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REVIEW: Agnes and Me

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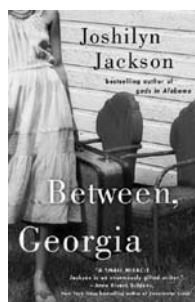
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do share some DNA." The second of Frazier's novels set primarily in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, the book is about the property acquisition of the Eastern Branch of the Cherokee Nation; the story of the land of the Cherokees; and, like Frazier's previous bestseller *Cold Mountain*, in part the story of the love of a man for a woman. John Calhoun and Andrew Jackson, along with other Washington, D.C. politicians, political operators, and post-Civil War U.S. government officials, attempt to resolve the Cherokee problem; other less upright characters, such as the men who knife Cooper at the opulent Warm Springs Hotel, appear as well. In contrast, Frazier creates deeper characterizations of the Cherokees, the high-born landowner Featherstone and Cooper's adoptive Cherokee father Bear. Charley, who may also "share some DNA" with the famous Cherokee warrior Tsali, is also drawn in depth. Cooper loves Claire, who appears in episodes from beginning to end; her passion for Cooper is balanced by her relationship with Featherstone. Cooper's passion for the land of the Cherokees is played out over eight decades of the annual cycle of 13 moons. Cooper/Holland Thomas bargains for the land, buys it, and ultimately saves the land for the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation. Charles Frazier uses Cooper's passions for good food, good drink, and a good horse as motivation to take the character off on many extended travels. Frazier adds a short bibliography of Cherokee resources. This novel is recommended for any library that includes fine historical fiction. ►►

— Reviewed by **Tim Wojcik**
Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School

Between, Georgia by Joshilyn Jackson (Warner Books, 2006; ISBN 0-446-52442-5, \$22.99).

Between, Georgia is stuck geographically between Athens and Atlanta, Georgia. Similarly, Nonny Jane is stuck genealogically between the Crabtrees who gave birth to her and the Fretts who claimed her. There is not much distance between Athens and Atlanta; one seems to run into the other. Neither is there is much difference between the oral histories of the Crabtrees and the Fretts. Fourth cousin counts only when the need presents itself. Likewise, men do not count much in this story. In fact, only one man, Henry, seems to aspire to giving or receiving respect. The plot examines the two



hierarchies that make up the ninety or so inhabitants of *Between*: those who own everything and those who own nothing. Author Joshilyn Jackson is clearly Nonny Jane. Nonny gives voice to the characters, sets the action, and determines the story's progression. The town's family matriarchs are definitely in charge, and their actions invoke and mandate the actions and behaviors of all the characters. Their banter reveals that within each lies a facsimile of the other, each as capable as the other of beauty and ugliness in body and soul. No one knows how the feud began, but everyone knows what fueled it; and, once begun, there was no undoing. There may be a lull in the feud; but, then... that is only a prediction. Jackson opens the story with Nonny Jane's harsh, raw entry into the world. She introduces us to those who walk the streets of *Between*, Georgia: the blind, the romantic, the criminal, the neurotic, the drunk. It is a global group all nested together into one literary museum where the past mingles with the present. ►►

— Reviewed by **Verely Sue Dotson**
Greene County High School

Agnes and Me by Jerry Gollihar (PublishAmerica, 2004; ISBN 1-4137-2478-7, \$19.95).

Agnes and Me recounts a year in the life of Payne Conley and his family, from around August 1949 to August 1950, focusing on his and his sister Agnes's adventures growing up. Payne is six, and, as he puts it, he can not move without seeming to get into trouble. Agnes is a couple of years older than Payne. Their other siblings are already grown and married with children of their own, some the same age as Payne. Anyone who grew up during the '40s or '50s, or who had siblings to fuss with and follow around, will enjoy this walk down memory lane. While not everyone has had adventures rescuing a kitten from an outhouse, shooting a cousin between the eyes with a BB gun, missing a full year of school due to ignorance of the workings of a flush toilet, or killing the family rooster, just the memories this book triggered had me laughing and cheering for Payne. *Agnes and Me* is a fun read and gives the reader an insight into a different time. Recommended for any fiction collection. ►►

— Reviewed by **Lee Ann Cline**
Dalton State College

