reflection and discussion will help address issues such as how we might proceed into this new social structure, where and how we live, and how we relate to the rest of our family and society.

- **Crossing to Safety** by Wallace Stegner
- **Having Our Say** by Sarah L. Delany and A. Elizabeth Delany with Amy Hill Hearth
- **Memory of Old Jack** by Wendell Berry
- **Stone Angel, The** by Margaret Laurence
- **Tuesdays with Morrie** by Mitch Albom

Idaho, Tough Paradise

This theme explores how the culture, people, and landscape of Idaho are reflected in literature and how the impact of each affects our lives as Idahoans, from pre-history through pioneer days and on to the present.

- **Balsamroot: A Memoir** / Blew
- **Bloodlines: Odyssey of a Native Daughter** / Hale
- **Buffalo Coat** / Brink
- **Far Away Places**
- **Heart of a Western Woman** / Leek
- **Hole in the Sky** / Kitteridge
- **Home Below Hell's Canyon** / Jordan
- **Honey in the Horn** / Davis
- **Housekeeping** / Robinson
- **Journal of a Trapper** / Russell
- **Lives of the Saints in Southeast Idaho: An Introduction to Mormon Pioneer Life Story Writing** / Swetnam
- **Lochsa Road** / Stafford
- **Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven, The** / Alexie
- **Mountain Man** /Fisher
- **Myths of the Idaho Indians** / Walker
- **Passages West: Nineteen Stories of Youth and Identity** / Nichols
- **Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place** / Williams
- **Sheep May Safely Graze** / Attebery
- **Stories that Make the World** / Frey
- **Stump Ranch Pioneer** /Davis
- **Sweet Promised Land** /Laxalt
- **Thousand Pieces of Gold** / McCunn
- **Victorian Gentlewoman in the Far West, A** / Foote
- **We Sagebrush Folks** / Greenwood
- **Where the Morning Light's Still Blue: Personal Essay** / Ardinger, Studebaker

Living in the Modern Rural West

The contemporary western writers featured in this theme offer a variety of perspectives on rural life in the modern West. Their books present a realistic portrait of the West, admitting to difficulties and divisions and misery, both personal and familial. And yet all of these writers also celebrate the particular Western landscapes that they chronicle, evoking the West's inspirational, restorative power even as they demolish the idea that coming west can solve all problems.

- **Bitterbrush Country: Living on the Edge of the Land** by Diane Josephy Peavey
- **Close Range: Wyoming Stories** by Annie Proulx
- **Home Mountains: Reflections from a Western Middle Age** by Susan Swetnam
- **In the Wilderness: Coming of Age in an Unknown Country** by Kim Barnes
- **The Sky Fisherman** by Craig Lesley
- **Snow Falling on Cedars** by David Guterson
- **Traplines: Coming Home to the Sawtooth Valley** by John Rember
- **Winter Range** by Clair Davis

Not for Children Only

Not for Children Only revisits childhood classics with an adult perspective.

- **The Classic Fairy Tales**, by Iona Opie and Peter Opie
- **Little Women**, by Louisa May Alcott
- **The Wind in the Willows**, by Kenneth Grahame
- **Charlotte's Web**, by E. B. White
- **Bridge to Terabithia**, by Katherine Patterson
- **Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry**, by Mildred Taylor
- **I Am the Cheese**, by Robert Cormier

Other Americas

As our country continues to grow more diverse, divisions remain in our society. The books in this series provide a window on how this has come to be historically, and how the future may be shaped.

- **Bless Me Ultima** by Rudolfo Anaya
- **Ceremony** by Leslie Marmon Silko
- **Invisible Man** by Ralph Ellison
- **Joy Luck Club, The** by Amy Tan
- **Like Water for Chocolate** by Laura Esquivel
- **Love Medicine** by Louise Erdrich
- **My Grandma Smoked Cigars**
- **Woman Hollering Creek** by Sandra Cisneros

Our Earth, Our Ethics

In the 21st century, we are challenged by momentous environmental issues. Serious interest in not only in the natural environment, but also in our proper relationship to it, has long antedated our present anxiety over greenhouse gas emissions, the hole in the ozone layer, and global warming. The books in this series focus on the American West, but every community will have its own concerns when it comes to such matters as land use, air pollution, declining species, and water.

