

Fair Trade Shopping, Books & Films Recommendations
Featured Program: *Women's Earth Alliance, Liberia and Sierra Leone*
March 2012

Recommended Books

Fiction

Ancestor Stones by Aminatta Forna

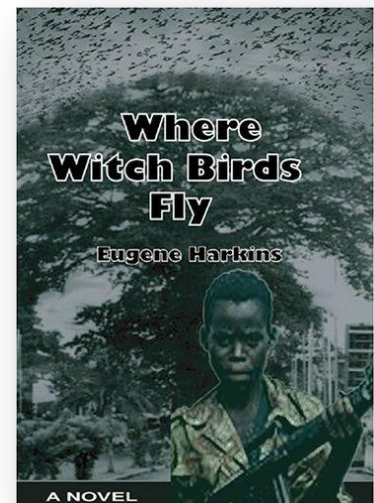
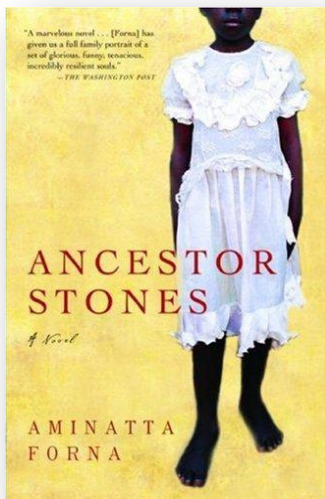
The author of the rapturously acclaimed memoir *The Devil That Danced on the Water* seamlessly turns her hand to fiction and delivers a novel that is a lush and beautiful portrait of several generations of African women. In *Ancestor Stones*, a young woman from West Africa, who has lived in England for many years, returns after years of civil war. The family's coffee plantation has been placed in her hands, and she turns to her aunts—women who were mysterious and a bit intimidating to her younger self—who begin to tell their stories. They are timeless tales of rivalrous co-wives, patriarchal society, and old religions challenged by Islamic and Christian incursions; they are modern stories of European-owned mining companies, the repressive influence of mission schools, corrupt elections, and the postcolonial African elite. Through their voices a family history interwoven with the history of a country emerges—one of a society both ancient and modern, of a family of strong women refusing to live

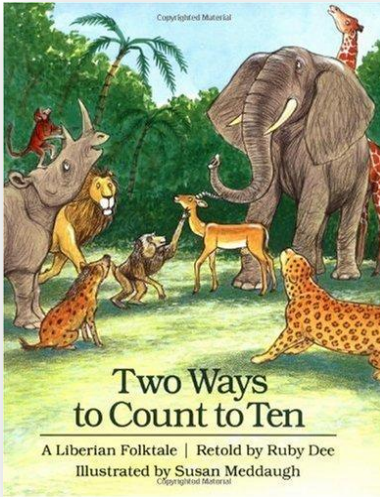
as second-class citizens. Powerful and sensuously written, *Ancestor Stones* is a wonderful achievement that recalls *The God of Small Things* and *The Joy Luck Club*, and establishes Forna as a gifted novelist.

[New York Times Sunday Book Review](#)

Where Witch Birds Fly by Eugene Harkins

In the twilight of the Cold War, a strange and horrific civil war erupted in Sierra Leone that would ultimately lead to a UN War Crimes Tribunal for Crimes Against Humanity. *Where Witch Birds Fly* captures the toxic brew of forces at play in the small West African country—Big Oil, Big Diamonds, competing outside powers, foreign mercenaries, and the local dominant Lebanese Christian trading community—all intriguing to pillage the African





population's assets, degrading and destroying its chances for development to the point that a brutal insurrection breaks out.

The anguish of Sierra Leone will change Richard White's life.

Two Ways to Count to Ten: A Liberian Folktale by Rudy Dee and Susan Meddaugh

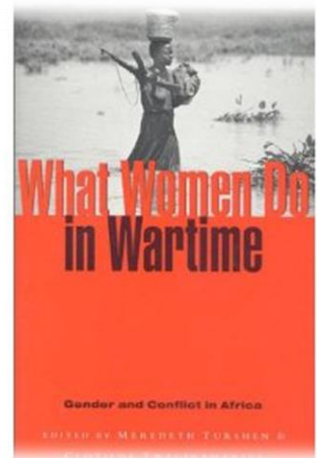
"The noted actress retells this lively, well-paced, and involving version of a Liberian folktale. Meddaugh's color-pencil and water-color paintings suit the text well. Readers and listeners of all ages will find this an irresistibly satisfying tale."--*Publishers Weekly*

"A clever tale about the jungle beasts learning to count, showing once again that being strong is not the same as being smart."--*The New York Times*

