**A Greyhound of a Girl** by Roddy Doyle  
Contemporary Fiction/Moving On  
Amulet Books, 2012, 206pp., $16.95  

Mary O'Hara has heard a billion times that the past lives on, but it isn't until she meets the ghost of her great-grandmother, Tansey, that she realizes just how true this is. Doyle’s *A Greyhound of a Girl* is a novel that explores death and moving on through the lives of four generations of women. It revolves around a tragedy, Tansey's unexpected demise, and its effect on her 3-year-old daughter, Emer. Now, with Emer on her deathbed, Tansey comes back to comfort her and, in the meantime, forever change the lives of her descendents Mary and Scarlett.

The combination of Mary's playful dialogue and Tansey's matter-of-fact attitude toward death make *A Greyhound of a Girl* at once utterly heartbreaking and wildly amusing. Although intended for young adults, this exquisite novel deals with death and moving on in a way that can be enjoyed by people of any age.

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**Beneath a Meth Moon: An Elegy** by Jacqueline Woodson  
Addiction/Recovery/Family  
ISBN: 978-0-399-25250-1

Life brightens briefly for Laurel once her family moves from Jackson, Mississippi, to the small Midwest town of Galilee. She’s a cheerleader and dating the high school’s basketball star. But T-Boom introduces her to meth, and Laurel quickly comes to crave its effects. Meth helps her forget the family she left behind in August 2005 before Hurricane Katrina’s arrival. But it also makes her forget the things that matter. She ends up on the street, begging for change to pay for her meth and becoming invisible to passersby.

Laurel's poignant story is told in a series of remembrances of her once-happy life and the losses she has experienced. While her recovery is uncertain, clearly she is making the effort, thanks to supportive family and friends like street artist Moses. This is a gripping, honest account of life’s pleasures and pains and what it takes to survive.

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**Bloody Chester** by J. T. Petty (writer) and Hilary Florido (illustrator)  
Identity/Courage/Morality  
ISBN: 978-1-59643-100-3

Set in the wild frontier, *Bloody Chester* is a tale of a young man coming of age and struggling to carve out an identity for himself. At its core a *bildungsroman* (or journey novel), *Bloody Chester* encapsulates the very best traditions of quality adolescent literature: identity formation, development of an ethical code (even at the expense of personal gain), and learning the differences between lust and love. While there are elements that may, at first glance, seem taboo and that warrant caution and close reading—references to sexuality, suggestive language, violence—these elements are contextualized in the time period and not sensational or gratuitous. *Bloody Chester* at times reads like a (much better written) *Catcher in the Rye*. Overall, these taboo elements help to keep the voice of the narrative authentic in the vein of some of the best and most revered stories of the old frontier.

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**Curveball: The Year I Lost My Grip** by Jordan Sonnenblick  
Baseball/Photography/Alzheimer's  
Scholastic, 2012, 304 pp., $17.99  
ISBN: 978-0-545-32069-6

Incoming freshman Peter Friedman and his best friend AJ have everything planned out. They’ll use their baseball prowess as tickets to success and popularity in high school. After a devastating arm injury precludes playing baseball, Pete feels lost without the sport around which his identity has been based. Using the camera equipment his grandfather gives him, he realizes that there is much truth revealed from behind the lens, but whose truth is it—the subject’s or the photographer’s? Pete’s life becomes complicated by Angelika, a classmate who shares his passion for the camera but demands honesty with himself and others.

Pete is also concerned about how Alzheimer’s is robbing his grandfather of his most precious memories. Although Pete does, indeed, lose his grip on life at several points, he regains his equilibrium and shows readers the benefits of self-honesty. Filled with humor, pathos, and insight, this page-turner is another homerun.
### Dark of the Moon

**By**: Tracy Barrett  
**Category**: Juvenile Fiction/Mythology  
**Publisher**: Harcourt Children's Books, 2011, 320 pp., $16.99  
**ISBN**: 978-0-547-58132-3  

Ariadne and Theseus are like many teenagers. She loves her kind mother, simple brother, and garrulous friends. He loves his helpful stepfather and flighty mother. Life is a little different for them, however: Ariadne's mother takes the form of a goddess for three days out of every year; Theseus' father is the king of Athens. For them to reach their fate, they may need to take away what is most precious to the other.

