

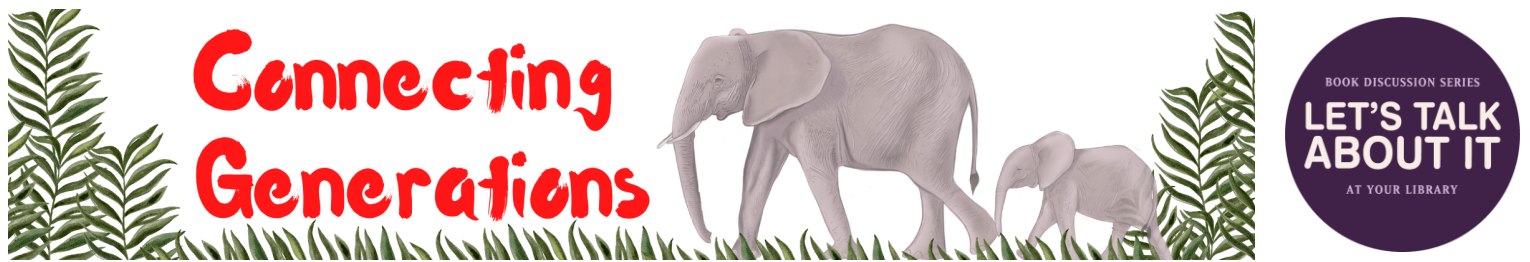
## Reading Materials

This document provides information about the reading materials for this theme, including a complete list of available titles, as well as book summaries and author information for each.

## Complete Book List

Included below is the complete list of books which have been vetted and recommended for this theme, and which are available in inventory from the ICfL.

- *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White. Published 1952, 184 pages.
- *Homegoing*, by Yaa Gyasi. Published 2017, 320 pages.
- *Home Mountains: Reflections from a Western Middle Age* by Susan Swetnam. Published 2000, 128 pages.
- *The Honey Bus: A Memoir of Loss, Courage and a Girl Saved by Bees*, by Meredith May. Published 2020, 336 pages.
- *I Am the Cheese* by Robert Cormier. Published 1977, 256 pages.
- *Jackalope Dreams* by Mary Clearman Blew. Published 2008, 404 pages.
- *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott. Published 1896, 449 pages.
- *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding. Published 1954, 182 pages.
- *Passages West: 19 Stories of Youth & Identity*, edited by Hugh Nichols. Published 1990, 405 pages.
- *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor. Published 1976, 210 pages.
- *Tatterhood and Other Tales* by Ethel Johnston Phelps. Published 1993, 192 pages.
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie. Published 2007, 229 pages.
- *The Bean Trees* by Barbara Kingsolver. Published 1988, 232 pages.
- *The Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson. Published 1977, 191 pages.
- *The Enders Hotel* by Brandon R. Schrand. Published 2008, 230 pages.
- *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway. Published 1950, 127 pages.
- *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd. Published 2003, 352 pages.
- *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame. Published 1908, 244 pages.
- *The Women of Brewster Place* by Gloria Naylor. Published 1982, 192 pages.
- *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum. Published 1900, 128 pages.
- *When We Were Romans* by Matthew Kneale. Published 2007, 304 pages.



## Book Summaries & Author Information

Included below are the detailed summaries of each book available for this theme, as well as background information about the author.

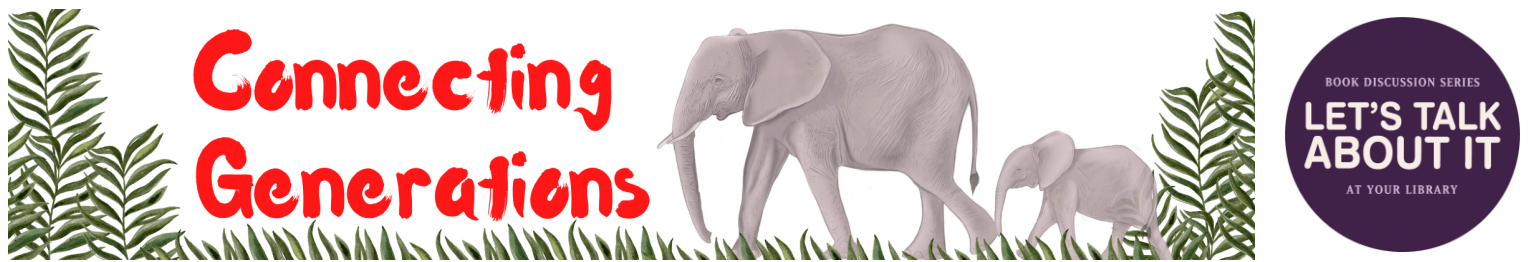
**Charlotte's Web** by E. B. White. Published 1952, 184 pages.

An affectionate, sometimes bashful pig named Wilbur befriends a spider named Charlotte, who lives in the rafters above his pen. A prancing, playful bloke, Wilbur is devastated when he learns of the destiny that befalls all those of porcine persuasion. Determined to save her friend, Charlotte spins a web that reads "Some Pig," convincing the farmer and surrounding community that Wilbur is no ordinary animal and should be saved. In this story of friendship, hardship, and the passing on into time, E.B. White reminds us to open our eyes to the wonder and miracle often found in the simplest of things.

Readers will discover the traditional values of the rural 1950's, the joy of a loyal friend, the pain of growing up, the fear of death we all share, and the ineluctable cycle of rebirth. (Source: Theme pamphlet by Elizabeth R. Baer, for American Library Association, 1984).

### Author Information

E. B. White, the author of such beloved children's classics as *Charlotte's Web*, *Stuart Little*, and *The Trumpet of the Swan*, was born in Mount Vernon, New York. He graduated from Cornell University in 1921 and, five or six years later, joined the staff of *The New Yorker* magazine. E.B. White authored over seventeen books of prose and poetry and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1973. In addition to writing children's books, E. B. White also wrote books for adults, as well as writing poems and essays, and drawing sketches for *The New Yorker* magazine. Some of his other books include: *One Man's Meat*, *The Second Tree from the Corner*, *Letters of E. B. White*, *The Essays of E. B. White*, and *Poems and Sketches of E. B. White*. Funnily enough for such a famous writer, he always said that he found writing difficult and bad for one's disposition, but he kept at it! Mr. White won countless awards, including the 1971 National Medal for Literature and the Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal, which commended him for making "a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children." He died on October 1, 1985, and he is survived by his son and three grandchildren.



**Homegoing**, by Yaa Gyasi. Published 2017, 320 pages.

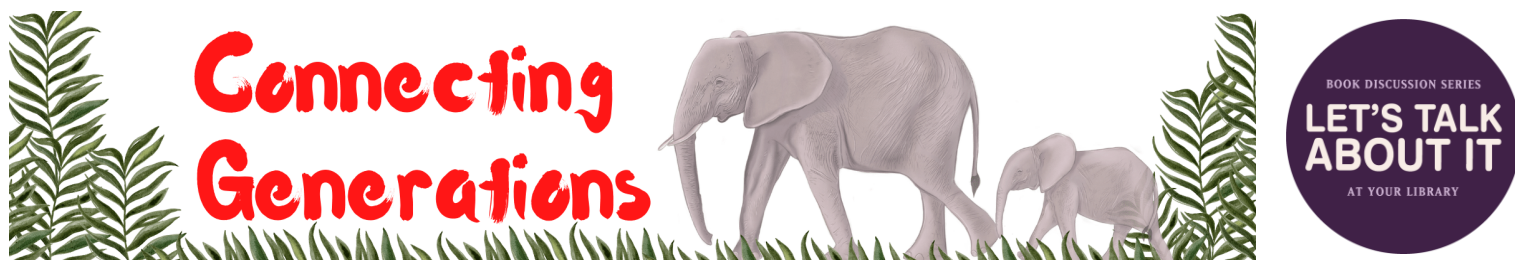
*Homegoing* begins with two half-sisters in Ghana in the 1700s; one marries an Englishman and lives in relative comfort, while the other is sold into slavery across the ocean. The novel traces the lives of the women and their descendants through seven generations in Ghana and the United States, showing how the choices they make and that others make for them have far-reaching effects. Characters grapple with issues related to colonialism, slavery, racism, legal and economic struggle, language, and cultural identity as they seek to understand themselves, their families, and the complicated worlds they live in.

