

Life and Death

Two Oregon authors take on what remains

HEARTSICK, fiction by Chelsea Cain. St. Martin's Minotaur, 2007. Hardback, \$23.95.

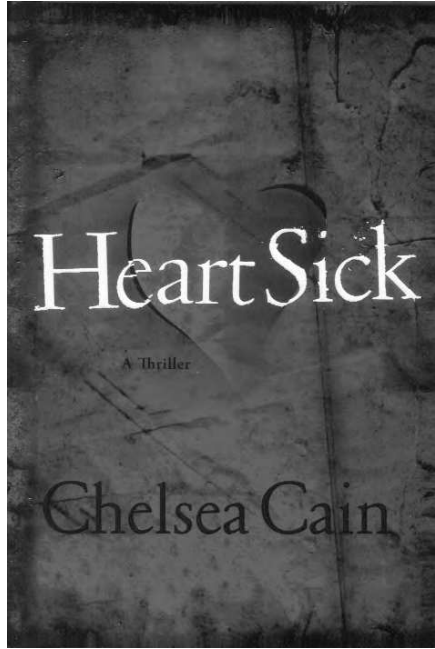
BEARING THE BODY, fiction by Ehud Havazelet. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007. Hardback, \$24.

We're all going to die, and on the way there, we will deal with a lot of pain. Much of literature deals with trauma — if it's a genre like science fiction, with documenting the remains of large, civilization-ending traumas, perhaps, or if it's a mystery, not only with solving the central puzzle but also with the lingering effects of a crime. Literary fiction addresses the personal effects of historical cataclysms, how those events shape human emotions.

But action novels also supply enjoyment, of the sort that a well-made action movie like *Speed* gives. Sure, those books can come from authors like Tom Clancy and Dan Brown, but thrillers also meet this criteria, especially with their heart-pounding buildup of scenes: First the kidnapping or murder, then the law enforcement officials, then the family, then back to the person at risk, with a stop in the sick mind of the killer. Chelsea Cain, author of the lighthearted *Dharma Girl* and *Confessions of a Teen Sleuth* (not to mention the "Calendar Girl" column of *The Oregonian*) joins the ranks of those authors with *Heartsick*. The result is a thriller that's creepy, gruesome and rush-inducing but more thoughtful than is usual in the genre.

Two parallel story lines run through the book, set in a quite convincing Portland (portraits of Cleveland, Roosevelt and other high schools, along with various river scenes, couldn't be more realistic). One is the tale of the fall and possible redemption of a detective who was captured and tortured (disgustingly, horrifically and in all too vivid detail) by a serial killer. Of course, that serial killer is a gorgeous woman who manipulates men into doing her will as she leaves a huge trail of bodies in her wake. But she doesn't kill the detective, Archie Sheridan, who's still on medical leave and addicted to all kinds of drugs years after she let him go and turned herself in.

Sheridan returns to the Portland police force to help search for a killer who is kidnapping, killing, raping — and bleaching — teenage girls. Susan Ward, a young reporter for the *Herald* (a stand-in for the *O*), gets involved rather quickly with reporting the case. Cain's disturbing narrative contains some depth (though the storyline with Ward grows stale) and some perceptive writing



with Sheridan's gradual changes. Those who enjoy thrillers should enjoy the twists and turns of this well plotted work.

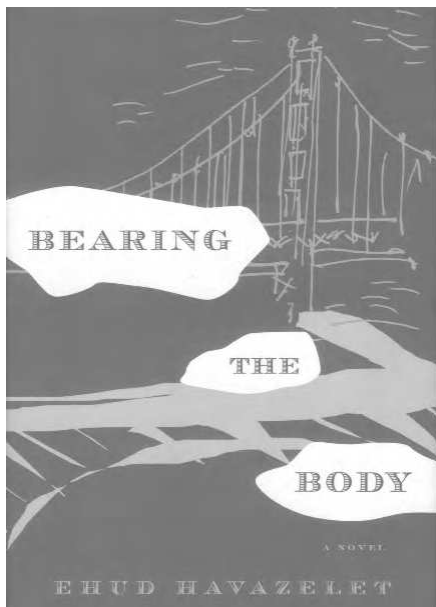
Yet if one is spending \$24 and some hours on a hardback novel, Ehud Havazelet's *Bearing the Body* would be a far better choice. Havazelet, who lives in Corvallis and sometimes teaches in the UO's Creative Writing program, writes well about history. The long, slow grip of trauma winds through the book, the corrosive red threads of 20th century events trapping the protagonists in agonizing lives. Like Art Spiegelman's *Maus* books, to which this book will unavoidably be compared by anyone who's read them, *Bearing the Body* addresses the long reach of the Holocaust on the American children of survivors — and the survivors themselves.