Barrett expertly weaves her story from the strands of both Ariadne's and Theseus's viewpoints to create a world both of its time and pertinent to now. Older teenagers who can appreciate discussions on the nature of power, the psychology of human relationships, and the search for belonging will find much to cherish here.

- **Walt Colt**  
  Nashville, TN

### Friends with Boys

**By**: Faith Erin Hicks  
**Category**: Friendship/Family/Identity  
**Publisher**: First Second Books, 2012, 213 pp., $15.99  
**ISBN**: 978-1-59643-556-8  

After years of home schooling, Maggie's mother abandons the family and leaves Maggie to navigate a local school system and its social structures. Having grown up in a house full of men, particularly brothers, Maggie learns that her new school is not so different. She adds a new friend to her life, a boy named Kevin. Maggie soon finds herself torn between two friends and the social norms of a new world.

Maggie's story adds a nice story line to the themes of friendship and belonging. It's a story about how life is not always as it seems and how our choices can shape our destinies. Fans of the supernatural and those who enjoy coming-of-age stories will enjoy this book.

- **Brian Kelley**  
  New York, NY

### Divergent

**By**: Veronica Roth  
**Category**: Dystopian Fiction/Identity  
**Publisher**: HarperCollins, 2011, 487 pp., $17.99  
**ISBN**: 978-0-06-202402-2  

Beatrice Prior, known as Tris, must make a decision—one that will change the course of her life forever. On Choosing Day each year, 16-year-olds across dystopian Chicago must choose to join one of five factions, each representing a different set of values. For Tris, the decision is clear: she must choose to join the faction of Dauntless, those who embrace fearlessness.

Amidst budding friendships and oft-confusing romance, Tris struggles to come to terms with the decisions she has made and their unimaginable consequences. Despite its similarity to other dystopian novels, Divergent's depiction of adolescence rings true. Growing up isn't easy, and growing up with a terrible secret is just plain hard.

- **Alex Ivey**  
  Brentwood, TN

### From Bad to Cursed

**By**: Katie Alender  
**Category**: Supernatural/Ghosts  
**Publisher**: Hyperion, 2011, 448 pp., $9.99  
**ISBN**: 978-1-4231-3471-8  

This second installment of the Bad Girls Don't Die series finds sisters in trouble with the spirit world. Kasey has made it home in time to start school after an evil spirit possessed her. Alexis begins to realize that their brothers were not alone, and that the secrets of the family past may hold the key to their survival.

Fans of the supernatural will enjoy this book. Young women will appreciate the cast of female characters who can take care of themselves and each other. While it is the second book in the series, reading the first book is not a must.

- **Sarah Cosey**  
  Jackson, GA
<table>
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<th><strong>Girl Meets Boy</strong> edited by Kelly Milner Halls</th>
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The age-old tale of “he said she said” never dies when it comes to romantic relationships. Especially the teenage ones. A clever compilation of six stories told through the eyes of the male and female, the dynamic YA authors who created the stories seek to expose the roadblocks and romanticism that stem from the various and sundry misconceptions of the adolescent mind. From a tortured soul searching for real love, to an interfaith couple defying their not so compliant parents, *Girl Meets Boy* is the perfect piece of literature to make you ask, “If I knew the other person’s point of view, could I be in a successful relationship?”

Cliché, but true, there really are two sides to every story. And at the end of the day, we can always learn from our differences. Whether they help us or hurt us, they will always make us stronger.

Jueel A. Davis
Clemson, SC

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<th><strong>Island of the Unknowns</strong> by Benedict Carey</th>
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Lady Di Smith and Tom Jones are the only two kids in Folsom Adjacent that can figure out what happened to Malba Clarke. Nothing exciting ever happens living in Folsom Adjacent, but this mystery is one that can no longer be overlooked, and it will change the lives of the lazy folk forever. With the help of some fellow outcasts, they use their logical minds to solve their unfamiliar clues that involve math, wits, and courage.