#### Author Information

Yaa Gyasi was born in Mampong, Ghana, and raised in Huntsville, Alabama. She received a BA in English from Stanford University and MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she held a Dean's Graduate Research Fellowship. Her critically acclaimed debut novel, *Homegoing* (Knopf, 2016), probes the legacy of the slave trade as it impacted two sides of an Akan family. *Homegoing* received 2017's American Book Award, the National Book Critics' Circle's John Leonard Award, and PEN's Hemingway award for debut fiction. Gyasi's short stories have appeared in *African American Review*, *Guernica*, *Callaloo*, and *Granta*, which designated her a Best Young American Novelist in 2017.

**Home Mountains: Reflections from a Western Middle Age** by Susan Swetnam. Published 2000, 128 pages.

After a youth spent in the East in quiet discontent, Susan Swetnam writes about the middle-age surprise of finding herself at home in southeastern Idaho. The book's autobiographical essays chronicle her attempts to come to terms with various "homes"—with the beautiful expanses and sometimes quirky occupants of the Intermountain West, but also with life choices, with family, with love, with responsibility, and with the need to keep adapting to life's ongoing changes. Essay topics range from the surprise of winning a blue ribbon at the Eastern Idaho State Fair, to mountain rambling, to fighting fires, to accepting the blessings of a love which can only be temporary. Youth is hardly the apex of life, Swetnam concludes; middle age, too, can be a time



of deep satisfaction, a time of dawning self-realization. Home Mountains was honored by the Idaho Library Association in 2000.

### Author Information

Susan Swetnam was born in Philadelphia in 1950 and educated at the University of Delaware and the University of Michigan. She came to Idaho in 1979 to teach at Idaho State University. A professor of English and a writer, she has published essays and articles in a wide variety of national, regional, and literary magazines, including *Gourmet*, *Mademoiselle*, and *Black Canyon Quarterly*. She won a writer's residency from Washington State's Espy Foundation in 2004. In addition to *Home Mountains*, she has published book-length studies of Mormon pioneer life story writing and of Idaho writer Grace Jordan, as well as a collection of personal essays about teaching (*My Best Teachers Were Saints*, 2006). She has been active in public humanities programming in Idaho, including Let's Talk About It programs for more than twenty years, as was her late husband, poet Ford Swetnam.

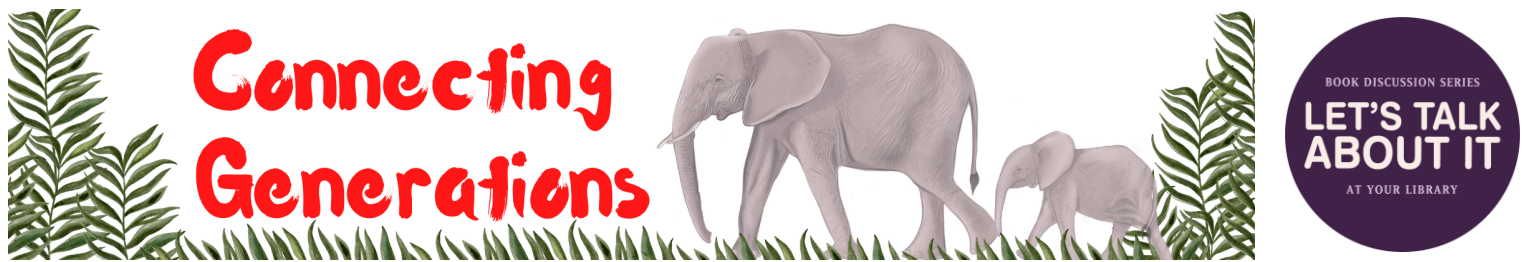
***The Honey Bus: A Memoir of Loss, Courage and a Girl Saved by Bees***, by Meredith May.  
Published 2020, 336 pages.

In this powerful memoir, journalist Meredith May describes her childhood and youth living with her unhappily-divorced mother at the home of her grandparents. While her mother grapples with mental illness and her grandmother tries to make up for her own failures as a parent, Meredith is saved by her step-grandfather and the world of beekeeping that he invites her to participate in. She learns from the bees and her relationship with her step-grandfather about how to survive in a harsh world and make beautiful things out of the bitter ingredients that life sometimes provides.

### Author Information

Meredith May is a memoirist and children's book author. Her books include *The Honey Bus* (HarperCollins/Park Row Books); *I, Who Did Not Die* (Regan Arts); and *Loving Edie*





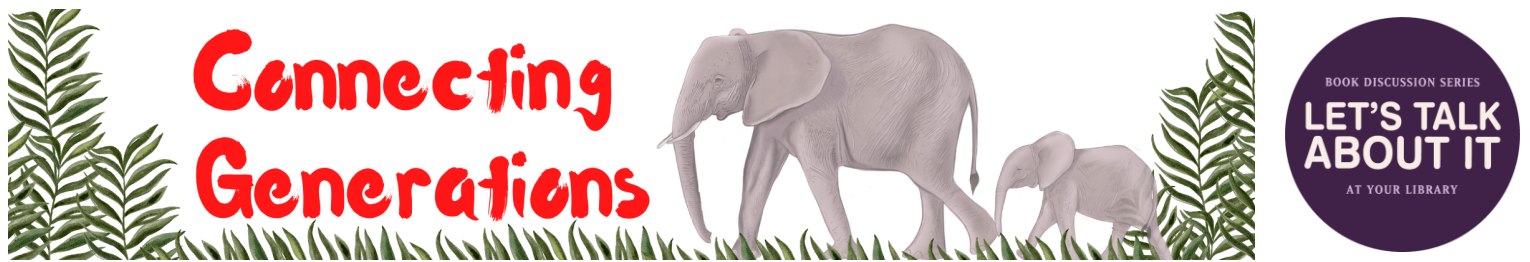
(HarperCollins/Park Row Books). She is a fifth-generation beekeeper with several hives in Carmel Valley. During her 16-year career at the San Francisco Chronicle, her writing won the PEN USA Literary Award for Journalism and was shortlisted for the Pulitzer Prize. Her first children's picture book, *My Hive*, will be published by Cameron Kids in 2024.

**I Am the Cheese** by Robert Cormier. Published 1977, 256 pages.

*I Am The Cheese* by Robert Cormier (1977) is a starkly contemporary novel, touching on issues such as government control, the ethics of psychiatry, and organized crime—all topics that were previously deemed taboo in children's literature. Cormier utilizes a tightly controlled, three-strand narrative to tell his chilling story. Hence, the reader must shift among young Adam Farmer's first-person account of his experiences, a third-person description of Adam's life, and excerpts of taped interviews between Adam and a mysterious man named Brint. The novel is at once a mystery, a spy/counterspy story, and a classic quest book in which a boy searches for his father. But unlike Cassie Logan, and unlike the archetypal hero of most quests, Adam Farmer appears to be retreating from consciousness, from a resolution to his odyssey. Cormier uses his reference to "The Farmer in the Dell" in his title in a bitter and ironic fashion. It would be unfair to reveal the conclusion of this novel; suffice it to say that Cormier has been criticized for his bleak endings (American Library Association, 1984).