The Mirsky family, or what's left of it, provides the lens for this look into history. The story, set in the 1990s, reaches back to a 1930s childhood in Poland and the student protests at Columbia University in the late 1960s. In 1994, older son Daniel has been killed in San Francisco, and his brother Nathan, stumbling through the last few years before he receives an M.D., must fly from New York along with their silent, judgmental and spiteful father, Sol, to retrieve Daniel's ashes.

Sol's bitterness and anger are mitigated by glimpses into the letters he writes to others seeking relatives who may have survived the death camps. But his losses reverberate down the years, and neither the hapless Nathan nor the maddening Daniel have escaped. Some of the book focuses on a child of the next generation, wounded by drug-addicted adults; yet the final scene, set near the Golden Gate Bridge and all that the West Coast represents of new beginnings, gestures faintly towards hope and healing. This complex, resonant novel deserves the attention it demands through its subject matter and finely honed prose.

What remains after trauma, after disaster? Both Cain and Havazelet show the wreckage and the slow human climb toward safety, but Havazelet's accomplishment makes his novel a strong work of American fiction. **CW**

Chelsea Cain reads at 7:30 pm Tuesday, Sept. 4, and Ehud Havazelet reads at 7:30 pm Wednesday, Sept. 5, both at Powell's on Burnside, Portland.



Phil's
Clubhouse
"GO DUCKS!!"

Show your game tickets Friday & Saturday at the door and get in FREE
SPECIALS AND THE BIGGEST POST GAME PARTY IN TOWN!!
\$3.50 LUNCH • \$5.00 DINNER
1195 Main St., Springfield • 741-0402
Monday-Friday noon-2:30am • Sunday 2pm-2:30am

Back to School SALE

RALEIGH VENTURE \$229
msrp \$255

TREK 7200 sale \$299
msrp \$399

DB TRANSPORTER sale \$329
msrp \$450

limited to stock on hand, our most popular models! All three are great bikes!

Avenir R-Mor Plate Lock \$ 7.95
Alloy Rear Carrier \$19.95
5-LED Taillight \$ 5.00
Planet Bike Beamer 3 \$17.95

COUPON - ONE PER CUSTOMER
2007 Krypto Lock \$24.00 !
present coupon, limited stock on hand
sale ends, coupon expires Sept. 15, 2007

Paul's Bicycle Way of Life

2480 Alder & 152 W. 5th & 3870 W. 11th

Mac's
at the Vet's Club

LIVE MUSIC
(Blues, Rock, R&B & Swing)

FULL BAR • VIDEO POKER
No Cover Wednesday or Thursday!

EVERY TUESDAY:
Rooster Blues Jam
6:30pm sign-up • 7pm start

EVERY WEDNESDAY:
Irish Session Band

EVERY THURSDAY:
U-JAM You Play, You Sing!

SEPTEMBER

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1ST
J.C. Rico • \$4

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH
2006 #1 harmonica
Hank Shreve Family Band • \$3

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15TH
West Coast Rhythm Kings • \$4

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21ST
Etoouffee • \$5

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22ND
Portland award winners
The Strangetones • \$6

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH
15th Anniversary Party
The Vipers
Featuring Deb Cleveland • \$4

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH
Mike Tracey Band • \$3

1626 Willamette, Eugene • 344-8600

BEST BEER ON TAP SELECTION 2006-2007

BEST BEER SELECTION 2005-2006

The Bier Stein

Over 900 Bottled Beers for you to choose from!

345 E. 11th Ave • Eugene • 541-485-Bier

BOTTLESHOP & PUB