Carey’s effort to ground math in the physical world involves allusions to famous mathematicians, secret societies and gangs, and some clever diagramming. The suspense carries you along until the very end, making you question everything that crosses their path and ache to solve the mystery along with them. It takes careful reading to follow along at times, but it’s worth the adventure to help learn and appreciate math in everyday life.

Claire Holman
Fairfax, VA

Lucius Vladescu is a vampire. Jessica Packwood is his vampire princess. But to this small-town Pennsylvania teen, getting through the school day is hard enough without a tall, dark, handsome vampire stalking her and calling her by her long forgotten Romanian name. It’s no secret that 17-year-old Jessica was adopted by free-spirited, vegan parents. But what they’ve hidden from her, an immortal destiny, will change her life forever.

Without warning, Jessica is plunged into a world of rumors, lies, and a fate she isn’t sure she wants to fulfill. As responsibility to her heritage overpowers her and Lucius’s kisses weaken her resolve, Jessica is faced with a choice between normalcy and unbelievable power. If only she has the courage to choose.

Beth Fantaskey’s first novel continuously grapples with the social ramifications of male and female power colliding, all wrapped up in the delicious vampire genre that has captured the nation.

Kirstin Slitt
West Hartford, CT
Money Boy
by Paul Yee
Adolescent Fiction/Coming of Age
Groundwood Books, 2011, 184 pp., $16.95

Ray has recently emigrated with his family from China because his father, Ba, believes there will be more opportunities available to them in Canada. However, after discovering his son's homosexuality, Ba forces Ray out of the house and onto the streets where he must fend for himself. In a journey that takes Ray to one of Canada's largest shopping malls and to a camp for overweight children for the summer, he learns valuable lessons about family, love, and the importance of personal growth. Yee's novel explores a variety of social and moral issues, such as immigration, homosexuality, and the power of money. Through his naïve protagonist, Yee makes connections between wealth and virtues like honor and freedom, raising questions about what it means to truly possess these qualities.

Tory Cortes
Charleston, SC

Out of Control
by Rick Jasper
Fiction/Sports
Lerner Publishing Group, 2012, 107 pp., $7.95

“What would Dad say if I quit?” wondered Carlos “Trip” Costas as he contemplated his future baseball career. Since he was little, his father, Julio, taught him everything he knew about how the game of baseball was played. Trip’s dreams of becoming a baseball star have been shattered by the news that he has lost his spot on the team. In a brave and self-realizing moment, Trip decides to follow his passion for music. This previously shy loner is making a name for himself as a high school class clown with few inhibitions and a remarkable talent for humor. Julio and his wife, Carmen, are shocked to hear that their son is pursuing a different path. Trip’s journey is a story of self-discovery and exploration of his true calling in life. This novel is a powerful and poignant tale of a young man’s struggle to find his place in the world.

Libby Byrnes
Alpharetta, GA

Pregnant Pause
by Han Nolan
Realistic Fiction/Teen Pregnancy

Eleanor Crowe is a very stubborn and rebellious 16-year-old girl who has been in and out of trouble. Now she’s pregnant. After announcing her pregnancy, Eleanor feels as though her world is crashing down. She is unsure if she wants to be married. On top of it all, she is stuck working at a camp for overweight children for the summer. This story chronicles Eleanor’s journey as she wrestles with the decision of whether or not she should keep the baby. Han tells an insightful and compelling story about self-discovery, growth, and what it is like to be 16 and pregnant.

La'Toya Wade
Smyrna, TN

My Friend Dahmer
by Derf Backderf
Graphic Novel/Memoir
Abrams ComicArts, 2012, 224 pp., $24.95
ISBN: 978-1-4197-0216-7

Derf Backderf and his friends don’t know what to make of the new Jeffrey Dahmer. This previously shy loner is making a name for himself as a high school class clown with few inhibitions and a remarkable talent for humor. The other boys and girls in his class are shocked to see Dahmer’s quirky behavior. Dahmer, who is new to the school, seems to be a different person from the shy, introverted student who used to be his best friend. But as Dahmer’s public displays become more frequent and disturbing, the other boys and girls begin to realize that dahmer’s actions are not normal. Dahmer’s true nature is revealed when the other boys and girls discover that dahmer has been keeping secrets from them. This graphic novel is a powerful and thought-provoking exploration of the tragic figure who was once their friend.
Shooting Stars by Allison Rushby
Realistic Fiction/Romance
ISBN: 978-0-8027-2298-0

Teenager Josephine “Jo” Foster is up close and personal with the world’s most famous celebrities on a daily basis—as a member of the paparazzi. Taking pictures of the stars to save up money for photography classes, Jo will do whatever it takes to get her money shot. That is, until she’s sent undercover to a rehabilitation facility to photograph teen heartthrob Ned Hartnett—the very celebrity that helped Jo get her start.