### Author Information

Cormier was acknowledged as the finest writer in the young adult genre, and also the first to show the literary world that YA novels could be not only realistic about teen concerns but unflinchingly honest about big questions like the abuse of power, courage, forgiveness, and redemption. The brilliance of his writing earned him many literary prizes. After the success of his first YA novel, *The Chocolate War*, Cormier astounded critics three years later with the brilliantly constructed *I Am the Cheese*, and in the following years continued to surprise his readers with the originality of each new book while maintaining a continuity of recognizable style and themes. Cormier lived a life of great stability and contentment, growing up in a large, warm French-Canadian and Irish-American family in the small mill town of Leominster, Massachusetts; marrying Constance Senay, the girl of his dreams; working as a newspaper man



for many years and writing fiction on weekends in his noisy home with four children. He was nearly fifty when he found success as a YA writer.

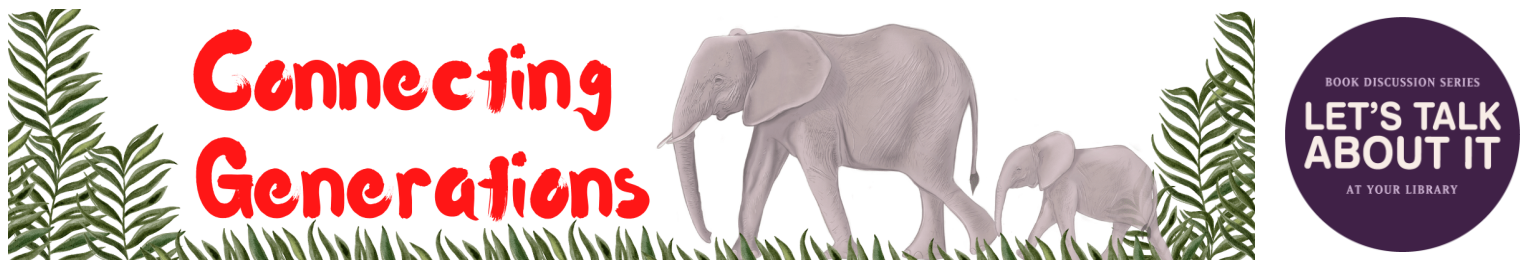
**Jackalope Dreams** by Mary Clearman Blew. Published 2008, 404 pages.

The departed men in her life still have plenty to say to Corey. Her father, a legendary rodeo cowboy who punctuated his lifelong pronouncements with a bullet to his head, may be the loudest. But in this story of Montana—a story in which the old West meets the new and tradition has its way with just about everyone—it is Corey’s voice we listen to. In this tour de force of voices big and small, sure, and faltering, hers comes across resonant and clear, directing us to the heart of the matter.

Winner of the 2008 Western Heritage Award, *Jackalope Dreams* plays out against the mythology of the Old West—a powerful amalgam of ranching history, Marlboro Men, and train robbery reenactments. This story of the newly orphaned, spinsterish Corey is a sometimes comical, sometimes poignant tale of coming-of-age a little late. As she tries to recapture an old dream of becoming a painter—of preserving some modicum of true art amid the virtual reality of modern Montana—Corey finds herself figuring in other dramas as well, other, younger lives already at least as lost as her own.

### Author Information

Mary Clearman Blew grew up on a small cattle ranch in Montana, on the site of her great-grandfather’s 1882 homestead. Her memoir *All But the Waltz: Essays on a Montana Family*, won a Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award, as did her short story collection, *Runaway*. A novel, *Jackalope Dreams*, appeared in 2008 and won the Western Heritage Center’s prize for fiction. Other awards include the Mahan Award for contributions to Montana literature, the Idaho Humanities Council’s 2001 Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Humanities, a Handcart Award for Biography, and the Western Literature Association’s Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2004, she received the "Distinguished Achievement Award" from the Western Literature Association. She is Professor of Emerita at the University of Idaho, where she has taught since 1994.



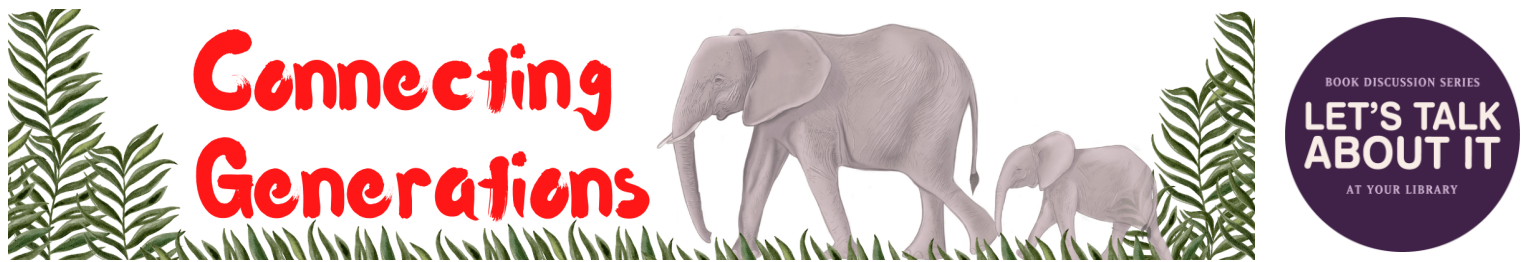
**Little Women** by Louisa May Alcott. Published 1896, 449 pages.

*Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (1868) is an enduring book that yields some startling insights into nineteenth century American life when one reads it as an adult. The novel has never been out of print since its initial publication in 1868, and it has been translated into no less than 27 languages. How to account for such longstanding appeal? Jo, in her feisty rebellion against the shackles of girlhood, is a character with whom all readers, especially girls, can identify. The novel raises still-valid questions about options and roles for women and also demonstrates the strides toward equality women have achieved in the past century. The novel was an instant success and became the precursor of the realistic family novel. (Source: Theme pamphlet by Elizabeth R. Baer, for American Library Association, 1984.).

### Author Information

Alcott was an active feminist and abolitionist. She worked as a teacher when she could but spent most of her time writing. She published many short stories in various periodicals and numerous novels, her most famous work being the 1868 *Little Women*, a chronicle of the lives of the March sisters.

Alcott, born into a New England family, was the second daughter of Bronson Alcott, a transcendentalist visionary and educator, and Abigail May Alcott, who bore the primary responsibility for keeping the family clothed and sheltered. Encouraged by Bronson, each member of the family regularly kept a journal and worked on self-improvement, just as the members of the fictional family do. Alcott approached the writing of a “girl’s story” at the urging of her father and her publisher, with a certain amount of resignation as she would have preferred to make her reputation with adult fiction. She had published books ranging from one on her Civil War nursing experiences to a fictionalized autobiography. However, given the urgent need of her family for financial assistance, she penned the first half of what is now published as one novel (the sequel came out in 1869) within three months’ time. According to family legend, she trained herself to write with both hands so that she could switch when one hand grew tired!



**Lord of the Flies** by William Golding. Published 1954, 182 pages.

This novel by Nobel Prize-winning author William Golding about a group of British boys stuck on a deserted island who try to govern themselves, with disastrous results. Its stances on the already-controversial subjects of human nature and individual welfare versus the common good earned it position 68 on the American Library Association's list of the 100 most frequently challenged books of 1990–1999. In 2005 the novel was chosen by TIME magazine as one of the 100 best English-language novels from 1923 to 2005. It was awarded a place on both lists of Modern Library 100 Best Novels, reaching #41 on the editor's list, and #25 on the reader's list.

