

# GRAB BAG

BOOK SHELF // GLIMPSE // WILDLIFE // POP CULTURE // WORDS // Q&A // FOOD // FUN



## A fond salute to Jane Austen

Jane Austen fans marked the 200th anniversary of her passing this summer with widespread commemorations of her life, work and legacy. The Regency-era author, who chose anonymity in her own lifetime, would be astonished by the vast cult of Janeites that has developed in the two centuries since her death.

While Austen's work enjoyed only modest sales in her day, millions of copies of her books have sold since then. In our current culture of spin-offs and sequels, it is little surprise that Austen fan fiction now has become a flourishing industry, too.

That is how this column, which focuses on Northwest books and authors, has come to review "The Darcy Monologues." Christina Boyd, who is the editor, publisher and mastermind behind this collection of short stories, operates out of a tiny burg in Whatcom County, Washington.

For this anthology, however, she has reached far and wide, marshaling authors from throughout the United States and around the globe to create short stories from the point of view of Fitzwilliam Darcy, who is the love interest of Elizabeth Bennet in "Pride and Prejudice."

In creating Darcy, Austen gave us one of the most dimensional and swoon-worthy swains in all of English-language literature. But for some readers, that has only whet their appetite for more. Boyd's authors have willingly stepped up to the challenge.

"The Darcy Monologues" is split into two different categories. The first stories return directly to Austen's work and the Regency era.

Caitlin Williams kicks off this set with an imagining of Darcy's thoughts on the eve of his wedding.

J. Marie Croft backtracks a bit to examine Darcy's mindset just after Elizabeth has spurned his first blundering marriage proposal. Fueled by anguish (and too much brandy), Darcy spends a sleepless night composing, scratching out, and rewriting the letter that will explain his motivations and actions to Elizabeth so that she will understand him better, even though she has rejected him.

Other stories in the book's first half introduce supernatural elements, a secret door, and other manners of embroidering on top of the tapestry Austen had already created. Some of it seems extraneous, but other elements, such as the fleshing out of Darcy's sickly cousin Anne de Bourgh, provide intriguing food for thought.

The second half of the book features seven stories that borrow Austen's characters and play with them in different settings and times. Two Northwest authors are featured here.

In "Pemberley by Stage," Aurora, Oregon, author Natalie Richards scrambles up a Wild West setting, a stagecoach heist, Elizabeth in disguise, and Darcy in pursuit of that perennial cad, Wickham.

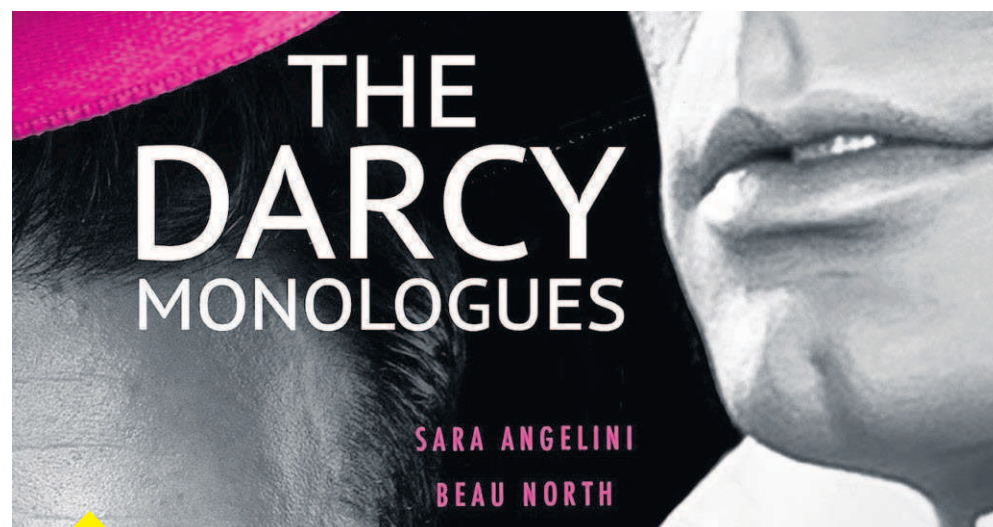
Portland author Beau North uses incipient rock & roll, the Cuban missile crisis and a cold winter in upstate New York to fire up the romance between Darcy and Eliza in "You Don't Know Me."

Chances are you'll like some of these stories more than others, but you can pick and choose as you please — not a bad way to idle your way through August's hot, hazy days.

*The Bookmonger is Barbara Lloyd McMichael, who writes this weekly column focusing on the books, authors and publishers of the Pacific Northwest. Contact her at [bkmonger@nwlinc.com](mailto:bkmonger@nwlinc.com)*

### Crossword Answer

R	A	G	A		L	E	I		M	O	M	A		R	I	T	E	A	I	D
A	J	A	X		A	L	B	E	R	T	A	N		A	S	H	T	R	E	E
V	A	N	I		S	H	I	N	G	C	O	I	N		P	A	Y	R	O	L
E	R	G	O	T					O	L	E	M	I	S	S		M	E	N	S
					M	A	L	T	O	S	E				V	O	L	E	S	
G	Y	M	S		H	O	E	S		A	U	G	M	E	N	T	S		F	C
L	O	A			L	I	N	K	I	N	G	R	I	N	G	S		P	A	I
Y	W	C	A		S	T	A	N		H	A	N	G	S		F	A	N	T	A
P	E	A	C	E		O	R	F	F		N	E	A		H	I	N	G	E	
H	E	W	E	D	T	O			R	I	N	D		L	I	E	G	E		
			S	A	W	I	N	G	A	L	A	D	Y	I	N	H	A	L	F	
A	N	S	A	R	I		A	M	I		D	U	D	S		O	N	C	U	
G	O	U	R	D		C	Y	A	N	S		N	I	N	E		G	A	M	E
F	O	R	D		C	H	A	N	G	I	N	G	C	A	R	D		D	E	M
A	B	E			C	H	A	R	I	S	M	A		T	R	I	O	L	E	T
					N	O	I	S	E					U	K	U	L	E	L	E
M	A	S	O	N		T	A		F	F	E	T	A				A	G	A	V
A	N	Y	T	I	M	E			L	E	V	I	T	A	T	I	N	G	M	A
S	T	R	I	N	G	B	E	A	N		E	L	E	C	T	R	O	N	E	E
C	H	E	E	S	E	S			E	L	L	A		D	Y	S		D	R	Y



"The Darcy Monologues"  
Ed. Christina Boyd  
The Quill Ink  
414 pp  
\$14.95

**eOMEDIA** group  
The most valuable and respected source of local news, advertising and information for our communities.  
[www.eomediagroup.com](http://www.eomediagroup.com)

experience  
THE  
ASTORIA  
COLUMN

BREATH-TAKING VIEW  
HISTORY OF THE WEST  
GIFT SHOP

WWW.ASTORIANCOLUMN.ORG  
1 Coxcomb Drive  
Astoria, OR 97103  
May-September: 9:00 am to 7:00 pm  
October-April: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm  
(Column closes at dusk)