

and emotions with empathy and acuity. [See Prepub Alert, 2/5/12.]—Jim Coan, SUNY Coll. at Oneonta

Wiesel, Elie. Hostage. Knopf. Aug. 2012.

c.224p. tr. from French by Catherine Temerson. ISBN 9780307599582. \$25.95. F
A Jewish storyteller and writer, Shaltiel Feigenberg, is abducted and held hostage by terrorists to bargain for the release of Palestinian prisoners in 1975. During his captivity and torture, Shaltiel tells stories from his past, intermixing scenes from German-occupied Europe with the horror of the narrator's current situation. The strength of Wiesel's most recent novel is his exploration of the psychology of being a hostage, as well as the complex nature of memory and its role in our lives. Perhaps his own near-abduction in 2007 was the seed of inspiration for this work. Regrettably, characters in the frame narrative are somewhat flat and one-dimensional, while Shaltiel's stories about his past are more nuanced. Wiesel is the author of more than 50 books, including the acclaimed *Night*, and he is the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, among other honors. **VERDICT** Readers expecting a literary thriller may be disappointed, but fans of Wiesel's strong prose who are looking forward to a return to familiar themes will be gratified by this work. [See Prepub Alert, 1/30/12.]—Gwen Vredevoogd, Marymount Univ., Arlington, VA

Woodruff, Lee. Those We Love Most.

Voice: Hyperion. Sept. 2012. c.320p. ISBN 9781401341787. \$26.99. F
In her debut novel, Woodruff (coauthor with her husband, ABC news anchor Bob Woodruff, of *In an Instant*) sheds light on the imperfections and vulnerabilities of shattered, stunned family members following a tragic loss. Adoring mother to three robust children, Maura Corrigan watches her life crumble in the aftermath of an accident involving her oldest son. The novel unfolds with several different viewpoints, but the author focuses on the undone Maura, who struggles to find joy and meaning in what remains of her life. **VERDICT** Maura's haunting Chagall-like dream is a wonderful touch, as is commentary on seasonal gifts of nature; surely some of this heartfelt, honest novel stems from the author's own real-life journey with her husband, who was severely injured while reporting on the war in Iraq. Overall, this is solid contemporary fiction, sure to please readers who enjoy Sue Monk Kidd and Anna Quindlen.—Andrea Tarr, Corona P.L., CA

SHORT STORIES

★Díaz, Junot. **This Is How You Lose Her.** Riverhead: Penguin Group (USA). Sept. 2012.

c.224p. ISBN 9781594487361. \$26.95. F

Díaz (*The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*) returns to short fiction in his latest book, the first since he won the Pulitzer in 2007, and his second collection of stories after 1996's *Drown*. The stories hinge on Yunior de las Casas, Díaz's Nick Adams: a Dominican-born, Jersey-raised writer and—as is especially on display here—chronic womanizer. Díaz tells of love won and lost with his signature verve; the book pulses with Spanish, *sf*, and the music and apocalyptic TV shows of the late 1980s. Through the lens of the women that Yunior, his older brother Rafa (who dies of cancer while Yunior is in high school), and their mostly absent father love, leave, and are left by, Díaz maps out a painful, aching geography of desire. The final story, "The Cheater's Guide to Love," which will be of particular interest to fans of *Oscar Wao*, further explores Yunior's (who was the novel's primary narrator) relationship with Lola, Oscar's sister. **VERDICT** Díaz's third book is as stunning as its predecessors. These stories are hard and sad, but in Díaz's hands they also crackle. [See Prepub Alert, 3/12/12.]—Molly McArdle, *Library Journal*

Pilch, Jerzy. My First Suicide. Open Letter.

2012. c.276p. tr. from Polish by David Frick. ISBN 9781934824405. pap. \$15.95. F
The ten novellas that this work comprises, each much more than a short story, give readers a window into the world of a contemporary Polish man who reveals different episodes of his life with nostalgia and wit. As the narrator says, "suddenly I feel like the writer who, finally, after a long silence, has composed a phrase that is not only beautiful, but also thoroughly true." Family members are so well described that they come alive, from the mother who cleams incessantly and communicates with the dead in "A Corpse with Folded Wings," to the grandfather with a mania for keeping the five wind-up clocks in the house running. Aside from family, the novellas deal with misplaced love and allegiance. For instance, a student seeks out a disastrous relationship in "The Most Beautiful Woman in the World." In another story, the narrator schemes to romp with an amorous soccer fan and her female amour. **VERDICT** With his apt depictions and clever language, NIKE Literary Award winner Pilch will make readers smile as they, too, gaze at the woman in the "lizard-green dress," and he effectively explores themes from the vagaries of Lutheran theology to the always pervasive topic of beautiful women.—Lisa Rohrbaugh, Leetonia Community P.L., OH

Stamm, Peter. We're Flying. Other. Aug. 2012.

c.384p. tr. from German by Michael Hofmann. ISBN 9781590513248. pap. \$15.95. F
In his latest, Swiss writer Stamm (*Seven Years*) offers the reader insights into the human character, sometimes discomfiting and seemingly irrational but at the same time oddly familiar. A husband faced with his wife's probable slow death follows the hospital's instructions by packing a suitcase with items that his wife will clearly never use and then has no idea what to do with the suitcase. A writer looking for a quiet sanctuary to complete a work in progress takes a room in an abandoned hotel with no electrical power or running water and in which dinner consists of unheated, canned ravioli. A middle-aged, childless couple, worn down by habitual communication, find themselves confronted with a disruptive, ill-behaved family in the neighboring villa while on summer holiday and find themselves strangely aroused. **VERDICT** These tautly constructed stories, with echoes of such disparate authors as Patricia Highsmith and Anton Chekhov, take root in the psyche and will not let go.—Sue Russell, Bryn Mawr, PA

Yu, Charles. Sorry Please Thank You

Stories. Pantheon. Jul. 2012. c.240p. ISBN 9780307907172. \$24.95. F
Riding on the critical success of his debut novel, *How To Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe*, Yu continues his predilection for "experimental" narrative in this collection of short stories. His ability to assume widely diverging roles as a storyteller is dazzling. For example, "Troubleshooting" reads like an instruction manual, "The Book of Categories" is presented in the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules format, "Hero Absorbs Major Damage" brings to mind a video game's battle plan, and "Designer Emotion 67" comes across like a keynote speaker's presentation. One story, "Note to Self," is even in the form of an online chat. The subjects embrace a wide variety of topics from genuine emotions in human relationships to make-believe, stereotyping, unfulfilled desires, and the true meaning of heroism and leadership, although this multifarious approach often is distracting. Sometimes he even resorts to Jack Kerouac-like "spontaneous prose" with rambling words and run-on sentences. "Open," written in a comparatively conventional style, is the most enchanting story in the collection and blends science fiction and magical realism in an exploration of the sincerity of our interactions with loved ones. **VERDICT** Those not bothered by diverse writing styles will find reading Yu to be an exciting adventure. [See Prepub Alert, 1/21/12.]—Victor Or, Surrey Libs. & Vancouver P.L., BC