

SOURCES

relevant place for teens.—*Melanie Wachsmann, Reference/Teen Librarian, Lone Star College CyFair Branch, Cypress, Texas*

Slow Reading. John Miedema. Duluth, Minn.: Litwin, 2009. 80p. \$12 (ISBN 978-0-9802004-4-7).

Slow Reading is a fast little book. I read it in one Friday afternoon in July, sitting on the steps of my library. I spent the morning sitting in my office, *intending* to read, but instead had overpowering “needs” to check my e-mail, edit a document, Google something, etc. Finally, I took the book and went outside. Sitting in the sun, I found myself marking the margins with questions, arguments, and commentary, but nevertheless . . . reading it all the way through.

Slow Reading exists to remind us of the unique rewards of spending an afternoon in exactly this way: deep in conversation with a book. The book is an expansion of an independent research project Miedema began as an MLIS student, and the writing displays a few earnest, unsupported declarations. This does not distract, however, from Miedema’s compelling argument that slow, deep reading of printed text is “an intimate act with transformative power. Unlike our modern consumption of information, slow reading is a journey that fundamentally changes us” (8).

The idea that there is a difference between reading a book and “information gathering” in front of a computer is not new. *Slow Reading* is useful not because it is groundbreaking, but because it serves as a kind of meditation on the history, future, and meaning of being a reader. Reading this book requires readers to question and reflect on their own habits of reading and thought.

In four essays, the book traces the concept of slow reading from its historical origins in “the symbolic eating of books by prophets in the Bible” (3) to its role in contemporary information ecology and human psychology. In the book’s third essay (my favorite), Miedema relates slow reading to the broader “slow movement” that encompasses everything from slow food to slow sex, emphasizing local production, community building, uniqueness, and pleasure over mass production, cost cutting, and convenience.

While not essential, this is a book readers in both public and academic libraries will appreciate.—*Sarah VanGundy, Reference & Instruction Librarian, SUNY Purchase College, Purchase, New York*

So You Want To Be a Librarian. Lauren Pressley. Duluth, Minn.: Library Juice, 2009. 215 p. \$15 (ISBN 978-0-9802004-8-5).

This brief but useful introduction to careers in librarianship is worth every penny of its low price. Pressley’s treatment of librarianship is accessible to aspiring young adults and college students as well as older readers who are considering a career change.

The first chapter provides an overview of academic, public, school, and special libraries, with a focus on their differing services, user populations, and current trends of management and operations. The second chapter addresses the types of jobs available in librarianship, including public services, technical services, technology, administration, and rare books and manuscripts. Pressley includes archives and the profession of archivist as possible career paths, which may give inexperienced readers the mistaken impression that archivists and librarians perform the same kind of work. In the third chapter, she adeptly elucidates the major professional issues surrounding librarianship, including some that bear repetition, such as the service ethos, the right to read, censorship, and libraries as community and cultural centers. She also touches on the technological impact of Web 2.0 technologies and current shifts in copyright law. The fourth chapter, “Getting the MLS,” contains generic information on the graduate school application process, including helpful tips on crafting the personal essay and relating individual experience to a probable career track. Pressley provides more definitive and better focused advice on how to maximize one’s graduate school experience for eventual job hunting.

The book’s conclusion serves more as an afterword with cursory details on the profession’s challenges (such as shrinking budgets) and the option of pursuing a career in the field loosely defined as “information science.” The appendixes include a glossary of selected terms and a collection of short interviews with librarians. The interviews are indeed informative, but would have been more useful if included in the foregoing chapters as a set of vignettes or detailed case studies. Placed within the proper context, the interviewees’ commentaries would have illustrated some of Pressley’s salient points. Each chapter features a list of relevant websites that the reader can consult for more information—if not for this handy book, prospective librarians would be face the time-consuming task of gathering those details on their own.—*Mike Matthews, Instructional Services Librarian, Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, Louisiana*

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