

JUST PUBLISHED

ROBIN COOK '62

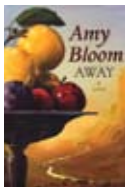
Critical
(Putnam, 2007)



In his latest medical thriller set in New York City, Cook devises an intricate plot revolving around a surge of drug-resistant staph infections in three specialty hospitals that leads to the death of an alarming number of patients. The author creates several colorful characters, including Angela Dawson, an ambitious CEO with a controlling interest in the three specialty hospitals; a shady investor in her startup business who is a member of organized crime; a former Iraq War veteran who has become a ruthless killer; and a range of medical professionals and dying patients. The novel brings back two characters from Cook's previous books, medical examiners and newlyweds Laurie Montgomery and Jack Stapleton. When Montgomery starts investigating the staph-related, post-procedure deaths at the three hospitals, she puts the lives of herself and her husband in danger. Cook keeps the reader on edge until the novel's surprising end.

AMY BLOOM '75

Away
(Random House, 2007)

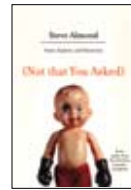


Bloom's critically acclaimed novel centers around a memorable heroine named Lillian Leyb, a 1920s Russian Jewish immigrant who in the course of the novel searches for her daughter as she travels to New York and then across the United States and through Alaska and Canada on her way to Siberia. Lillian has survived a Russian pogrom that has taken the lives of her husband and parents. When she arrives in New York's Lower East Side, she encounters the world of Yiddish theater and becomes the mistress of both a theater impresario, Reuben Burstein, and his actor son. The first portion of the book concentrates on Lillian's life in New York, while the rest of the novel follows her transcontinental journey as she meets a number of characters and uses all her cunning and will to survive. In her *New York Times* review, Janet Maslin described the novel as "a literary triumph It is accessible to the point of pure enthrallment without compromising its eloquence or thematic strength."

If you are a Wesleyan graduate, faculty member, or parent with a new publication, please let us know by contacting David Low '76 at dlow@wesleyan.edu or at Wesleyan magazine, Office of Public Affairs, Wesleyan University/South College, Middletown, CT 06459.

STEVE ALMOND '88

Not that You Asked: Rants, Exploits, and Obsessions
(Random House, 2007)



In this entertaining and often funny essay collection, Almond shares his passionate views on a number of subjects that obsess him, including media and reality television, Oprah's book club, personal grooming, the Boston Red Sox, writing about sex, Condoleezza Rice, religion, and fatherhood. His collection began as a biography of Kurt Vonnegut, and one of the book's best essays pays tribute to the late popular author whose work showed Almond that it was possible to be angry and hilarious at the same time. Readers will appreciate Almond's gift for finding humor in humiliating and sometimes absurd situations that most of us have to endure throughout our lives.

LINDA PERLSTEIN '92

Tested: One American School Struggles to Make the Grade
(Henry Holt, 2007)



In 2005, Perlstein, a former education writer for the *Washington Post*, was allowed an all-access pass for a year to Tyler Heights Elementary School in Annapolis, Md., some 32 miles from the White House, where the No-Child Left Behind education bill was signed into law. At the time, 70 percent of students at Tyler Heights lived at or below the poverty level. Her excellent book ventures beyond the statistics to study firsthand how the testing movement has affected students, teachers, and school administrators in Maryland and around the country. Perlstein uncovers the complexities of a modern elementary school as she chronicles the pressures on administrators to adopt business practices and hire consultants; the difficulties of learning faced by students with behavior problems; the changes in teaching children to read; the complications of standardization in regards to teaching immigrant and special education children; and the different education poor minority students receive compared to more affluent young people. — David Low

OF NOTE

JACK MCDEVITT MALS '72 has received the 2007 Nebula Novel Award for his book *Seeker* (Ace, 2006) from the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America. His latest science fiction novel *Cauldron* (Ace, 2007) is part of a series of books featuring veteran star pilot Priscilla "Hutch" Hutchins.

EDUCATOR ROBERT WILDER '88's witty new essay collection, *Tales from the Teachers' Lounge* (Delacorte Press, 2007), chronicles the highs and lows of life in the classroom as both a student and a teacher.

POET AND ACTIVIST ALIX OLSON '97 is the editor of *Word Warriors: 35 Women Leaders in the Spoken Word Revolution* (Seal Press, 2007), which features powerful and provocative essays and poems by some of the most influential female spoken word artists in the United States.

FICTION AND POETRY

GABRIEL COHEN '82, *Boombbox* (Academy Chicago, 2007)

BEVERLY DONOFRIO '78, *Mary and the Mouse, The Mouse and Mary* (Random House, 2007) and *Thank You, Lucky Stars* (Random House, 2008)

DAVID LEE GARRISON '67, *Sweeping the Cemetery* (Browser Books, 2007)

PATRICIA SHEEHY MALS '98, *Field of Destiny* (Oak Tree Press, 2007)

NONFICTION

EUGENE BORGIDA '71 and SUSAN FISKE, EDITORS, *Beyond Common Sense: Psychological Science in the Courtroom* (Wiley, 2007)

ENRIQUE CHAVES-CARBALLO '56, MD, *The Tropical World of Samuel Taylor Darling: Parasites, Pathology and Philanthropy* (Sussex-Academic, 2007)

LISA GOODMAN '83 and DEBORAH EPSTEIN, *Listening to Battered Women: A Survivor-Centered Approach to Advocacy, Mental Health, and Justice* (American Psychological Association, 2007)

