



United Black Book Clubs of Pittsburgh (UBBCP)
www.ubbc.org



Literary Healing IV: Family

LITERARY BINDINGS

Once a Month Community Chat at the Homewood Carnegie Library

Saturday, February 6, 2010 (1-5 PM)

"A Celebration of Life" (A 2010 National African-American Read-In)

Suggested book reading for this chat topic:


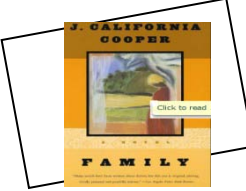
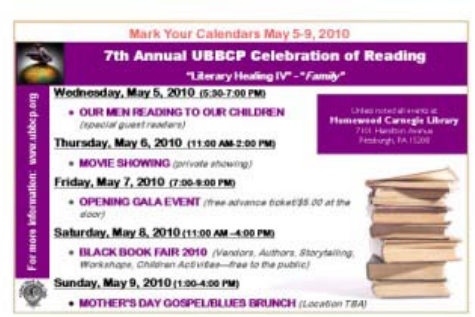


The Matter is Life by J. California Cooper . A set of tales of simple people and events that are rich, lyrical, humorous, ironic, and full of wonder at life's mysteries.

Publishers Weekly Review: Cooper's exuberant talent, displayed so effectively in *Family* , is somewhat muted in this uneven collection of eight deceptively simple slice-of-life parables. In "Vanity," a friend tells of the downfall of an egocentric beauty, whose passage from darling to victim is inadequately explained. Although Nona--the self-centered, superficial narrator of "Friends Anyone?"--has a Ph.D. in psychology, she never understands why she is rejected by family and friends, even by Jana, the childhood pal who ends up raising the twins--one deaf, one blind--Nona conceived with Jana's fiance. In "The Doras," the daughters of a poor black woman pursue her dreams and theirs, struggling along the way with poverty, prostitution and all kinds of abuse. Although the questions raised by these tales are important, the answers given are often trite. Sometimes overripe with symbolism, Cooper's trademark African-American dialect here makes it difficult to distinguish narrative voices. (July)

Library Journal Review: The first of eight stories in this collection focuses on a funeral but affirms life. Almost every speech uttered by the 90-year-old narrator contains the words, "I ain't ready." Luxuriating in the love of her extensive family, she tells God and all the world that she is not ready to die. Later stories deal with poverty, abusive husbands, drug addiction, and prostitution, but even these grim situations yield nurturing down-home wisdom. Most of Cooper's first-person narrators are shrewd black women, and on occasion the stories suffer from sameness in plots, themes, and characters. Usually, however, they are touching without falling into sentimentality and totally honest without becoming crude.-- Albert E. Wilhelm, Tennessee Technological Univ., Cookeville

(Books listed are suggested readings for the chat topic)

<p>MARCH 13, 2010 2pm-4pm</p> <p>WHAT IS THE HEALING POWER OF FAMILY?</p>  <p><i>In My Father's House</i> Ernest Gaines</p>	<p>APRIL 10 & 24, 2010 5:30pm-6:30pm</p> <p>COMMUNITY READ SIP-N-CHAT</p>  <p><i>Family</i> J California Cooper</p>	<p>MAY 5-9, 2010</p> <p>7th Annual UBBCP Celebration of Reading</p>  <p>"Literary Healing IV" - "Family"</p>
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Location: Homewood Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, 7101 Hamilton Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15208; 412-731-3080; 412-721-9191(UBBCP)



UBBCP is an association of librarians, readers and book clubs in Pittsburgh. Through a united effort, UBBCP was formed to promote literary activities and events, to provide community outreach programs, and to spread the love of reading throughout the community.