Suddenly, this feisty photographer finds herself posing as a patient in the treatment center, torn between doing the job that will finally enable her to pay for photography classes and her burgeoning friendship, and maybe even romance, with Ned. As she grows closer to Ned, Jo realizes that things aren’t always as they seem—in her life or in Ned’s—something that forces her to decide just how far she’s willing to go to achieve her dreams.

Caroline Wilson
Houston, TX

The Farewell Season by Ann Herrick
Sports/Relationships/Grief
Puddletown Publishing Group, 2011, 143 pp., $10.99

Football lovers and non-football fans will enjoy this compelling story. Eric Neilson’s enthusiasm for playing high school football is nearly stifled by the death of his supportive father. For Eric, everything changes, and he struggles to understand his mother’s erratic behavior. With the help of Glynnie, who is dealing with her parents’ divorce, Eric learns that he needs to deal with his grief, not ignore it. The realistic feelings and true-to-life characters provide a story with an important lesson about life and loss.

The reader empathizes with Eric’s pain as he tackles the most heartbreaking obstacle of his life, then rejoices when he resolves his grief and puts himself back on the playing field! This story crosses the “goal line”—both for teens who may face similar hurdles, and for those who wonder about such “what ifs” in life that may yet befall them.

Patricia D. Engelking
Lowell, OR

The Difference between You and Me by Madeline George
Realistic Fiction/ Romance

Jesse is a fisherman-boot-wearing, self-proclaimed weirdo that fights for what she believes in. Emily is the J Crew-clad student council vice-president that always has a plan for everything, including her future. Both girls are harboring their secret relationship while carrying out their normal lives. When an issue comes up that divides the entire town and puts these girls on opposite sides, will they learn to compromise in order to maintain a relationship?

Madeline George spins an entertaining story that tells of two girls trying to find their way in the world of high school and in the world of relationships. The story of Jesse and Emily does a great job of demonstrating the importance of learning to decide what things in life are worth fighting for.

Courtney R. Morgan
New Braunfels, TX

The Fault in Our Stars by John Green
Fiction/Illness
Dutton Juvenile, 2012, 313 pp., $17.99

Hazel Grace Lancaster has terminal cancer. Along with her life-sustaining oxygen tank and doctor visits, she attends weekly Support Group meetings to help her deal with her illness. It is at one of these meetings where she meets Augustus Waters, a cancer patient in remission. Using Augustus’s leftover make-a-wish, the two set off for answers about Hazel’s favorite book, finding companionship and love along the way.

John Green tells the story of two teenagers with cancer who are struggling to find their place and purpose in the world. Holding little back in his depiction of this ailment, he allows for his characters to grow through their shared hardships and triumphs. Hazel and Augustus meet in Support Group, but they gain far more than support. They gain a sense of purpose and find out what it means to be not dying of cancer but living with it.

Zachary Oswanski
Nashville, TN
The Future of Us by Jay Asher and Carolyn Mackler
Fiction/Relationships/Destiny
Razorbill, 2011, 356 pp., $12.91
ISBN: 978-1-59514-491-1
Set in 1996, Josh and Emma are not the constantly wired teenagers of today. Josh has just given Emma a free AOL trial cd rom for her new computer. Upon logging on, Emma sees a page that has all her personal information and pictures. Emma has stumbled onto herself 15 years in the future, on Facebook. Josh is there too, but their profiles do not seem to be linked. Emma is surprised and confused. When someone comes into their lives who used to be friends, a whole new history is revealed. The two begin to share secrets and plans for their future, which begins to change the present. They soon realize that there is more to them than they thought.