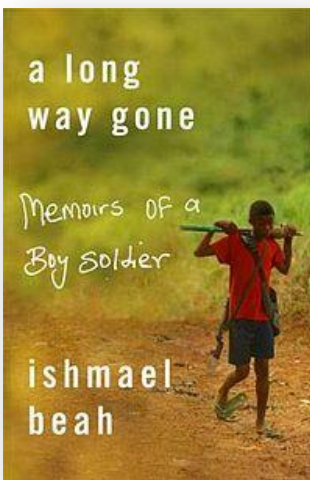
Non-Fiction

What Women Do in Wartime: Gender and Conflict in Africa edited by Meredith Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya

This is the first book to describe and analyze the experience of women in African civil wars. A mixture of reportage, testimony and scholarship, the book includes contributions from women in Chad, Liberia, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa and Sudan. The political context of these conflicts is outlined in an introduction to



each chapter. The book profiles women's responses to war, as combatants as well as victims, and describes the groups women organize in the aftermath. The first book to examine rape and other forms of gendered political violence in African civil wars, this extraordinary volume is also about women taking action for change.



A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishmael Beah

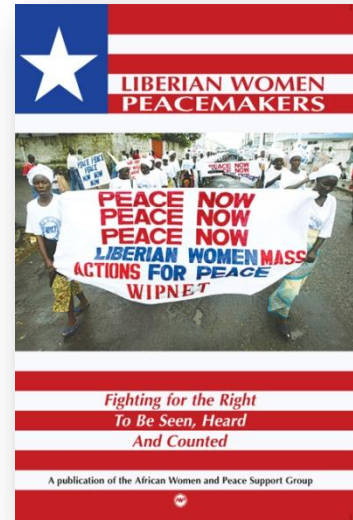
Beah's harrowing story of a boy caught up in the civil strife in Sierra Leone is not an audio to curl up with before bedtime. Beah's even-toned narrative is particularly disturbing because it's almost exactly the same whether he is enjoying the company of a newly found uncle or busy shooting and maiming rebels and

even burying them alive. His monotone works particularly well when he is recounting his dreams, for he cannot distinguish his nightmares from his waking life. Beah speaks with a thick accent that omits the sounds. Many words are understandable in their context, but a few are not. He also stumbles over some longer and more complex words. Despite these drawbacks, Beah's tale is a riveting snapshot of childhoods stolen from all too many, not just in Sierra Leone but in Somalia, Iraq, Palestine and other places ravaged by civil wars.

Liberian Women Peacemakers: Fighting for the Right To Be Seen, Heard and Counted by

Africa Women and Peace Support Group

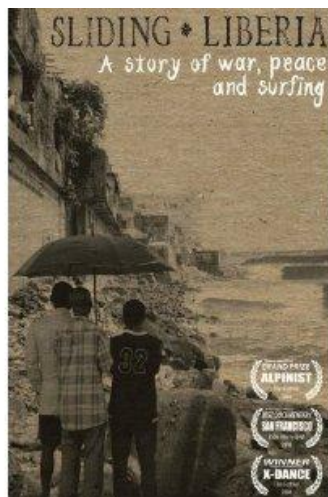
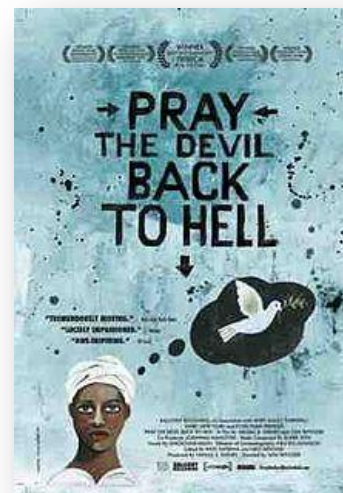
Women are usually seen as victims of wars, as indeed they are. But they are also peacemakers, so that the riches of their land may be invested in their children's education and health services and in agriculture and industry. In this book, Liberian women and men who were caught in the civil war between 1989 and 2003, tell their own stories of assisting the afflicted, feeding the hungry, pleading with trigger-happy young soldiers to stop the killing, seeking to heal trauma, taking to the streets in protest, and storming peace conferences "to speak plainly and forcefully about the destruction of families, communities and the nation." This book celebrates them.



Recommended Films

Pray the Devil Back to Hell, 2008

Pray the Devil Back to Hell is a captivating new film by director Gini Reticker. It exposes a different story angle for the largely forgotten recent events of the women of Liberia uniting to bring the end to their nation's civil war.



Sliding Liberia: A Story of War, Peace, and Surfing, 2008

"Sliding Liberia"-a story about war, peace, and surfing on the world's deadliest stretch of coastline. Directors Britton Caillouette and Nicholai Lidow invented a new film genre - one where surfing becomes a catalyst for social change. A multi-award winner at films festivals around the globe.