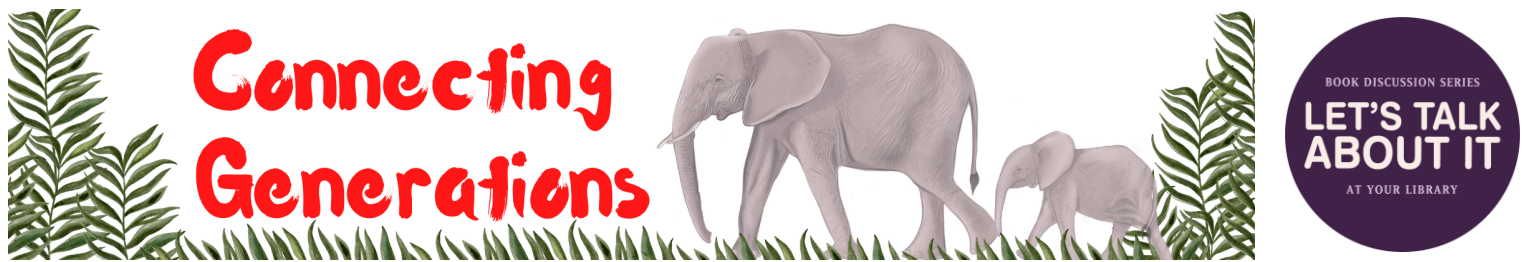
Published in 1954, *Lord of the Flies* was Golding's first novel. Although it was not a great success at the time—selling fewer than 3,000 copies in the United States during 1955 before going out of print—it soon went on to become a best-seller, and by the early 1960s was required reading in many schools and colleges; the novel is currently renowned for being a popular choice of study for GCSE English Literature courses in the United Kingdom. It was adapted to film in 1963 by Peter Brook, and again in 1990 by Harry Hook.

### Author Information

William Golding was born in Cornwall in 1911 and was educated at Marlborough Grammar School and at Brasenose College, Oxford. Apart from writing, his occupations included being a schoolmaster, a lecturer, an actor, a sailor, and a musician. He taught at Bishop Wordsworth's School, Salisbury. He joined the Royal Navy in 1940, saw action against battleships (at the sinking of the *Bismarck*), submarines and aircraft, and finished as Lieutenant in command of a rocket ship. He was present off the French coast for the D-Day invasion, and later at the island of Walcheren. After the war he returned to teaching and began to write again. *Lord of the Flies*, his first novel, was published in 1954. It was filmed by Peter Brook in 1963. In 1980 he won the 'Booker Prize' for his novel *Rites of Passage*. He retired from teaching in 1962. After that, he lived in Wiltshire, listing his recreations as music, sailing, archaeology, and classical Greek. William Golding died on June 19, 1993.

**Passages West: 19 Stories of Youth & Identity**, edited by Hugh Nichols. Published 1990, 405 pages.





*Passages West*, edited by Hugh Nichols, is an anthology of nineteen short stories about coming of age in the West. Selections by writers including Ivan Doig, Norman Maclean, Wallace Stegner, Mary Clearman Blew, and Vardis Fisher chronicle the anxieties and joys of young people searching for identity in a distinctive landscape.

### Author Information

Hugh Nichols, from 1971 to 1999, was Professor of English and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston. He has written about H. L. David, Norman Maclean, Dorothy Johnson, and other Western writers.

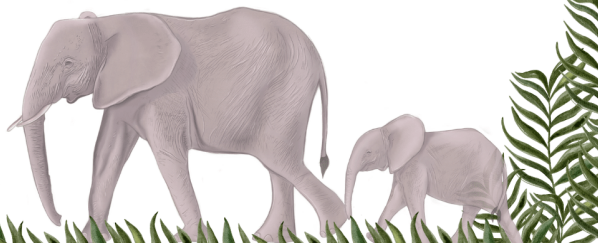
**Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry** by Mildred Taylor. Published 1976, 210 pages.

This story by Mildred Taylor (1976) is set in the 1930's, but it is a book that would not have been written for and distributed to children at that time. It chronicles a year in the life of fourth grader Cassie Logan, the second of four children in a black farming family in Mississippi. Cassie comes to consciousness in this year-consciousness of racial discrimination, consciousness of her father's gifts to her of dignity and determination, and her mother's gift of the value of education. Cassie tells her story in the first person, thus richly conveying her terror of the "night riders," her resourcefulness at revenge, her affection for her family, her dawning awareness of pride in her heritage and her land. In the detailing of that gradual awakening, Taylor neither denies harsh reality nor lets it suffocate her protagonist. Despite the bleak ugliness of some of the incidents in the novel, *Roll of Thunder* is an affirmation of the good qualities in humans. Cassie, though at times humiliated and discouraged, is never completely downtrodden. In addition, most of the book transcends color: here are good and bad people of both races, and each character is drawn realistically with strengths and weaknesses. Taylor won the prestigious Newbery Medal for this novel. (Source: theme pamphlet by Elizabeth R. Baer, for American Library Association, 1984.).

### Author Information

Mildred D. Taylor was born in Jackson, Mississippi, on September 13, 1943. She is the daughter of Wilbert Lee and Deletha Marie (Davis) Taylor. Even though she was born in the South, she

# Connecting Generations



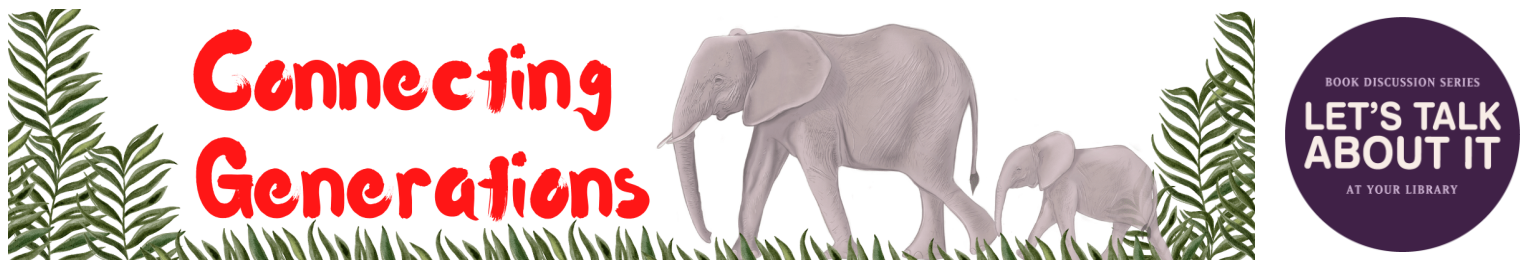
did not grow up there. Yet, for Ms. Taylor, the South still holds pleasant memories as the home of her family. When she was only three months old, her parents moved her and her sister to live in the North. They moved to a newly-integrated Ohio town called Toledo. When she went to school, she was the only black child in her class. Her father decided to leave the South in the mid-1940's because he did not want his children to live their lives as he had lived his, in a segregated, racist society that allowed little or no opportunity to blacks. Taylor attended the University of Toledo. After graduation she joined the Peace Corps in Ethiopia as an English and history teacher for two years. When she returned, she attended the University of Colorado School of Journalism. She earned a Master of Arts degree there. While she was attending school, she worked with university officials and fellow students in structuring a Black Studies program at the university. Now she is a writer living in Colorado.

