

Tangled Bank,” and include one column that was pulled for editorial reasons. Pyle writes on butterflies, boogers, Amsterdam and turtles to touch on just a few topics, and each is a pearl waiting to be pulled out and worn close to your skin. — *Camilla Mortensen*

teen

The Edge of Nowhere

By Elizabeth George. Viking, \$18.99.

■ Amber House

By Kelly Moore, Tucker and Larkin Reed. Arthur A. Levine (Scholastic), \$17.99.

Adult readers may bemoan *Twilight*, mock Harry Potter and wish *The Golden Compass* was “as good as” C.S. Lewis’ Narnia books, but if there’s one thing getting a doctorate in literature has taught me, it’s to appreciate good, light reading, and some of the best light reading out there is in young adult fiction. Thanks to Potter and *Twilight*, publishers seem to be taking more risks with fantasy, ghosts and magical powers, and that’s good news for escapist teen readers and adults.

Amber House, written by a mother and two daughters from Jacksonville, Ore., is the first in a trilogy that weaves strange powers, ghosts, and family drama into a web of

time and altered time. The book takes place in an old mansion in Maryland, layered with secrets both historical and new, as Sarah deals with family memories, turning 16 and her younger brother’s autism.

Elizabeth George’s *The Edge of Nowhere* brings the a hint of the paranormal as well, this time to the Pacific Northwest, as Becca King, a girl with the strange power to hear the thoughts of others and a haunted past, finds herself homeless and on the run on Whidby Island, Wash. Like *Amber House*, *Edge* brings romance into the supernatural teen plot, and both books deal with a teen protagonist falling for a boy of a different racial background with tact and realism (these are real boys, no Edward Cullens here). *The Edge of Nowhere* is the first of a series as well, and both promise to leave young adult and adult readers wondering what will come next. — *Camilla Mortensen*

The Great Unexpected

By Sharon Creech. HarperCollins, \$16.99.

One of my favorite young adult works, which still makes me cry, is Katherine Paterson’s *The Bridge to Terabithia*, and there’s something about Sharon Creech’s *The Great Unexpected* that brings that book to mind, mixed perhaps with a little *Because of Winn Dixie*. Narrator Naomi Deane, who shines brightly despite the loss of her parents and a withered arm from a long-ago accident, lives in the small town of Blackbird Tree with her chatty best friend Lizzie

Scattering. One day a lovely boy drops out of a tree and soon a mystery, a bit of a tragedy and a delightful story full of hope are underway. — *Camilla Mortensen*

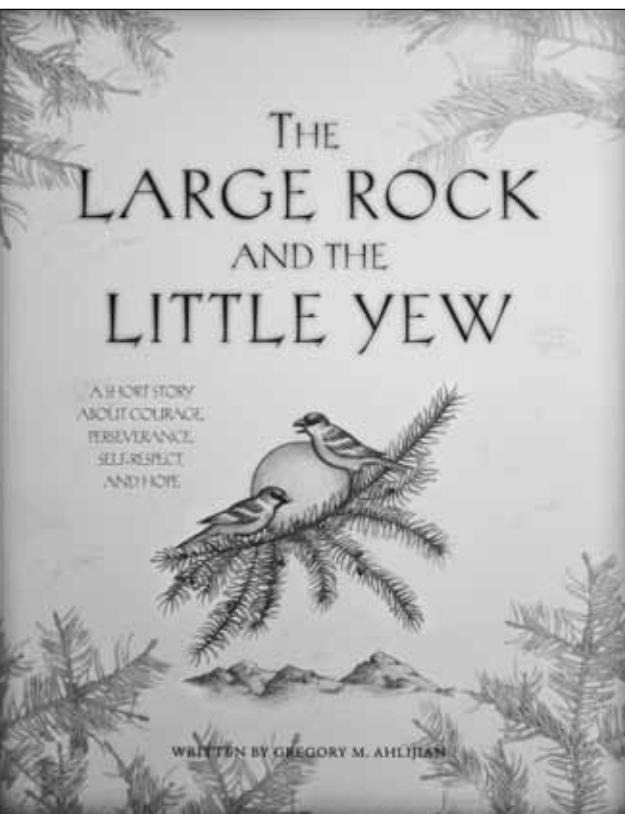
poetry

■ Evensong

By Ingrid Wendt. Truman State University Press, 2011. \$15.95.

Lane County is blessed with a plethora of poets, and not only that, we are also lucky to have poets that care about the community, from placing poetry in downtown parking garages to printing poems on broadside to be displayed with photographs at Maude Kerns to call attention to the destruction of Parvin Butte, as Ingrid Wendt and other local poets did earlier this year.

Wendt’s collection of poetry, *Evensong*, is wistful and lovely, a profusion of small narratives that reflect Wendt’s musical background, her everyday world in and around Eugene and simultaneously a global perspective on life and loss. — *Camilla Mortensen*



Book Money

Local author raises \$44,000 for Jasper Mountain

Just 20 minutes from the heart of Eugene sits Jasper Mountain Center, an internationally recognized nonprofit where kids who are hurt and troubled, often by severe trauma or abuse, can live and attend school in a safe environment while getting the help they need to heal. After volunteering there since 2008, Gregory Ahljian wanted give more to the center and the kids he works with, so he wrote a book and has been donating all of its proceeds plus its production costs to the center — so far about \$44,000.

The Large Rock And The Little Yew: A short story about courage, perseverance, self-respect and hope: The yew seedling starts its life in a fissure of a big, negative rock and overcomes its tough beginnings to be a happy tree. It’s inspired by a real tree in the U.K. and a discussion about trees in one of his classes at the center.

Ahljian says that the first time he visited the center and learned about the very serious reasons the children were there, “It was not a happy experience” for him. He started teaching to help out, and he says he hopes the book will be used to teach as well. Each section contains a life lesson, and its downloadable discussion packet has vocabulary words and open-ended discussion questions.

The book, now approaching its second anniversary and in its second printing, is available for \$20 at local stores including Hirons, The Book Nest, Imagine Gallery and Market of Choice. Ahljian says his next challenge is marketing nationally and possibly internationally (he just received an order from Malta), taking no reimbursement for the printing costs and donating every dollar to Jasper Mountain. — *Shannon Finnell*



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