



A Literary Winter

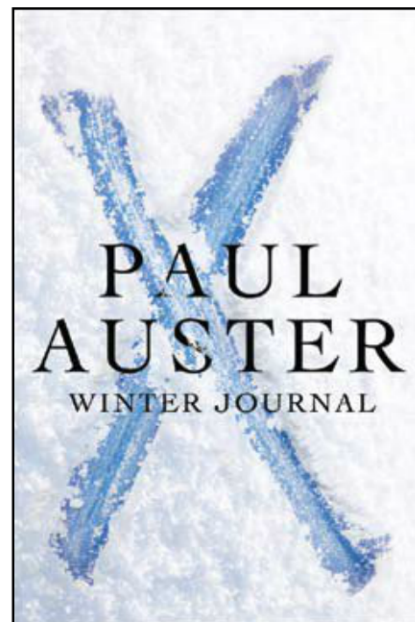
Books to Warm Heart, Mind, & Soul

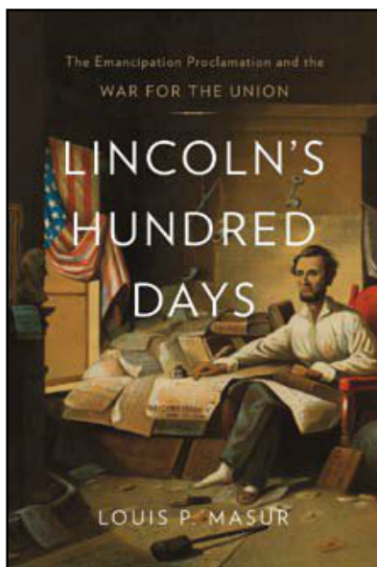
From the first frost until the last trickles of the thaw, winter in Connecticut is a multifaceted season. Just as there are many adjectives to describe our winter, there is a trove of books in every genre to complement the season. The books featured here include many recent editions, but also some favorites that wear their aging copyrights with grace and style. Find the adjective that best suits your mood below; it will lead you to a fitting book for adult or young readers. Then find a cozy corner in which to unwrap your chosen story.

Wise

Winter Journal
(Henry Holt and Company, 2012)

Paul Auster turned 64 as he penned his second memoir. He describes it as "an attempt to try to communicate what it feels like to be alive in one's own body." Auster's prose speaks simply but richly; his second-person narrative, an unusual approach for a life story, is palpable: "The wind in your face during last week's blizzard. The awful sting of the cold, and you out there in the empty streets wondering what possessed you to leave the house in such a pounding storm, and yet, even as you struggled to keep your balance, there was the exhilaration of that wind..." An insightful account of a full and interesting life, Auster's sensuous retelling of both momentous and mundane moments highlights the value of life's varied experiences, missteps and all.

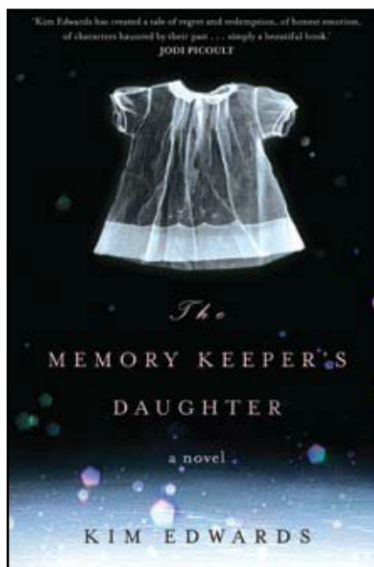




Historical

Lincoln's Hundred Days
(Harvard University Press, 2012)

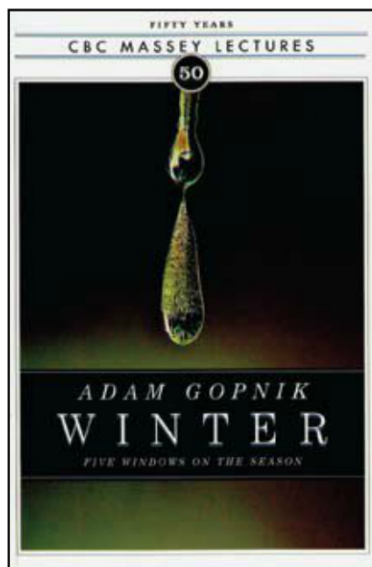
Historian and Rutgers University professor Louis P. Masur recounts the crucial days between September 22, 1862, when Lincoln announced his intention to free the slaves, and New Year's Day, 1863, when the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. Masur describes the document as "welcomed and feared, praised and damned, analyzed and debated." The nation wondered—would the president change his mind? We know how the story ends, but the heated politics preceding this nation-changing milestone makes for an intriguing history lesson. With Stephen Spielberg's film, *Lincoln*, due in theaters this winter, Masur's volume is a timely read.