**Tatterhood and Other Tales** by Ethel Johnston Phelps. Published 1993, 192 pages.

*Tatterhood* is a collection of folk tales from around the world—old stories about magic and adventure. These 25 traditional tales come from Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. These are stories that ordinary people in the past told to entertain their families and friends. The stories were not originally thought of as “children’s tales,” but generations of children have loved hearing them. All the central characters are spirited females – while they are not superior, they are decisive heroes of extraordinary courage, wit, and achievement who set out to determine their own fate. Some of their stories are comic, some adventurous, some eerie, and some magical. The Chicago Sun-Times writes: “A sparkling gathering of traditional, yet little-known, tales from all parts of the globe. The female characters... manage to outsmart, outdo, and over-power the villains with nerves of steel, cunning minds, and disarming senses of humor.” The *Introduction* offers more detailed information on the history and nature of folk tales, and brief endnotes tell a little more about each tale.

## Author Information

Ethel Johnston Phelps holds a master’s degree in Medieval Literature; she is co-editor of a Ricardian journal and has published articles on fifteenth-century subjects. A native Long Islander, her activities have included acting, writing, and directing in radio drama and



community theater. Three of her one-act plays have been produced. Her other books include *Maid of the North*.

**The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian** by Sherman Alexie. Published 2007, 229 pages.

The novel opens with Arnold's explanation of the fact that he was born with an excess of cerebral spinal fluid in his skull (an event that he describes as being "born with [water on the brain](#)"). The brain damage that resulted from this and the surgery that he went through in order to remove some of the fluid left Arnold with many physical problems: he has forty-two teeth; is skinny; has an over-sized head, hands, and feet; has poor eyesight; and experiences frequent [seizures](#), [stutters](#), and [lisps](#). Mistreated by others on the reservation because of these problems, Arnold is regularly beaten up and given such nicknames as "retard" (for the brain damage that he has sustained) and "globe" (for his large head). His family, like the majority of the other reservation families, is incredibly poor: This point is emphasized when Arnold's adopted dog Oscar begins to suffer from intense heat exhaustion and Arnold's father is forced to kill Oscar with a rifle to avoid having to pay the expensive veterinary treatment necessary to save him. Arnold's teacher, Mr. P, having seen many bright Spokane Indians (among them Arnold's sister) lose hope and a desire to succeed after experiencing life on the reservation, believes that Arnold, a relatively bright student, deserves more than what he will get from continuing to live where he is now.

### Author Information

Sherman Alexie, a Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian, was born in 1966 on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Wellpinit, Washington. He received his B.A. in American studies from Washington State University in Pullman. His books of poetry include *Face* (Hanging Loose, 2009), *One Stick Song* (2000), *The Man Who Loves Salmon* (1998), *The Summer of Black Widows* (1996), *Water Flowing Home* (1995), *Old Shirts & New Skins* (1993), *First Indian on the Moon* (1993), *I Would Steal Horses* (1992), and *The Business of Fancydancing* (1992). He is also the author of several novels and collections of short fiction including *Flight* (Grove Press, 2007); *Ten Little Indians* (2003); *The Toughest Indian in the World* (2000); *Indian Killer* (1996); *Reservation Blues* (1994), which won the Before Columbus Foundation's American Book Award; and *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993), which received a Hemingway



Foundation/PEN Award. Alexie and Chris Eyre wrote the screenplay for the movie *Smoke Signals*, which was based on Alexie's short story "This is What it Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona." The movie won two awards at the Sundance Film Festival in 1998 and was released internationally by Miramax Films. He is also a three-time world heavyweight poetry slam champion. Alexie lives with his wife and son in Seattle, Washington.

**The Bean Trees** by Barbara Kingsolver. Published 1988, 232 pages.

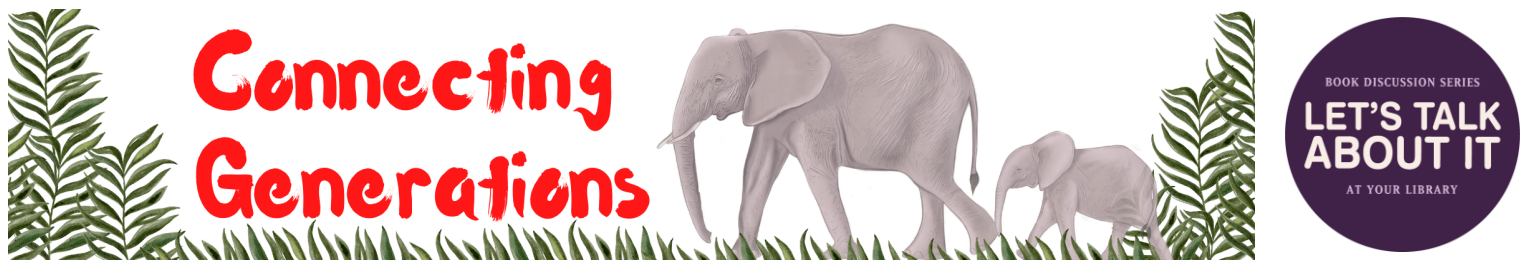
Marietta Greer leaves home in a beat-up '55 Volkswagen bug, determined to get away and to avoid pregnancy. Heading west and savoring her freedom, she changes her name to "Taylor" when her car runs out of gas in Taylorville, Illinois. A forlorn Cherokee woman drops a baby in Taylor's passenger seat and asks her to take it, and she does. Taylor names the little girl "Turtle," because she clings with an unrelenting, reptilian grip. With Turtle in tow, Taylor lands in Tucson, Arizona, with two flat tires at an auto repair shop called Jesus Is Lord Used Tires. It also happens to be a sanctuary for Central American refugees. Taylor meets the human condition head-on, as she experiences motherhood, responsibility, and independence. The heart of this funny, inspiring book is its affirmation of risk-taking, long and friendship, abandonment and belonging, commitment and everyday miracles.

### Author Information

Barbara Kingsolver was born in 1955 and grew up in rural Kentucky. She earned degrees in biology from DePauw University and the University of Arizona and she has worked as a freelance writer and author since 1985. At various times in her adult life, she has lived in England, France, and the Canary Islands, and has worked in Europe, Africa, Asia, Mexico, and South America. She spent two decades in Tucson, Arizona, before moving to southwestern Virginia where she currently resides.

Her books include *The Bean Trees*, *Homeland*, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike*, *Animal Dreams*, *Another America*, *Pigs in Heaven*, *High Tide in Tucson*, *The Poisonwood Bible*, *Prodigal Summer*, *Small Wonder*, *Last Stand: America's Virgin Lands*, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life*, *The Lacuna*, and *Flight Behavior*.





Kingsolver was named one of the most important writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century by Writers Digest. In 2000 She received the National Humanities Medal, our country's highest honor for service through the arts. In 2011, Kingsolver was awarded the Dayton Literary Peace Prize for the body of her work.

