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**Newsletter No 66  
December 2008**

Winter draws on.

Our [Book of the Month](#) is Booker shortlisted SEA OF POPPIES by Amitav Ghosh. Do this month's [competition](#) to win a copy.

Our other [recommended titles](#) are BLINDNESS, a modern-day parable, by Jose Saramago and the rather esoteric HELL by Yasutaka Tsutsui.

We don't have an interview this month but we do have an exciting [Christmas Book Quiz](#). The winner, to be drawn out of a hat at the end of December, will receive a set of 8 of our favourite Picador books from 2008. The quiz is open to all.

Can you [Spot the Bookshop](#)? Congratulations to Sue Leyland, our November winner, for spotting Heffers in Cambridge. A £10 book token is on its way.

Congratulations to the winners of THE CLOTHES ON THEIR BACKS: Katherine Penny, Reigate; Clare Gleave, London; Neil Tattersall Chale Green; Paul Ansell, London; Vicki Day, Peterborough; Pauline Gane, Swindon; Nina de la Mer, Brighton; Julie Sansom, Warwick; Toni Quandt, Crawley; Karen McLachan, Edinburgh; Katy Humber, Epsom; Eve Eheridge, Ffynnonwen; Barbara Terpilowska, Bognor Regis; Emma Blackband, Lancing and Gillian Wilton, Kings Lynn. Many thanks to Virago publishers.

Claim your [FREE BOOKS](#)! If your group is already registered with us you are eligible to claim free books every month (sorry, UK and Ireland groups only). This month we have 100 proof copies of Kate Grenville's great new novel, THE LIEUTENANT which

we can offer to every member of your group. This will be on a first come first served basis so if your group is not registered then just fill in the [form](#). It's a very simple process!

Read about our [Bookgroup of the Month](#) The Teachers and Friends from Filey who are on their 60<sup>th</sup> book!

Fill in the [questionnaire](#) if you'd like to be a BGoTM.

There are literary prizes galore this month:

Vietnamese-born writer Nam Le has been awarded the 2008 [Dylan Thomas prize](#) (to recognize the best young writer in the English-speaking world), picking up a whopping £60,000 cheque for THE BOAT, his first collection of short stories.

The winner of the 2008 [John Llewellyn Rhys Prize](#) is THE SECRET LIFE OF WORDS by Henry Hitchings. This is the first non-fiction book in six years to win the award, which is open to author's aged 35 or under writing in all literary genres.

Winners of the inaugural [Roald Dahl Funny Prize](#) are THE WITCH'S CHILDREN GO TO SCHOOL by Ursula Jones (for children aged six and under) and MR GUM AND THE DANCING BEAR by Andy Stanton (for children aged seven to fourteen).

Boris Johnson's novelist sister Rachel Johnson has taken this year's [Bad Sex in Fiction award](#) for her novel SHIRE HELL. A lifetime achievement award was also given to John Updike after the American author realised the "unique achievement" of four consecutive nominations for the award.

THE REST IS NOISE by Alex Ross, "An intricate, kaleidoscopic, all-embracing history of 20th-century music from Mahler to La Monte

Young" is the winner of this year's [Guardian First Book award](#).

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The search for Andrew Motion's successor as the new [Poet Laureate](#) is under way, with the public invited to make suggestions. Who would be your choice?

Have you got a comment to make about these - or any other book-related topic? Have your say on our [notice-board](#).

Radio 4 [Bookclub](#) on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December features Amitav Ghosh (shortlisted for the 2008 Man Booker) who discusses the book that made his name in this country, THE GLASS PALACE. Remember you can "listen again" if you miss either programme.

Would you like to attend a BBC Radio 4 Bookclub recording? You could attend recordings of AL Kennedy at Glasgow's Mitchell Library on Tuesday 13 January at 4.30pm. The book for discussion is DAY. And on Tuesday 27 January Kate Grenville is at BBC Bush House, London WC1 at 5pm. The book for discussion is THE SECRET RIVER. Tickets are free. Just go the [Bookclub](#) website.

**Many thanks to all of you have emailed us to thank us for helping with setting up your group and making your reading choices. Please do remember to forward the newsletter to other members of your group so that they can take advantage of the offers and competitions.**

**A Very Happy Christmas to you all!**

Please email us at [info@bookgroup.info](mailto:info@bookgroup.info) if you wish to unsubscribe to the newsletter.

