

This collection shows the historical journey of Puerto Rican literature into the literary canon. There are critical points of view in analyzing different genres and the migration journey as relates to the Puerto Rican experience.

*Writing Off the Hyphen* offers depth and insight on the theory and critical approaches for understanding the complexity of the Puerto Rican diaspora from a broad range of perspectives. It covers a variety of topics and serves as a starting point for critical discussions on Puerto Rican literature from a historical and literary standpoint.

This volume belongs in all academic library collections. It is a key resource for Puerto Rican literature and culture courses, and for understanding Puerto Rican diasporic literature.

Alva V. Cellini  
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#### 18-1-0025

Wallach, Jennifer Jensen. *[Closer to the Truth Than Any Fact]: Memoir, Memory, and Jim Crow*. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 2008. 176 pp. ISBN 978-0-8203-3069-3, \$34.95.

Wallach uses an interdisciplinary approach to argue for the use of memoir writing as historical artifact. She argues that, "Reality is inherently perspectival. We cannot understand any social reality outside the perspectives of the people who created and inhabited that social world" (9). The book uses Jim Crow era memoirs written by individuals who represent divergent philosophies of race relations during that period of American history. Wallach notes that although "we must look for the author's stated intentions," one must also be careful not to fall into the trap of intentional fallacy (8). This is a difficult fallacy to avoid when one is professing the argument that authorial intent must be examined. For even when authorial intention is written down, it not only remains open to interpretation, but also is subject to the same historicization that Wallach argues for in approaching memoir as historical text.

Wallach demonstrates a diligent attention to this tension. Chapters three and four are excellent examples of an interpretive process for historicizing literary text. This is a must read for anyone who teaches social studies or history.

Leslie Antonette  
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## Visual and Performing Arts

#### 18-1-0026

Gioia, Ted. *Delta Blues*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008. 450 pp. ISBN 978-0-393-06258-8, \$27.95.

Gioia, the author of five earlier studies of jazz and the blues, not only covers the classic Delta blues performers such as John Lee Hooker, Robert Johnson, and Muddy Waters but also delves deep into the roots of the music, placing it within the context of the Mississippi Delta's prison farms and poverty. Woven through his chapters on individual performers is an examination of where the music comes from and how it came to be known to a wider audience through the work of Alan Lomax and other blues researchers.

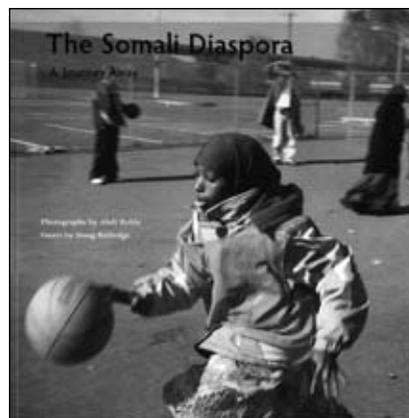
Gioia is one of those rare writers whose literary style is accessible to both scholars and the general reading public, which makes this new work a fitting purchase for both academic and public library collections. He takes a less methodological approach to the subject than Marybeth Hamilton's *In Search of the Blues* (Basic Books, 2008) and is more in the style of William Ferris's *Blues from the Delta* (Doubleday, 1978), but it is his original research that pushes *Delta Blues* to the forefront. Recommended for all popular music collections.

Anthony J. Adam  
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#### 18-1-0027

Pavitt, Nigel. *Kenya: A Country in the Making, 1880–1940*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008. 304 pp. Illus. with photos. ISBN 978-0-393-06777-4, \$50.00.

Roble, Abdi, and Rutledge, Doug. *The Somali Diaspora: A Journey Away*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2008. 208 pp. Illus. with photos by Abdi Roble. ISBN 978-0-8166-5457-4, \$34.95 (pb).



Pavitt's photo-essay is a big, beautiful, sprawling book filled with over 700 black-and-white photographs of a bygone era. Drawn from family photo albums and private collections as well as museums and archives from around the world, this book brings back the romance of the land, people, and animals we

have all come to associate with the "Out of Africa" experience. Pavitt writes in the Introduction, "This book is not about politics or the rights and wrongs of colonialism and settlement. It is a photographic celebration of life in an emerging African nation during those decisive pioneering years of a Country in the Making" (1), and this is exactly how the reader should read this book—as a celebration. The historical photographs range from the African peoples of the Maasai, Kikuyu, and Turkana; the European colonists; Indian laborers; and the famous (including Theodore Roosevelt, Karen Blixen, and Ernest Hemingway) to

the breathtaking landscapes of Mount Kenya, the Great Rift Valley, and the coastal town of Mombasa. Also featured are early railways, cars, and airplanes, and the fascinating photos of World War I being played out in East Africa. This book will be a joy to those readers who are fascinated by the history and peoples of Kenya.