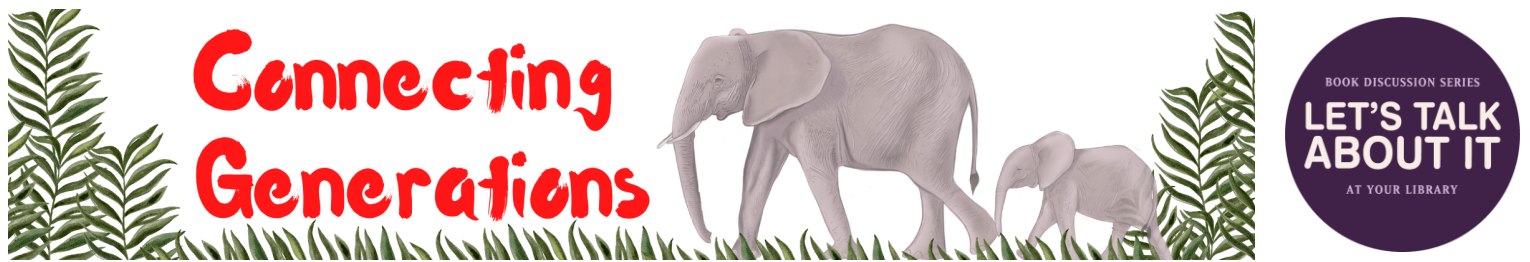
**The Bridge to Terabithia** by Katherine Paterson. Published 1977, 191 pages.

This is a poignant exploration of friendship and death. The novel introduces readers to two sensitive young people, Jess and Leslie, who form a close friendship. Their wish to escape humdrum reality inspires them to create their own fantasy kingdom modeled on C. S. Lewis' land of Narnia discovered when reading *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Their secret place is reached by a rope swing over a creek. The swing becomes their bridge to a magical world where the realities of life don't intrude.

The concept of the "bridge between worlds" becomes the author's metaphor for her storytelling. "I have spent a good part of my life trying to construct bridges," she said in accepting a Newbery Medal for the book. There were so many chasms I saw that needed bridging—chasms of time and culture and disparate human nature." (Source: Theme pamphlet by Elizabeth R. Baer, for American Library Association, 1984).

### Author Information

Born in 1932 in China to missionary parents, Katherine was herself a teacher and a missionary in Japan. She received her master's degrees in English Bible and Religious Education, and her husband is a Presbyterian minister. They have four children and seven grandchildren. Mrs. Paterson has written more than 30 books for children, including 14 novels for young people. Two of these novels, *The Master Puppeteer* and *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, were National Book Award winners, in 1977 and 1979 respectively. *The Great Gilly Hopkins* was also the single Honor Book for the 1979 Newbery Medal. She received the Newbery Medal in 1978 for *Bridge to Terabithia* and again in 1981 for *Jacob Have I Loved*. *Lyddie* was the U.S. contribution to the Honors List of the International Board of Books for Young People in 1994, and *Jip, His Story*, was the winner of the 1997 Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction. Her books have been published in more than 25 languages, and she is the 1998 recipient of the most distinguished international



award given to a writer for a contribution to children's literature, the Hans Christian Andersen Award. Her most recent books are a novel, *The Same Stuff as Stars*, and a picture book, *Blueberries for the Queen*, which she co-authored with her husband, John. Katherine Paterson lives in Vermont, the setting for the last few chapters of *Long Road Home*.

**The Enders Hotel** by Brandon R. Schrand. Published 2008, 230 pages.

In the center of the rural boomtown of Soda Springs, Idaho, stands the historic Enders Hotel, Café, and Bar, a three-story brick building that has been many things to many people. But to one family who bought it as an attempt to renew themselves it was home, a place they desperately tried to hold on to and yet, after seventeen years of living there, the very place from which they wanted to escape.

Growing up under its leaking roof, Brandon R. Schrand watched a cast of broken characters pass through the hotel doors—an alcoholic artist, a forgotten boxing champ, an ex-con, a homeless family—and tried to find his own identity among those revolving faces. Haunted by a father he had never seen, he tested the faces of those drifters for familiarity. Winner of the River Teeth Literary Nonfiction Prize, *The Enders Hotel* reveals the promises and warnings of western boomtown life—stories of alcoholism, murder, betrayal, hope, and finally, redemption.

### Author Information

Brandon R. Schrand is the author of *The Enders Hotel: A Memoir*, the 2007 River Teeth Literary Nonfiction Prize winner, a 2008 School Library Journal Best Adult Books for High School Students selection, and a 2008 Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers selection. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Dallas Morning News*, *The Utne Reader*, *Tin House*, *Shenandoah*, *The Missouri Review*, *Columbia*, *Colorado Review*, *Green Mountains Review*, *River Teeth*, *Ecotone*, *Isotope*, and numerous other publications. He also has essays forthcoming in several anthologies including *Borne on Air: Essays by Idaho Writers* (EWU Press); *Now Write!: Nonfiction Writing Exercises From Today's Best Writers and Teachers* (Tarcher/Penguin); and *The Book of Dads: Essays on the Joys, Perils, and Humiliations of Fatherhood* (Ecco/Harper Collins). He has won the 2006 Willard R. Espy Award, *Shenandoah's* 2008 Carter Prize, the Pushcart Prize, two Pushcart Prize Special Mentions, and has had Notable Essays in both the



Best American Essays 2007 and 2008. A two-time grant recipient of the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, he lives in Moscow, Idaho, with his wife and two children where he coordinates the MFA Program in Creative Writing at the University of Idaho.

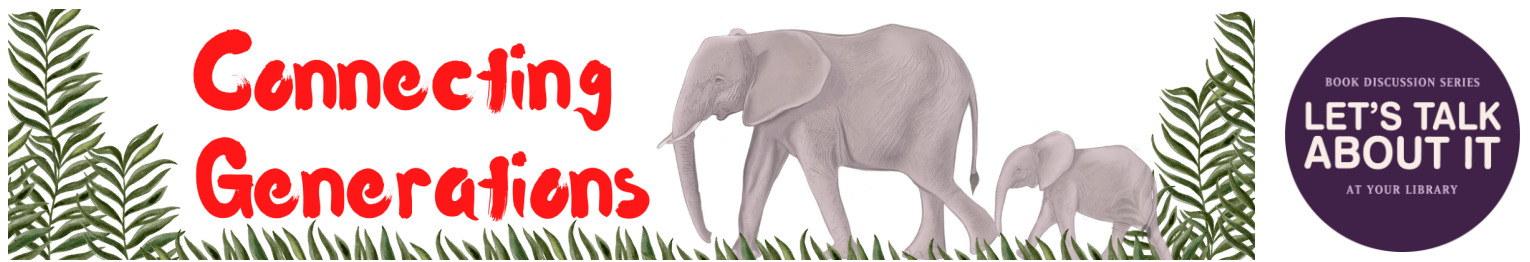
**The Old Man and the Sea** by Ernest Hemingway. Published 1950, 127 pages.

*The Old Man and the Sea* invites, even demands, reading on multiple levels. For example, readers can receive the novella as an engaging and realistic story of Santiago, the old man; Manolin, the young man who loves him; and Santiago's last and greatest battle with a giant marlin. However, the novella also clearly fits into the category of *allegory* — a story with a surface meaning and one or more under-the-surface meanings. Likewise, the characters become much more than themselves or even types — they become *archetypes* (universal representations inherited from the collective consciousness of our ancestors and the fundamental facts of human existence). From this perspective, Santiago is mentor, spiritual father, old man, or old age; and Manolin is pupil, son, boy, or youth. Santiago is the great fisherman and Manolin his apprentice — both dedicated to fishing as a way of life that they were born to and a calling that is spiritually enriching and part of the organic whole of the natural world. Santiago, as the greatest of such fishermen and the embodiment of their philosophy, becomes a solitary human representative to the natural world. He accepts the inevitability of the natural order, in which all creatures are both predator and prey, but recognizes that all creatures also nourish one another. He accepts the natural cycle of human existence as part of that natural order but finds within himself the imagination and inspiration to endure his greatest struggle and achieve the intangibles that can redeem his individual life so that even when destroyed he can remain undefeated.