Moving

The Memory Keeper's Daughter (Penguin Books, 2005)

This book by Kim Edwards begins with snowfall, the start of a mother's labor, and a dicey drive to the hospital in the storm. Rapidly accumulating snow creates a scenario in which the father, a surgeon, delivers his own twins. The baby boy is perfectly healthy, but his twin sister has Down syndrome. The time is 1964, when those with disabilities were often sequestered from society. The surgeon sends the new baby girl away, telling his wife that she perished. The weight of this enormous secret takes its toll, but the eventual emergence of the truth engenders family healing. Have some tissues nearby for this heart-wrenching read.

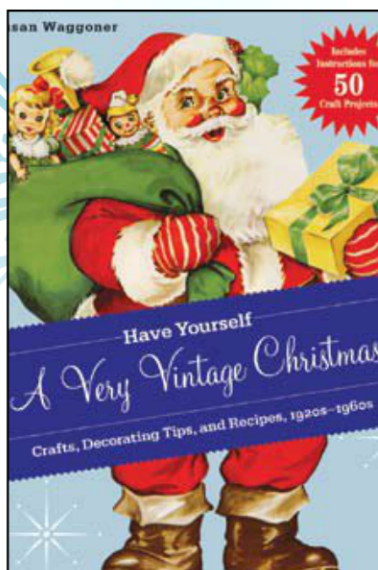


Thought-Provoking

Winter: Five Windows on the Season (House of Anansi Press, 2011)

Adam Gopnik has identified "5 Rs" for winter—romantic, recuperative, radical, recreational, and remembering—conveying his perspective on each through well-researched anecdotes. Did you know that ice-skating was one of the few acceptable forms of "flirtation and sexual display" in the 1800s, drawing tens of thousands of visitors to Central Park? Or that our image of a chubby, white-bearded Santa was invented by a Civil War era illustrator as "the presiding deity of the Union cause"? If this book represents his in-person personality, Gopnik must be a dinner guest in high demand. Borrow a few of his fascinating facts to kindle conversation at your next holiday party.

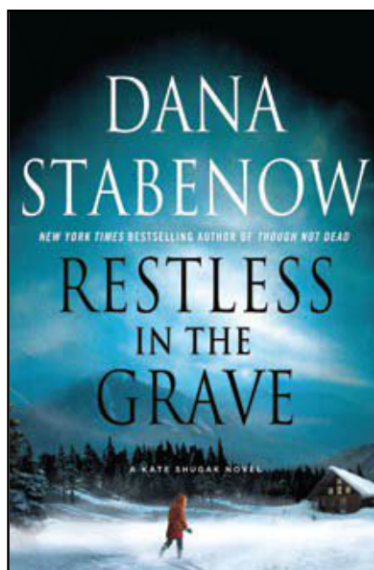
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Nostalgic

Have Yourself a Very Vintage Christmas
(Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 2011)

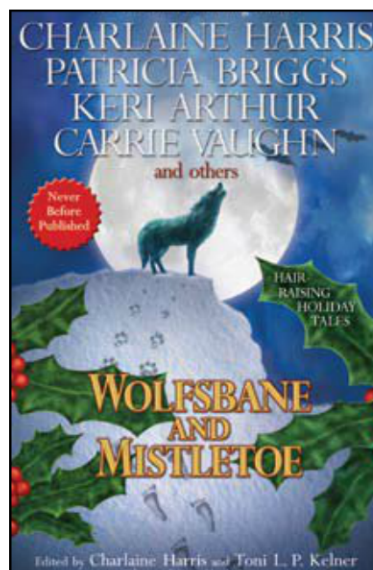
Even if “crafty” isn’t on your list of talents, one of the projects in this book may be a fitting—and fairly easy—tribute to Christmases of simpler decades. Tidbits about each era from the 1920s through the 1960s precede straightforward directions for each project. Items like worn children’s toys and cotton batting take on new life as part of the wonderland décor, a reminder that the green movement is a longstanding tradition. Author Susan Waggoner includes practical matters, too, such as basic tips as how to use adhesives without affixing yourself to your craft. An “art portfolio” presents colorful images to photocopy for holiday cards, plus decorating and style tips and even candy recipes for old-fashioned fudge and caramels.