The Near Witch by Victoria Schwab
Fantasy/Family
ISBN: 978-1-4231-3787-0
A child is missing in the town of Near, a mysterious place that bears the legacy of witchcraft. Town leaders suspect a young male stranger whose arrival in Near coincides with the disappearance of the child, but Lexi, a spitting girl who is determined to find answers, befriends the boy and slowly learns the truth. As the lines between good and evil blur, Lexi is caught in a web of secrets and lies. This novel not only examines how we write our destinies, but also to what extent our future is written in technology. Asher and Mackler's compelling depictions force the reader to examine the simultaneous impact of current technology, keeping the reader guessing about the future of Emma and Josh as well as the future of humanity.

The Name of the Star by Maureen Johnson
Mystery
ISBN: 978-0-399-25660-8
When Rory Deveraux's parents take a sabbatical to spend her senior year, she chooses to spend it at boarding school in London. But it just happens to be the same time someone is copying Jack the Ripper's letters. As she learns more about Near and the town's history, she is forced to examine the simultaneous impact of current technology. Johnson's story of an American teen with amazing capabilities is a worthwhile read.

The Statistical Probability of Love at First Sight by Jennifer E. Smith
Romance/Family Relationships
Poppy, 2012, 260 pp., $17.99
The four minutes that cause Hadley Sullivan to miss her flight to London might change her life. As she waits for the next available flight, she meets Oliver, a Brit who is also on his way to London. They end up sitting next to each other on the plane, and as they talk, they realize they are on the same flight. They are the only ones to see each other, and they decide to break a rule and talk. As they get to know each other, they realize they are perfect for each other. But when they arrive in London, they realize that they have no idea where they are, and they must find a way to get back to their original flight. This novel not only examines how we write our destinies, but also to what extent our future is written in technology. Asher and Mackler's compelling depictions force the reader to examine the simultaneous impact of current technology, keeping the reader guessing about the future of Emma and Josh as well as the future of humanity.
**The Storyteller** by Antonia Michaelis  
Fantasy/Family Relationships  
Amulet Books, 2011, 402 pp., $18.95  
ISBN: 978-1-4197-0047-7

Seventeen-year-old Anna seems to be living in a fairy tale, and not a happy one. It begins when she finds a little doll with a dangerous owner who also has a gift for storytelling. A notorious drug dealer and outcast, Abel is everything that Anna is not. Drawn to him and his mesmerizing stories, Anna begins to discover more about the boy with the icy eyes and Micha, the little sister he would die to protect.

Is Abel truly dangerous? And how do his stories seem to predict the tragic events that are happening? As Anna falls deeper and deeper into Abel’s stories, the lines of reality blur and the stakes become higher. Michaelis deftly interweaves truths and tales as she explores the harsh reality of family, love, and desperation.

Grace Chee  
Easley, SC

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**The White Assassin** by Hilary Wagner  
Fantasy  
Holiday House, 2011, 242 pp., $17.95  
ISBN: 978-0-8234-2333-0

In this second book in the Nightshade Chronicles, Juniper and the valiant rats of Nightshade City are struggling against their nemesis, Billycan, and his army of swamp rats. The story takes the reader into the rats’ world as they attempt to subdue Billycan. Seemingly simple at its onset, the story becomes increasingly complex as the history of Billycan, Juniper, and the other main characters is revealed.

The theme of good vs. evil is interwoven throughout the story, but the complexity of the characters makes this book worthwhile. Deception and duplicity are vital elements, but so are redemption and forgiveness. The noblest characters are not immune to the inner turmoil that Billycan faces. Similarly, Billycan is not the cold-hearted killer that he appears. Wagner has succeeded in creating an imaginative world inhabited by rats, bats, and snakes, and has simultaneously delved into the age-old issues of identity, trust, and love.

Alec Woodhull  
Nashville, TN

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**The Year of the Book** by Andrea Cheng  
Fiction/Friendship  

Friends, who needs them? You do not have to worry about being invited to go on ski trips or sleepovers or wonder if your friends like your outfit. Anna’s friends are the characters in the books she reads. They take her on their adventures without having to be asked. But, Anna soon realizes the benefits of having real friends and being a friend. Chang introduces young readers into the world of a Chinese American girl who is struggling with finding her place in the both the Chinese and American cultures. The story includes references to Chinese words (and characters), traditions, calendar, and food. Readers will learn that friendship is important in all cultures.