- **The Botany of Desire** by Michael Pollan
- **Desert Solitaire** by Edward Abbey
- **Indian Creek Chronicles** by Pete Fromm
- **A Sand County Almanac** by Aldo Leopold
- **Pilgrim at Tinker Creek** by Annie Dillard
- **Prodigal Summer** by Barbara Kingsolver
- **The Solace of Open Spaces** by Gretel Ehrlich
- **Who Owns the West?** by William Kittredge

Reading Lewis and Clark

The Lewis and Clark Expedition tells a story that many see as distinctively American and symbolic of the American spirit. The multi-cultural background of its members, the cooperative effort of many people toward one goal, the nostalgia for simpler times, the romance of a past when much of our great land was unknown to Euro-Americans and inhabited by native peoples—all call upon our collective imagination and rekindle hope for the future.

- **The Essential Lewis and Clark**, by Landon Jones
- **Lewis and Clark Among the Indians**, by James P. Ronda
- **Across the Snowy Ranges: The Lewis and Clark Expedition in Idaho and Western Montana**, by James R. Fazio and Mike Venso
- **The Truth about Sacajawea**, by Kenneth Thomasma
- **Sacagawea of the Lewis and Clark Expedition** by Ella E. Clark and Margot Edmonds
- **Sign-Talker: Adventures of George Droulliard on the Lewis and Clark Expedition**, by James Alexander Thom
- **Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West**, by Stephen Ambrose
- **William Clark and the Shaping of the West**, by Landon Jones

We Are What We Eat

Food is one of human beings' favorite obsessions. Most people spend a great deal of time physically and mentally preoccupied with food: we organize and prepare meals, we daydream about what's for lunch or dinner; we eat. Beyond simply an enjoyable, necessary human pastime, though, eating has important implications for how we think of ourselves, and how we relate to the larger culture.

- **Chocolat** by Joanne Harris
- **Choice Cuts: A Savory Selection of Food Writing from Around the World and throughout History** by Mark Kurlansky
- **Climbing the Mango Tree** by Madhur Jaffrey
- **The Language of Baklava** by Diana Abu-Jaber
- **Mistress of Spices** by Chita Banerjee Divakaruni
- **My Year of Meats** by Ruth Ozeki
- **The Tummy Trilogy** by Calvin Trillin
- **We Are What We Eat: 24 Memories of Food** by Mark Winegardner

Western Experience

This theme examines life in the West from various viewpoints, looks at myths and stereotypes of the West, and explores how various groups have adapted to unique physical and cultural environments in the West.

- **Angle of Repose** by Wallace Stegner
- **Billy the Kid: A Short and Violent Life** by Robert Utley
- **Black Elk Speaks** by John Neihardt
- **Brave Cowboy** by Edward Abbey
- **Bride Goes West, A** by Nannie Alderson and Helena H. Smith
- **Buffalo Girls** by Larry McMurtry
- **Ceremony** by Leslie Marmon Silko
- **Death Comes for the Archbishop** by Willa Cather
- **English Creek** by Ivan Doig
- **Fools Crow** by James Welch
- **Grapes of Wrath** by John Steinbeck
- **Lame Deer, Seeker of Visions** by John L. Deer and Richard Erdos
- **Letters of a Woman Homesteader** by Elinore Stewart
- **Man Who Killed the Deer, The** by Frank Waters
- **Reservation Blues** by Sherman Alexie
- **Shane**, by Jack Schaefer
- **Sometimes a Great Notion** by
- **This House of Sky** by Ivan Doig
- **Virginian, The** by Owen Wister
- **Yonnonidio** by Tillie Olsen

Working: Making a Living, Making a Life

These books explore how the jobs we perform shape our identities.

- **Death of a Salesman** by Arthur Miller
- **Growing Up** by Russell Baker
- **Professor's House, The** by Willa Cather
- **Soul of a New Machine** by Tracy Kidder
- **Working** by Studs Terkel