Mysterious

Restless in the Grave
(Minotaur Books, 2012)

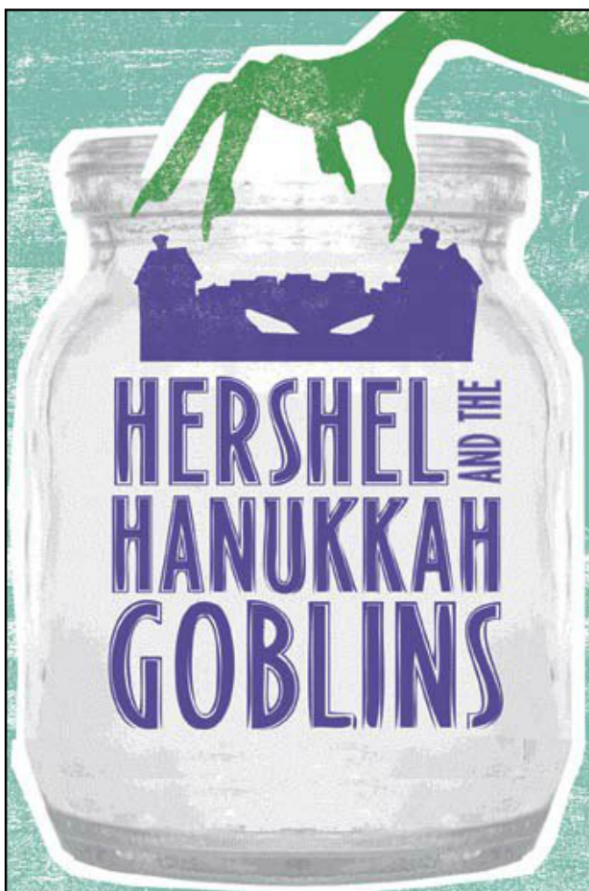
Private investigator Kate Shugak, an Aleut native of Alaska, lives in a national park with her half-wolf/half-Husky dog, Mutt. In this book, the 19th in the Kate Shugak series, bestselling author Dana Stabenow brings back her popular character state trooper Liam Campbell to partner with Kate. (Fans have been clamoring for Liam’s return since *Better to Rest* in 2002). The duo must decipher the clues behind the apparent foul play that caused a tragic plane crash. Stabenow’s vivid prose finds a compelling backdrop in the landscape and history of Alaska.



Peculiar

Wolfsbane and Mistletoe
(Penguin Group, 2008)

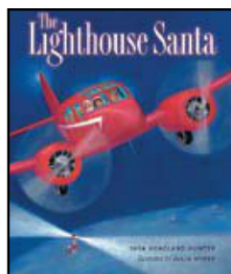
Charlaïne Harris and Toni L. P. Kelner’s short story anthology about vampires and birthdays (*Many Bloody Returns*, 2007) worked so well that the editors added a second act in adult fantasy, featuring werewolves and Christmas. The offbeat result showcases several bestselling authors, including Dana Cameron, who won an Agatha Award for “The Night Things Changed,” included here. Benign-sounding stories like “Gift Wrap” and “Milk and Cookies” take on a whole new shadowy tone. This could be the perfect gift for your quirkiest friend!



Clever

Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins (Holiday House, 1994)

In this book for young readers aged five and up, Hershel of Ostropol, arriving in a beleaguered village, can't find a single Hanukkah candle burning. He quietly and cleverly outwits the hill-dwelling goblins who plan to ruin another annual celebration by snuffing out the sacred menorah candles—and getting rid of the potato latkes, too! This tale, written by Erick Kimmel and humorously illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman, parallels the message of courage and freedom in the Hanukkah story, in which a small band of people ultimately defeated a large army and rededicated the Temple in Jerusalem.



Hopeful

The Lighthouse Santa (University Press of New England, 2011)

Sara Hoagland Hunter and Julia Miner based this book, which is intended for readers aged four to eight, on pilot Edward Rowe

Snow, who delivered Christmas gifts to the children of lighthouse keepers from 1936 to 1981. In the story, a young girl on Nantucket keeps the faith that a blizzard and high winds won't deter the pilot from his annual visit. Images that vibrate with cinematic energy complete the sweet, hopeful refrain that "nothing is impossible on Christmas Eve in a lighthouse."

As you prepare for your "long winter's nights," remember that the best books are often those recommended by fellow booklovers, including friends, family, and those community heroes—librarians and independent-bookstore owners. Here's wishing you the warm welcome of well-written words this winter! ❧

Katherine Hauswirth writes creative nonfiction and poetry for a variety of magazines and journals. Her column on books, Reading the Truth, is published at BiblioBuffet.com.