

AFTER THE DEATH OF ANNA GONZALES
by Terri Fields (Henry Holt & Company, \$16.95)

For a collection of poetry about the suicide of a fictional high school girl named Anna Gonzales, this book is surprisingly inspiring. Each poem offers a different reaction, as if written by the girl's classmates and teachers.

Anna killed herself because she thought no one cared about her, but she was wrong. The poems show the pain, anger, and confusion that afflict her friends and anyone who knew her. One poem by her good friend Alexis reads: "I could always accept not being the prettiest or the smartest/Because I had the best of friends./A and A they called us./But, Anna, somehow, I failed you./And now I've lost the best part of Me." The collection makes you realize that no matter how unloved or depressed you feel, there really are people out there who care about you. ★★★ —Megan Reimers, intern



THE GIRLS' BOOK OF LOVE: COOL QUOTES, SUPER STORIES, AND SOME ADVICE AND MORE
edited by Catherine Dee (Little, Brown and Company, \$9.95)

This book starts off by saying that "in order to really understand [love], you've got to experience it." Then what's the point of reading the next 160 pages? Each chapter begins with a preachy one-page synopsis of the celebrity quotes, love poems, and random facts that follow. If the editor hadn't offered her opinions so much, I would have groaned less. Still, I did find *some* good stuff. One of my favorite quotes is this zinger from Miss Piggy: "Only time can heal your broken heart, just as only time can heal his broken arms and legs." ★★★ —Sara Lyle

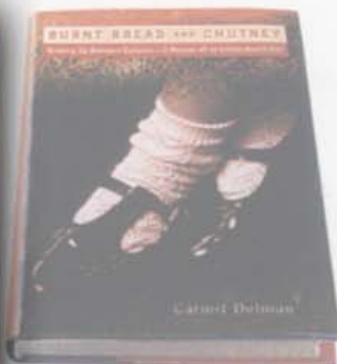
THE DIARY OF A TEENAGE GIRL: AN ACCOUNT IN WORDS AND PICTURES
by Phoebe Gloeckner (Frog, Ltd., \$22.95)

Minnie Goetz has a hippie mom who smokes pot with her, a little sister who eats and watches TV in her room all day, and a 35-year-old lover who also happens to be her mom's boyfriend. Yeah, it's some heavy stuff. Minnie survives with the help of her diary, which chronicles her high school years in San Francisco during the 1970s. Cool comic-strip-style drawings make up half of the book, and they seamlessly intersect with the smart and funny text. You'll read the whole thing in about three hours and be left wishing it were longer. ★★★★★ —Rebecca Onion



SEW FAST SEW EASY: ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN YOU START TO SEW by Elissa K. Meyrich (St. Martin's Press, \$22.95)

I can sew—or rather, I took a couple of classes in college and sort of remember the basics. But this book made me want to become a better seamstress. In a totally unimpeachable way, it goes over everything from fabrics to tools to sewing machines—perfect for a beginner or someone with a little experience. The author also has lots of cool tricks for things that I've always messed up, like the best way to sew a dress strap. Three more reasons this is a great buy? It comes with a bunch of patterns, has excellent diagrams, and is pretty short! ★★★★★ —Lisa Schulner



BURNT BREAD AND CHUTNEY: GROWING UP BETWEEN CULTURES—A MEMOIR OF AN INDIAN JEWISH GIRL
by Carmit Delman (Ballantine Books, \$22.95)

Carmit is the daughter of an Indian-Jewish mother and a Jewish father, and she totally resents her parents' old-fashioned rules. For example, it's Indian tradition to wait to date until you're looking for a husband, so all through high school Carmit's not allowed to go out with guys. But while her story is unusual, everyone can relate to the alienation she experiences as a teenager. "On paper, I would never be the norm in any one community," Carmit reflects during a family road trip. "But buckled in, watching out that window, I could imagine myself blended in." The book's details are great, like the time Carmit, at age 8, visits Israel and dances on top of a bomb shelter. When you finish her memoir, you'll feel like you've known the author your entire life. ★★★★★ —Jenny Taitz, intern

RATING KEY	If these books were actresses...
★★★★★	Reese Witherspoon
★★★★	Sarah Michelle Gellar
★★★	Katie Holmes
★★	Tara Reid
★	Britney Spears

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