

Beacon Press

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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

December 19, 2006



To: UUA Board of Trustees
From: Helene Atwan, Director
Re: Beacon Press Board Report

We're closing a strong year at Beacon Press, with several titles enjoying unprecedented success both in terms of sales and national attention.

Pulitzer Prize-winning poet **Mary Oliver**'s newest collection, *Thirst*, has landed on bestseller lists across the country, most recently on the *Boston Globe*'s Hardcover Fiction list, ranked alongside Michael Crichton and Mitch Albom—a remarkable accomplishment for a book of poetry. The *New York Times Book Review* recently noted that, according to Nielsen BookScan, Oliver holds the top three spots in poetry with *Thirst*, *Why I Wake Early* and *New and Selected Poems: Volume One*. We will publish a new book in October, 2007, that will join text by Oliver with photographs by Molly Malone Cook, her partner of forty years who died in 2005. *Our World* will be a uniquely intimate intertwining of their lives and art.

Another book recently made the *Boston Globe* Hardcover bestseller list, in nonfiction. **Rashid Khalidi**'s *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood*, is generating waves of publicity. In addition to being named one of the 100 Best Books of 2006 by *Publishers Weekly*, Khalidi has been featured on Charlie Rose, C-Span, Democracy Now!, On Point, The Bob Edwards Show, and is slated for another Beacon Press first: an appearance on *Comedy Central's The Colbert Report*. The Iron Cage has also been reviewed in the *Economist* and the *New York Times*, and is expected to be discussed in the *New York Times Book Review* soon. I'm also delighted to announce that Rashid Khalidi has accepted the UUA's invitation to be **Ware Lecturer** at GA in June of 2007.

In January, Beacon will publish the second novel of author **Laila Halaby**, who won the prestigious PEN Beyond Margins Award for her first book, *West of the Jordan*. *Once in a Promised Land* is a dramatic tale of the complex and cruel realities of life for two Arab Americans in the wake of 9/11. Andre Dubus III, author of *House of Sand and Fog*, calls Halaby's new novel, "A deeply resonant tale of our tangled and common humanity," and the book has been chosen by Barnes & Noble for its very selective **Discover Great New Writers** program.

Among our newly acquired titles:

Kathryn Joyce has been investigating a fringe Christian right movement that takes an anti-modern, anti-feminist stance. Disavowing all forms of family planning, members of "Quiverfull" seek to bear as many children as possible in order to have more influence

by sheer demographic force. Joyce's book, *Quiverfull*, will be not only a portrait of the movement, but a breakdown of its relationship to the broader conservative Christian world, and an inquiry into the implications of these movements in our society. A substantial piece based on the forthcoming book already ran in the November 27, 2006, edition of *The Nation*.



Democracy Unbound, a new book by historian and activist **Paul Ortiz** will show how issues of race and class have been inextricably bound together through the entire narrative of our country's history. Through this innovative approach to the past, Ortiz shows that it will take more than incremental public policies to address social inequality in the future.

Danya Ruttenberg's *Waking Up in New Babylon* is an account of how the author came to embrace a conservative Jewish practice—and to become a rabbi—after growing up “gently religious” in an alternative culture. Ruttenberg will describe what happens when an individual takes on a spiritual discipline in a serious manner through the lens of her own life.

Through her work as fiction editor at the online magazine Literary Mama, **Suzanne Kamata** has crafted an anthology of fiction, nonfiction and poetry on the theme of parenting children with special needs. Unlike most collections on this subject, Kamata's book will move beyond upbeat inspirational anecdotes, using literary writing to confront the challenges and realities facing these families.

Beacon author **Suzanne Strempek Shea** returns with an exciting and ambitious new book. *Sundays in America* will follow Shea's journey to 52 different Christian churches in 52 weeks. Her own quest for a meaningful spiritual home will run parallel to her search to assess how the concept of “church” has evolved in America in recent years. From the New Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Harlem to Joel Osteen's Lakewood International Center in Houston, and including a stop at the Ka-ahumanu Congregational Church in Wailuku, Maui, one at the Church of Jesus Christ, Latter Day Saints in Palmyra, New York, Rick Warren's church, King's Chapel in Boston, and the Cowboy Hall of Fame Church, Shea's pilgrimage will span the country and examine the ways Christians live their religious beliefs in the 21st century.

