

Women Crime Writers

While female mystery writers such as Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers have long been credited as masters of their genre, often overlooked are the women who wrote hardboiled crime novels. Focusing on 20th century novelists such as Dorothy B. Hughes and Margaret Millar, this Reading Group will explore criminal suspense novels that are not so much whodunits as why-dunits.

May 18, *Laura* by Vera Caspary (1943)

May 25, *The Horizontal Man* by Helen Eustis (1946)

June 1, *In a Lonely Place* by Dorothy B. Hughes (1947)

June 8, *Beast In View* by Margaret Millar (1955)

All of the novels are available in the Library of America editions, *Women Crime Writers: Suspense Novels of the 1940s & 50s*, edited by Sarah Weinman. However, any other edition of these books are also okay to use.

More information of these novels can be found at the Library of America site:

http://womencrime.loa.org/?page_id=228

From the LoA description:

“Women writers have always had a central place in American crime writing, although one wouldn’t know it for all the attention focused on the men of the “hardboiled” school. In place of the mean and violent streets of the novels of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, the pioneering women crime writers of the 1940s and ’50s uncovered the roots of fear and mania in a quiet suburban neighborhood or a comfortable midtown hotel or the insinuating voice of a stranger on the telephone. Anticipating the “domestic suspense” novels of recent years, these writers explored the terrors of the mind and of family life, of split personality and conflicted sexual identity. They are overdue for fresh attention.”