Angela Draper  
Nashville, TN

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**This Dark Endeavor: The Apprenticeship of Victor Frankenstein** by Kenneth Oppel  
Fantasy/Classic  
ISBN: 978-1-4424-0315-4

Who was Victor Frankenstein BEFORE he created his monster? What was he like as a teen? This Dark Endeavor provides a view into his possible past. Victor and his twin brother Konrad are nearly inseparable; they share a love of adventure. They discover The Dark Library filled with secret books of alchemy and ancient potions. The boys’ father forbids them to go into the Library, but that just makes Victor want to go in even more. Then Konrad becomes deathly ill, and Victor tries to save him with the Elixer of Life.

The journey to find the ingredients for the Elixer pushes Victor and his friends to the limit of their endurance; their desperation to save Konrad pushes them beyond even that. This novel provides a glimpse into the making of a scientist desperate to unlock the secrets of life; its connections to Frankenstein are thought-provoking in this excellent read.

Melanie Hundley  
Nashville, TN
Trial by Fire
by Jennifer Lynn Barnes
Werewolves/Family/Fantasy
Egmont, 2011, 368 pp., $17.99

Bryn, the human Alpha of a pack of werewolves, is settling into her position as leader. She knows that she doesn’t fully understand werewolf politics and rules, but she does the best she can to figure out how to keep her pack together and safe. Pack safety is challenged with the arrival of a... and wants Bryn’s protection. Is Lucas who he says he is? Does he have an ulterior motive for coming to Bryn’s pack?

Bryn has to choose between the safety of her pack and her humanity. She will have to face and fight her greatest challenge alone. Bryn, a strong, female, human Alpha, challenges the expectations of were society, and this novel challenges the expectations of the current vein of werewolf novels.

Melanie Hundley
Nashville, TN

Ultraviolet
by R. J. Anderson
Mystery/Science Fiction
Carolrhoda Lab, 2011, 306 pp., $17.95
ISBN: 978-0-7613-7408-4

Shortly after waking up in a hospital, 16-year-old Alison is transferred to the Pine Hills Psychiatric Treatment Centre. At first her memory is hazy, but as she spends more time in Pine Hills, Alison realizes that the police cannot locate Tori’s body, and even Alison can’t quite explain how Tori died.

Everything changes, though, when a mysterious scientist visits the center and takes an interest in Alison and the unusual sensory powers that she has. She is revealed to be a scientist named Milo, who is working on a new kind of technology that can help people with special abilities.

St鲷ndoff: After being kept in a hospital, 16-year-old Alison is transferred to the Pine Hills Psychiatric Treatment Centre. At first her memory is hazy, but as she spends more time in Pine Hills, Alison realizes that the police cannot locate Tori’s body, and even Alison can’t quite explain how Tori died.

Diana Liu
Nashville, TN

Tris & Izzie
by Mette Harrison
Magic/Teen Romance
Egmont USA, 2011, 267 pp., $16.99
ISBN: 978-1-60684-257-7

In many respects, Izzie’s life is already a fairy tale. She reigns as queen bee of Tintagel High with best friend Branna and perfect basketball captain boyfriend Mark always at her side. Beautiful, brainy, and strong, Izzie is the perfect girl next door. But when a strikingly handsome stranger, arrives at Tintagel, Izzie’s two worlds collide, and a supernatural adventure begins.

One love potion, or “philtre” gone awry sets the tone for Harrison’s brew of high school drama mixed with a legendary love story. Izzie must face magical foes and heartache alike as she unravels the truth of her past. In so doing, she seeks her true place between two worlds.

Virginia Hornblower
Snowmass Village, CO

Publishers who wish to submit a book for possible review should send a copy of the book to: Melanie Hundley
1021 Delmas Ave.
Nashville, TN 37216-3630

To submit a review for possible publication or to become a reviewer, contact Melanie Hundley at melanie.hundley@Vanderbilt.edu.