Fast forward a few decades and you will find a totally different picture of people living in East Africa. *The Somali Diaspora: A Journey Away*, does not show the glamour or romance of a place through historical photographs, but the modern harsh reality of what can happen when a people are forced to flee their homeland. Authors Roble and Rutledge, who have been documenting the lives of Somali immigrants in the United States since 2003, write that this book is to fulfill two missions, to provide “a history of the Somali Diaspora” and to “educate members of the host communities” (xiv). These beautiful black-and-white photographs and essays show the struggles that the Somali living in the refugee camps in Kenya must face and also the realities that await them when they move to a new place—the United States. The authors introduce the reader to a variety of people, from a family that moved from the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya to Anaheim, California, and finally to Portland, Maine, to educators, families, community elders, and business people living in Columbus, Ohio, and Minneapolis, Minnesota. Through the Somali Documentary Project and this book, Roble and Rutledge are helping to create a new photographic history not only for the Somali community but also for the larger American community.

Both books do a wonderful job of giving the viewer a glimpse into a different world—that of the past and the present. Both books are highly recommended.

Melissa Aho  
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## Biography/Autobiography

### 18-1-0028

Bibish. *The Dancer from Khiva*. New York: Atlantic/Black Cat, 2008. 256 pp. Trans. from Russian by Andrew Bromfield. ISBN 978-0-8021-7050-7, \$14.00 (pb).

*The Dancer from Khiva* is Bibish’s memoir of her life growing up in Uzbekistan in a religiously conservative town, and her subsequent moves to Tashkent and ultimately Russia, all because of her passion for traditional Uzbek dance, which was deemed unacceptable by the orthodox elders of her home village. Bibish was raised in Soviet Uzbekistan where religion was technically illegal, but in her village most of the inhabitants were conservative Muslims regardless. Bibish’s dancing led to rumors and innuendo relentless enough to push her into attempting suicide. She escaped village life through her education and marriage in Tashkent, and she ultimately moved with

her husband and children to Leningrad, where she endured further hardships, including homelessness under the decaying Soviet system.

The story is told in a very straightforward, conversational style, even as she details the horrific events in her life, including multiple sexual assaults. The almost childlike quality of the narrative is compelling, though it leaves the story short on analysis of why things in her life happened the way they did. The book does not claim to portray a typical Soviet life, but it is an engrossing story of one Uzbek woman during the decline and collapse of the Soviet Union that, taken with other memoirs, can offer readers a greater understanding of life in that critically important time and place.

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### 18-1-0029

Fitts, Robert K. *Wally Yonamine: The Man Who Changed Japanese Baseball*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2008. 368 pp. Foreword by Senator Daniel K. Inouye. ISBN 978-0-8032-1381-4, \$26.95.

Wally Yonamine is one of those famous people we haven’t heard of. Fitts’s book is a fascinating, though uneven and overly long, look at Yonamine’s career and influence on baseball in Japan.

The first and last parts are the most interesting, as they deal with Yonamine’s childhood and the wrap-up of his career. Yonamine grew up poor on a pre-war sugar cane plantation on Maui. His success in high school football eventually led to scholarship offers on the mainland of the United States. In 1947 after leaving the Army, Yonamine was all set to play football for Ohio State University when he received an offer to play for the San Francisco 49ers. He signed with them to help his family and played for a season, but injuries convinced him to try baseball instead.

Yonamine signed a minor league contract; after not moving up quickly, he took a chance by becoming the first non-Japanese to play in the Japanese big leagues. His aggressive American ways, such as sliding hard to break up double-plays revolutionized the game, but fans in Japan were slow to warm to his style, especially during the American Occupation.

The middle of the book sags for most readers, except for some baseball statisticians, as it details each of Yonamine’s seasons, his personal achievements, and how his team performed. Along the way, we see his success as a player (1958 MVP) and later as a coach and manager.

Although it could be at least 50 pages shorter, this book will be of interest to sports fans and those who like good guys to come out ahead.

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