

# Book Club Books



*Below are this winter's Book Club selections. Chosen to represent a range of interests, it is hoped these books will stimulate thought and discussion among our diverse group of readers. As always, your comments and suggestions are welcome.*

## **Winter 2005**

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### **Dreams From My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance** by Barack Obama

Obama is the newly elected junior Senator from Illinois. The son of a white American mother and a black African father, he wrote this powerful biography before he was in the limelight. In it he candidly explores his rebellious teens, his activist years in Chicago dealing with poverty and corruption, and how he came to terms with his racial identity, especially after visiting his father's extended family in Kenya.

### **Family History** by Dani Shapiro

Rachel Jensen, a housewife and art restorer, thinks she has it all until tragedy strikes, involving her 13-year-old daughter Kate. This novel explores with mesmerizing intensity adolescent guilt, the frailty of marriage and parenthood, and the struggle to accept the limits of love.

### **Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World** by Tracy Kidder

Dr. Farmer wants to change the world. Charismatic and charming, he is the recipient of a "genius" grant, a renowned infectious-disease specialist, an anthropologist, and the founder of a small public charity. This book explores Dr. Farmer's philosophy, "the only real nation is humanity". It also chronicles how he achieved such remarkable results in places like Haiti where his methods have resulted in better outcomes for poor tuberculosis patients than those in the United States.

### **She Is Me** by Cathleen Schine

A funny and touching novel about three generations of women who wrestle with personal demons and their love for each other. Grandmother Lotte faces old age and cancer, mother Greta also has cancer and is starting to question her sexuality, and daughter Elizabeth has a three-year-old son, a live-in boyfriend, and is trying to write a screenplay for *Madame Bovary*. A hilarious yet wise look at the complicated nature of mother/daughter relationships.

### **Walking Into the Night** by Olaf Olafsson

Christian Benediktsson is an Icelandic butler for William Randolph Hearst. A very private man, he performs his duties with efficiency and discretion, even as Hearst's affairs are unraveling before their eyes. But in his youth, as World War I ends, he abandoned his wife and children in order to follow his great passion for another woman. Now wrestling with his guilt, he writes unsent letters to his wife back in Iceland, trying to make sense of loyalty and betrayal on many levels.