

July 2008

REVIEW: The Sugar Queen

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Recommended Citation

Malcolm, Carol (2008) "REVIEW: The Sugar Queen," *Georgia Library Quarterly*: Vol. 45 : Iss. 2 , Article 35.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/glq/vol45/iss2/35>

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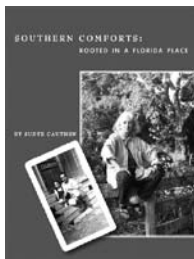
mind," the highly technical presentation of ideas demands a specialized vocabulary and a somewhat rarefied openness to applying statistics to the study of literature. This book would be a good addition to academic libraries where linguistics is a primary focus. It would also be appropriate for inclusion in collections with an emphasis on Georgia studies or Southern literature.

— Reviewed by **Leslie R. G. Bullington**
Augusta, Georgia

Southern Comforts: Rooted in a Southern Place by *Sudye Cauthen* (University of Georgia Press, 2007; ISBN 1-9300-6658-9, \$29.95).

In 1974, following a divorce and the death of her father, Sudye Cauthen moved herself and her 9-year-old son to a cabin on Waters Pond, near her childhood home in Alachua in the interior of northern Florida. Eventually, at the urging of her mother, she moved all the way back to Alachua, prompting a re-examination of her childhood. Disheartened by the changes in her hometown, Cauthen subsequently spent years driving back roads, sometimes at random, sometimes deliberately, seeking the people and places she had known. The author filled in gaps in her understanding of her own family history as well as the history of the region and its people. The result, *Southern Comforts*, is a combination of memoir, interviews, natural history and folklore. These individual elements combine to form a snapshot of a time when tobacco was king, and people both shaped the land and were shaped by it. Pair this with Janisse Ray's *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood* for a portrait of southern Georgia and northern Florida before Disney and interstate highways forever altered the identity of the region. Recommended for academic and larger public libraries.

— Reviewed by **Kathy Pillatzki**
Henry County Public Library System



assistant to her elderly mother. Given her willful and unpleasant behavior as a child, Josey feels obligated to be at her mother's constant beck and call, and her mother happily accepts Josey's feelings of obligation. Interspersed with her daughterly duties, Josey goes on a sandwich run for the woman in the closet, Della Lee, and meets Chloe, who has her own unique situation. Books literally appear to Chloe: They follow her, turn up when she most needs them. Josey and Chloe bond over their respective love troubles: Josey is in love with the enigmatic mailman, and Chloe is on the verge of a breakup with her lawyer boyfriend due to his cheating on her one night after a particularly difficult case. The mailman and the lawyer are best friends, a fact that further complicates matters yet also ties them together even more closely. In the small ski town of Bald Slope, N.C., everyone knows everybody else. Josey's father was the founder of the town, resulting in most of the residents knowing her from the time of her birth, witnessing her disagreeable behavior as a child and seemingly unwilling to forget any of it. This relationship between Josey and the town illustrates a disadvantage of small-town life. Throughout the course of the novel, Allen deftly employs magical realism, adding an element of mystery and beauty to the compulsively readable story. Recommended for public libraries and academic libraries with a contemporary fiction section.

— Reviewed by **Carol Malcolm**
Riverside Military Academy

Orange Mint and Honey by *Carleen Brice* (One World Ballantine Books, 2008; ISBN 978-0-345-49906-6, \$14.00).

Carleen Brice's first novel is a heartwarming story about redemption, forgiveness and finding that going back home again can be less bitter when it is followed by something sweet. Shay Dixon is a graduate student who is on the verge of a nervous breakdown and broke. Taking the advice of blues singer Nina Simone, her spiritual adviser, Shay goes back home to a mother whom she had written off. Nona, Shay's mother, was once an alcoholic who left Shay alone a lot and when around was either drunk or hungover. However, after Shay returns home, she meets the new Nona who loves to garden, has a 5-year-old daughter and a new lease on life. This novel takes a look at the relationship between a mother and daughter who have a past that needs forgiveness in order to heal and move on. The novel addresses many issues in a way that will be engaging and endearing to the reader. Brice's storytelling will have the reader crying one minute and laughing the



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The Sugar Queen by *Sarah Addison Allen* (Bantam, 2008; ISBN 978-0-5538-0549-9, \$22.00).

Most of us have never woken up and found a woman living in our closet, but this does happen to Josey, the main character of Allen's engrossing second novel. As surprising and unusual as this event is, Josey has an even more challenging concern: serving as a personal

