

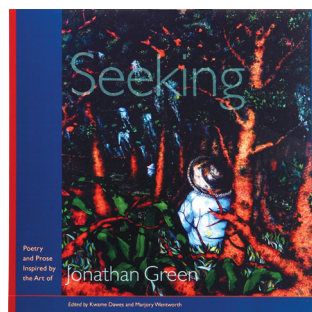
Inspiring Words

3 PERFECT STORIES FOR YOUR LIBRARY



▲ Losing your hair is traumatic, but it is even more so when, as an adult, you are a well-known interior designer and contributor to the *Today* show. In **THE BALD MERMAID (\$35; POINT-ED LEAF PRESS)**, a memoir by Sheila Bridges, the author humorously unpacks her unique looks (frizzy blond hair and blue eyes) and many family Christmases until the worst happens: her hair falls out. Is it the stress? The trips around the world? The almost maniacal attention to design detail? It was a mystery until her alopecia was diagnosed. But the process of losing her hair taught her a lot about how people view others. With expertise, Bridges tells her life story with grace, humility and dexterity.

Freshman author Marlen Suyapa Bodden has accomplished what most self-published authors dream of: writing a book that turns into an underground sensation that is then rereleased by a major publishing house to a larger, mainstream audience. But once you read **THE WEDDING GIFT (\$25.99; ST. MARTIN'S PRESS)**, you'll learn why the based-on-true-events story of biracial slave Sarah Campbell, her White sister Clarissa Allen and her slavemaster daddy Cornelius Allen is sure to become 2013's sleeper hit. Sarah is the "gift" given to the dangerously immature Clarissa upon her marriage to another wealthy slave owner. This isn't another sordid, tragic mulatto tale. The horrors of whips and chains are present, but the beauty of this novel is the way it expands the typical slave narrative by adding gripping innuendo, mystery, surprise, shrewd insight and murder centered on people—White, Black, male and female—who will fight to the death to escape their circumstances.



◀ WHERE ELSE CAN YOU FIND A LOVELY PAIRING of picturesque Jonathan Green paintings and accessible poetry except in **Seeking: Poetry and Prose Inspired by the Art of Jonathan Green (\$19.95; The University of South Carolina Press.)**? Edited by Kwame Dawes and Marjory Wentworth, the short book includes several of genre masters Green's vivid portraits of Southern life. Most important, it contains *Seeking*, a painting created to be placed in a Moncks Corner, S.C., abbey on the old Laurens plantation—something the abbot wanted to commemorate the work of the slaves who toiled in the rice paddies. Green, inspired by the discovery of a slave cemetery there, agreed. The various poets who contributed to this work did so after viewing *Seeking*, resulting in a lovely and hypervisual read.

EDITOR'S PICKS

WHET YOUR APPETITE FOR A GOOD OLD-FASHIONED LOVE STORY with Regina Hart's *Trinity Falls* (\$6.99; Kensington Publishing). It's a simple, devilish pleasure. Award-winning filmmaker, hip-hop artist and writer MK Asante combines anger and beauty in the narrative *Buck*, a memoir of his own survival and life from Zimbabwe to the streets of "Killadelphia" (\$25; Spiegel & Grau). Frankie Y. Bailey dazzles with *The Red Queen Dies* (\$24.95; Minotaur Books) a by-the-book, futuristic whodunit that draws you in from page one.