### Author Information

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), born in Oak Park, Illinois, started his career as a writer in a newspaper office in Kansas City at the age of seventeen. After the United States entered the First World War, he joined a volunteer ambulance unit in the Italian army. Serving at the front, he was wounded, was decorated by the Italian Government, and spent considerable time in hospitals. After his return to the United States, he became a reporter for Canadian and American newspapers and was soon sent back to Europe to cover such events as the Greek





Revolution. During the twenties, Hemingway became a member of the group of expatriate Americans in Paris, which he described in his first important work, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926). Equally successful was *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), the study of an American ambulance officer's disillusionment in the war and his role as a deserter. Hemingway used his experiences as a reporter during the civil war in Spain as the background for his most ambitious novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). Among his later works, the most outstanding is the short novel, *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952). His straightforward prose, his spare dialogue, and his predilection for understatement are particularly effective in his short stories, some of which are collected in *Men Without Women* (1927) and *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories* (1938). Hemingway died in Idaho in 1961.

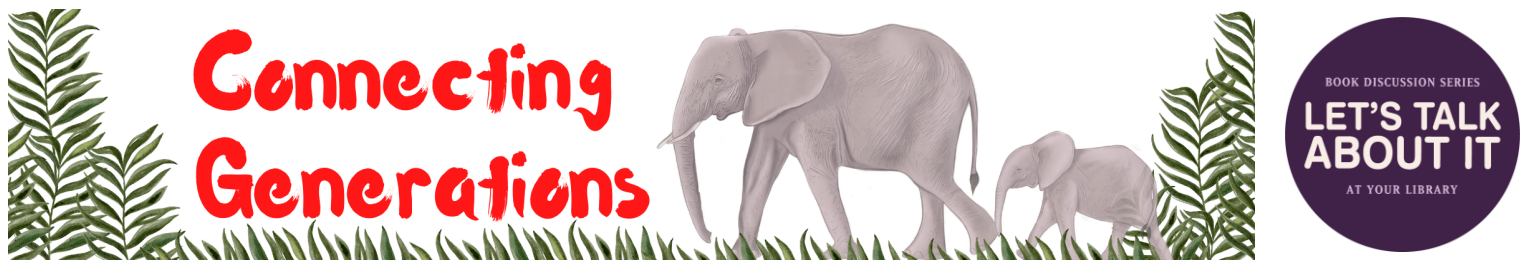
**The Secret Life of Bees** by Sue Monk Kidd. Published 2003, 352 pages.

The Secret Life of Bees is a 2002 historical novel by American author Sue Monk Kidd. Set in the American South in 1964, the year of the Civil Rights Act and intensifying racial unrest, Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees* is a story of coming-of-age, of the ability of love to transform our lives, and the often unacknowledged longing for the universal feminine divine. Addressing the wounds of loss, betrayal, and the scarcity of love, Kidd demonstrates the power of women coming together to heal those wounds, to mother each other and themselves, and to create a sanctuary of true family and home. It received much critical acclaim and was a New York Times bestseller. It was nominated for the Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction and was adapted into a 2008 film by Gina Prince-Bythewood.

### Author Information

Sue Monk Kidd, born in Sylvester, Georgia, graduated from Texas Christian University with a B.S. in nursing in 1970 and worked throughout her twenties as a Registered Nurse and college nursing instructor. She got her start in writing when a personal essay she wrote for a writing class was published in *Guideposts* and reprinted in *Reader's Digest*. She went on to become a Contributing Editor at *Guideposts*. Her first books, *God's Joyful Surprise* (Harper San Francisco, 1988) and *When the Heart Waits* (Harper San Francisco, 1990), were spiritual memoirs describing her experiences in contemplative Christianity. *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter* (Harper San Francisco, 1996) introduced themes from feminist theology. Her first novel, *The*





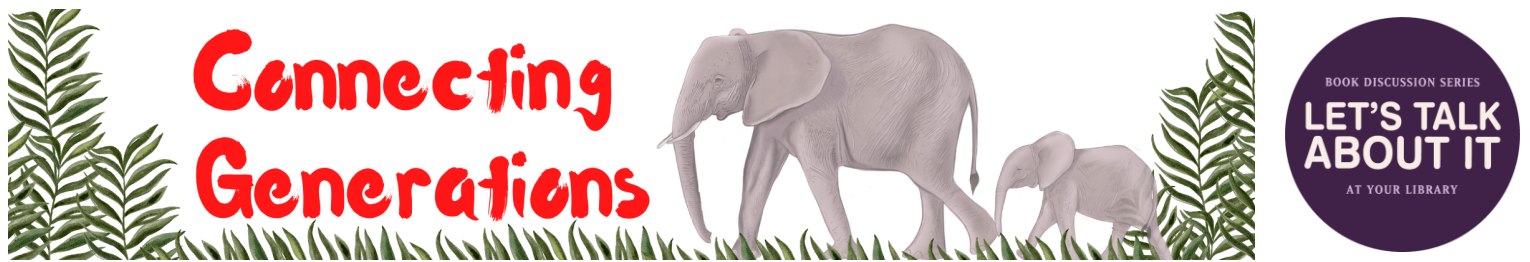
*Secret Life of Bees* (Viking, 2002), was written over three and a half years. It has been produced on stage in New York by The American Place Theater and been adapted into a movie. She has since published several additional books, her newest the novel *The Book of Longings*. Kidd has acknowledged Henry David Thoreau, Kate Chopin, Thomas Merton, and Carl Jung as influences.

**The Wind in the Willows** by Kenneth Grahame. Published 1908, 244 pages.

*Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame (1908) presents a fantasy world peopled by males only, free from constraints, demands, and responsibilities. Kenneth Grahame began this book unwittingly, by telling bedtime stories and writing letters about Toad and Rat to his only child, Alastair. But is it a book for children? Peter Green, Grahame's biographer comments: "There has been much discussion as to whether *The Wind in the Willows* is indeed a pleasure for all ages, is a book for children or for adults. It is both. For children, a fantasy world that triumphantly fuses disparate levels of reality; for adults, hauntingly evocative language and demure social satire; for both, that immensely potent myth." Perhaps it is this very duality that makes the book so well-loved: while on the one hand decrying encroaching technology and materialism, Grahame lauds the pleasures of sumptuous feasting and bodily comfort. The book's structure itself seems to reflect this duality by use of alternating chapters: one full of action with Toad and his motorcar, the next a discursive, philosophical reflection on the joys of rural life. (Source: Theme pamphlet by Elizabeth R. Baer, for American Library Association, 1984).

### Author Information

Kenneth Grahame was born in 1859 and was orphaned by the time he was five years old. He went to live with his grandmother in Cookham Dene, Berkshire. He attended St. Edward's School there, and at the age of 17 began working as a clerk for the Bank of England. He stayed on, was promoted several times, eventually holding the position of Permanent Secretary. He married Elspeth Thomson in 1899. Grahame wrote essays which were published in the 'National Observer,' and many well-received sketches of childhood - some about orphaned siblings - for various publications. He was nostalgic, appreciative of nature, and sensitive to the lives of children; some of the stories which comprise *The Wind in the Willows* were originally written as



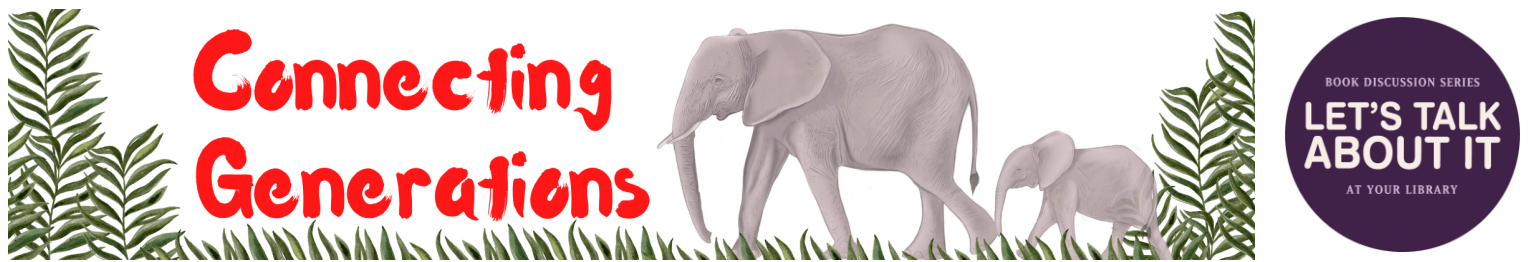
letters, others were invented as bedtime stories - all in order to amuse his young son, who died in an accident in 1920. Grahame died in 1932.