DALE TORSTON GRADEN, MALS '80, *From Slavery to Freedom in Brazil: Bahia, 1835–1900* (University of New Mexico Press, 2007)

LESLIE ANDERSON MORALES '76, EDITOR, *Virginia Slave Births Index, 1853–1865*, (Heritage Press Books, 2007)

JANET O'SHEA '90, *At Home in the World: Bharata Natyam on the Global Stage* (Wesleyan University Press, 2007)

JOEL OSTROW '87, GEORGIY SATAROV, and IRINA KHAKAMADA, *The Consolidation of Dictatorship in Russia* (Greenwood Press, 2007)

SANFORD SEGAL '58, *Nine Introductions in Complex Analysis* (Elsevier Science, 2007)

PATRICIA SHEEHY MALS '98, *Giving with Meaning* (Oak Tree Press, 2007)

CLARA SILVERSTEIN '82, *The Boston Chef's Table* (Globe Pequot Press, 2007) and (with Marjorie Druker) *The New England Soup Factory Cookbook* (Thomas Nelson/Rutledge Hill Press, 2007)

TED SMITH '67, DAVID SONNENFELD, and DAVID NAGUIB PELLOW, CO-EDITORS, *Challenging the Chip: Labor Rights and Environmental Justice in the Global Electronics Industry* (Temple University Press, 2006)

MARIA TRUGLIO '92, *Beyond the Family Romance: The Legend of Pascoli* (University of Toronto Press, 2007)

MICHAEL YAMASHITA '71, *New York Flying High* (White Star, 2007)

For additional book reviews, listings, and news, please see: wesleyan.edu/magazine/ or wesleyan.edu/magazine/extra/.

BACKSTORY

Just Go Forward

In her exhilarating memoir, *The Late Bloomer's Revolution* (Hyperion, 2007), **Amy Cohen '88** tells how she changed her life against all odds.

My new book began with my writing about how within a single year, my mother died, I got fired from my sitcom writing job, my boyfriend broke up with me, and soon after, I got a rash on my face (for eight months) that made me look as if I'd fallen asleep on a George Foreman grill, leading many well intentioned people to ask, "Um, do you ever compare yourself to Job?" I had no mother, no boyfriend, no face, no job, and no idea of who I was.

I began writing about how my life hadn't turned out the way I hoped. I always imagined I'd be the powerhouse who juggled a thriving TV writing career, an English sculptor husband, and two adorable children with a room in our loft where they could play the drums. But at 35, I was unemployed, single, and as far from any kind of success—both personal and professional—as I could imagine. I began to think that when people referred to the "great depression of the thirties," they were talking about my thirties. I had visions of myself living in a single room occupancy hotel, obese from a steady diet of government cheese, wearing a muu-muu stained with cheap wine and tears, while banging on my wheelchair with a spatula. I would joke about this to friends, pretending that I was kidding—a muu-muu, ha!—but the truth was, ending up alone was as scary as anything I could imagine.

The only thing that kept me going was telling myself I was a Late Bloomer—I would triumph, just not in the time I expected. I told myself this to calm myself down—I was terrified—but in fact, there was little evidence that anything in my life would change.

And then, one day I decided to buy a bicycle. If I'd known that teaching myself to ride a bicycle would forever change me, I would

have been too afraid to try. Growing up, I'd never learned how. My mother battled cancer several times and amidst all the busy-ness of illness, I was afraid to ask anyone to teach me.

At 35, I bought a bike with a seat so big it was practically a Barcalounger and so low it was essentially a sled. I wore so much padding that I looked like a bulkier Michelin Man, which helped as I constantly crashed into things—trees, the side of a chowder shack, a shiny new Porsche. But even covered with bruises, even knowing that I looked like a complete idiot, every weekend I would get back on my bike. I went from being able to ride five unwieldy revolutions to ten (this took over a month). But more than that, the voice in my head, the one that had chanted, "your life's going nowhere," was now telling me, as I so often told myself on my bicycle, "forward, just go forward."

I would invoke this new mantra often in the following years, including when I handed in the original draft of my book—about my mother's slow death from a brain tumor, which was so bleak it could only be read with your head in the oven. And my publisher agreed. I had gotten a book contract based on a light, energetic dating column I had written chronicling things like: People who break up with you when you didn't know you were actually dating. My publishers wanted *Sex and the City*, not a more somber version of *Death Be Not Proud*. They wanted chic restaurants and saucy dalliances with men named Gustavo; I gave them hospice. And so, after almost two years of writing, I started again from scratch. Just go forward, I reminded myself in the worst of times. I like mentioning this failed draft because I'd always thought that all writers knew exactly the book they would write, but that wasn't the case for me. Apparently, even my book was a Late Bloomer.

I found myself asking how much can you change about yourself after a certain age? I mean, really change. Can you go from being scared to scrappy? From the emotional equivalent of a cheap piñata to a person who now understood that, however difficult, she could handle anything? I came to understand, to believe, that the answer was yes. And that I'd never be the same.

Learning to ride a bicycle at 35 convinced me I could do anything, at any age. That was something I'd never felt before. Now I believe, as George Eliot said, "It's never too late to be what you might have been." You can change anything about yourself at any time. I know that now. It's as simple as learning to ride a bicycle.

Amy Cohen was a writer/producer on the television sitcoms *Caroline in the City* and *Spin City*, a dating columnist for the *New York Observer*, and the dating correspondent for cable TV's *New York Central*. She lives in New York City.

