

## Finding Beauty

By Laura Stoll, Assistant to the Director/Office Manager

The other night, I looked out the window of my house onto the moonlit street. I thought (yet another) layer of gentle white snow had fallen until I realized it was actually just a thick crust of salt and sand. While I'm grateful that our hard-working DPW has found a way to keep us safe on the roads, the chalky pavement just made everything outside look washed out. It seems like it will be an eternity before the leaves and buds of springtime make my street come to life with color. It's hard to find beauty when everything is cold and frozen.

Because spring is indeed still a long time coming, the Kirkland Town Library is launching a new program in February and March to help us find the loveliness all around us. We invite you to try twenty different activities that will have you visiting the KTL, getting out in the community, and spending time at home. You'll discover the beauty you never noticed in nature, art, music, books, and more.

To participate, stop by the KTL and pick up a game board. Once you've completed an activity, come back to the KTL and we'll give you a sticker to cover the corresponding square on the game board. As you complete more activities and earn more stickers, you'll start to see a beautiful image emerge. If you complete at least ten activities, you'll win a special prize. Everyone who completes all twenty can enter a raffle for a chance to win an even bigger prize!

Our game board wouldn't be complete without a task that asked participants to read a book so we challenged participants to read something about an artist or musician. Here are some of the titles that fit the theme that I recommend.

"Daisy Jones and the Six" by Taylor Jenkins Reid. This author has been very popular at the KTL recently and in my opinion, this is one of her best books. Daisy Jones is the beautiful lead singer of The Six, a fictional 1970s rock group. Read about their meteoric rise to fame followed by their mysterious fall. The book is currently being made into a TV series starring Riley Keough, the granddaughter of The King of Rock and Roll himself, Elvis Presley.

"Songs in Ursa Major" by Emma Brodie is another book about rock stars but has more of a folk-music flair than "Daisy Jones." Superstar Jesse Reid was ready to perform at the Bayleen Island Folk Festival in 1969 but a motorcycle crash on the way to the show derailed his plans. Local singer Jane Quinn and her bandmates step in at the festival and a star is born.

It took me a little while to get into "Bel Canto" by Ann Patchett but once I did, I was riveted. Somewhere in South America, an opera singer is entertaining a crowd of rich and powerful guests when the entire party is taken hostage by terrorists. The bonds formed between the hostages and the terrorists makes for a great story. I recently read Patchett's newest title, a book of essays called "These Precious Days" and highly recommend it, too.

"The Goldfinch" by Donna Tartt. It seems like people either loved this book or hated it; you can group me with the lovers. The novel starts with a violent explosion at a New York City museum and takes you through the life story of one of the human survivors as well as one of the pieces of art found in the rubble. I haven't seen the movie adaptation of the book but it's on my list.

"Swing Time" by Zadie Smith. I haven't read this book yet but Zadie Smith has been on my "to read" list for a few years. Here's a summary from the publisher, Penguin Random House: "Two brown girls dream of being dancers—but only one, Tracey, has talent. The other has

ideas: about rhythm and time, about black bodies and black music, what constitutes a tribe, or makes a person truly free. It's a close but complicated childhood friendship that ends abruptly in their early twenties, never to be revisited, but never quite forgotten, either."

If this list has you wanting more beauty in your life, stop by or visit our website to check out the Finding Beauty challenge. Watch a movie, take a walk on a brand new StoryWalk, see our art collection, send a postcard to a friend, and much more. We hope to see you at the KTL soon!