**The Women of Brewster Place** by Gloria Naylor. Published 1982, 192 pages.

In her heralded first novel, Gloria Naylor weaves the truths and the myths of seven women living in Brewster Place, a bleak inner-city sanctuary, into a powerful, moving portrait of the strengths, struggles, and hopes of black women in today's America. Vulnerable and resilient, openhanded and openhearted, these women forge their lives in a place that in turn threatens and protects—a common prison and a shared home. Naylor renders painful and very ugly human experiences with simple eloquence and uncommon intuition. Her ability to establish a memorable sense of place and history makes *The Women of Brewster Place* a remarkable literary accomplishment and a contemporary classic.

### Author Information

Gloria Naylor, was born in New York City in 1950. Although she grew up in the largest urban center in the U.S., her roots were in the south since her parents had been sharecroppers in Robinsonville, Mississippi. In 1963 Naylor and her family moved to Queens, a more middle-class borough, which increased Naylor's awareness of racism. Also in the same year, Naylor's mother joined the Jehovah's Witnesses and in 1968 Naylor followed in her footsteps. She witnessed for seven years, supporting herself as a switchboard operator, but eventually left the Jehovah's Witnesses because "things weren't getting better, but worse." What followed for Naylor were years of transformation. From 1975-1981 she worked full-time as a switchboard operator, pursued writing, and attended classes at Medgar Evers College, and eventually Brooklyn College. She discovered feminism and African-American literature which revitalized her and gave her new ways to think about and define herself as a black woman. In 1977 Naylor read her first novel by an African-American woman, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, which gave her the courage to write. She began writing fiction in 1979 and submitted a story to *Essence* magazine, whose editor advised her to continue writing. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English, completed her first novel, *The Women of Brewster Place*, and began graduate work in Afro-American in Studies at Yale in 1981. She died in 2016.



**The Wonderful Wizard of Oz** by L. Frank Baum. Published 1900, 128 pages.

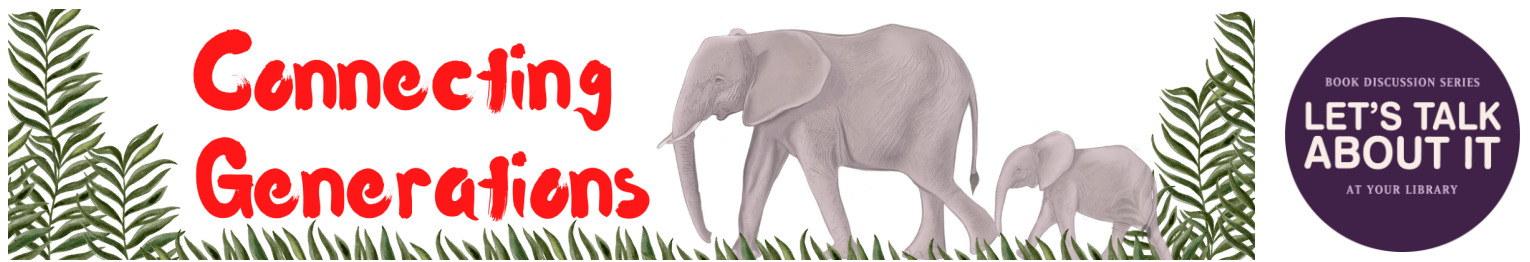
Since it first appeared in 1900, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* has brought joy to generations. In it, a girl's dream world comes to life as the cyclone lifts Dorothy from Kansas, depositing her in the enchanted land of the Munchkins. Here she meets the famous Oz characters: The Scarecrow, the Tin Woodsman, the Cowardly Lion, and the Wicked Witch of the West. Her adventures along the Yellow Brick Road to the Emerald City and the Wizard himself evoke the rich, universal appeal of a classic fairy tale.

#### **Author Information**

Lyman Frank Baum (May 15, 1856 – May 6, 1919) was an American author of children's books, best known for writing *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. He wrote thirteen novel sequels, nine other fantasy novels, and a host of other works (55 novels in total, plus four "lost" novels, 82 short stories, over 200 poems, an unknown number of scripts, and many miscellaneous writings), and made numerous attempts to bring his works to the stage and screen. His works predicted such century-later commonplaces as television, laptop computers (*The Master Key*), wireless telephones (*Tik-Tok of Oz*), women in high risk, action-heavy occupations (*Mary Louise in the Country*), and the ubiquity of advertising on clothing (*Aunt Jane's Nieces at Work*).

**When We Were Romans** by Matthew Kneale. Published 2007, 304 pages.

Lawrence and his little sister Jemima find themselves uprooted and off to a new life in Rome with their mother who has decided they must leave England. Life becomes a catalogue of sofa-surfing homelessness and uncertainty for the family, with all the hopes and anxieties of the children acted out in a city dominated by its history. Lawrence embraces that history with the schoolboy enthusiasm that he also reserves for his galaxies of information on the solar system. Nine-year-old Lawrence is the man in his family. He carefully watches over his willful little sister, Jemima, and his mother, Hannah. When Hannah becomes convinced that their estranged father is stalking them, the family flees London and heads for Rome, where Hannah lived happily as a young woman. For Lawrence, fascinated by stories of popes and emperors, Rome is



an adventure. Though they are short of money, and move from home to home, staying with his mother's old friends, little by little their new life seems to be taking shape. But the trouble that brought them to Italy will not quite leave them in peace. Narrated in Lawrence's perfectly rendered voice, *When We Were Romans* powerfully evokes the emotions and confusions of childhood—the triumphs, the jealousies, the fears, and the love. Even as everything he understands is turned upside down, Lawrence remains determined to keep his family together, viewing the world from a perspective that is at once endearingly innocent and preternaturally wise.

### Author Information

Matthew Kneale (born 24 November 1960) is a British writer, best known for his 2000 novel *English Passengers*, which won the prestigious Whitbread Book Award and was also shortlisted for the Booker Prize. He went to school at Latymer Upper School and then studied Modern History at Magdalen College, Oxford, and afterwards spent a year in Japan, when he began writing. He now lives in Italy. Kneale is the son of the writers Nigel Kneale and Judith Kerr. His other novels include *Whore Banquets* (1987 – winner of the 1988 Somerset Maugham Award, which was also won by his father in 1950; republished in 2002 as *Mr. Foreigner*), *Inside Rose's Kingdom* (1989), *Sweet Thames* (1992 – winner of the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize), and *When We Were Romans* (2008). In 2004, he released the short story collection *Small Crimes in an Age of Abundance*. *English Passengers* was also shortlisted for Australia's Miles Franklin Award in 2000, making Kneale the first non-Australian author to be shortlisted for the award.