

ed departure of his wife. Wils splits his time between a gofer job at a downtown newspaper and the socialite parties of the Lakefront North Shore, finds his first true love, Aurora, and . . . The book is worth reading, so I won't spoil it.

The readership of *Psychiatric Services* will be particularly interested in the character of Jason Brule, Aurora's father. A psychiatrist mysteriously known to everyone in Chicago society, he drifts in the shadows of the summer balls—aloof, seemingly detached, but somehow known and in the know. It is Dr. Brule's wartime experience, as an army medic who endured the unendurable during the Bataan Death March, that haunts him and that in turn haunts the entire novel.

We see the social drama of the time—labor unrest, an economy in transition, the hesitant ease of the upwardly mobile—through the experiences of Wils the reporter, Wils the child of privilege, and Wils' father, a factory owner rocked by

union violence. The hum of tension is what elevates this novel beyond the clichés of “going off to college” and gives it its interest. There is not only the tension of life in transition through adolescence but also the tension between postwar ease and the lingering impact of the war, between prosperity and social change.

The most nuanced aspect of *An Unfinished Season*, for me, has to do with Wils' dawning appreciation of adults as complex, three-dimensional figures. This evolving appreciation is carefully observed, well crafted, and particularly powerful. I would not hold the book up as great literature. Nor is the attention paid to psychiatry so central that it becomes a must read for psychiatrists. But *An Unfinished Season* is an enjoyable and interesting novel, well worth the time. Those who know and love Chicago, and anyone interested in the social issues of post-World War II America, should make a particular effort to track this one down.

plexities of these relationships, and the issues raised by adoption permeate the pages. The inner ruminations are real and burning. Although readers will likely feel empathy for each of these characters, they will also understand why others react to them as they do.

What I found most compelling in these stories was the series of choices each character faced as he or she traversed from adolescence to adulthood. It is these choices that drive the stories. While choices during childhood are also depicted, and the author treats children with dignity, it is the choices in adolescence and young adulthood that send them swirling into uncharted and risky waters. To have or not to have the baby, to keep the baby or to give it up for adoption, to seek out biological connectedness or to let it go, to confront the realities of paternal responsibility or to delude oneself into complacency, to reveal one's true self or to portray a more idealized self—all these are choices that young people commonly face in the transition to adulthood. Chaon has portrayed these choices elegantly, and with kindness, yielding a compelling read for those who enjoy the complexity of people and their relations with one another.

You Remind Me of Me

by Dan Chaon; New York, Ballantine Publications, 2004, 368 pages, \$24.95

Maryann Davis, Ph.D.

This is a novel about the meaning and impact of family, and about becoming an adult. In its exploration of both of these ideas, it is also a striking portrait of inner life juxtaposed with others' interpretations of behavior. It is a gentle novel that has great compassion for people struggling with their circumstances and choices.

The novel begins with a series of intriguing vignettes—a young boy living with his mother and grandfather is attacked by their Doberman; a slightly adrift ten-year-old boy hangs out with his married teenaged

cousin and his friends at a trailer park; a grandmother realizes that her young grandson has likely left her yard with an unknown adult; and a pregnant teenager with a very busy mind sits in a home for unwed mothers. These vignettes continue to unfold across separate decades, but by the end of the novel they fold into one another. The stories take place in the Midwest, largely in small towns, at a pace that is comforting.

Although the author focuses primarily on the first two boys, each of the characters is interesting and genuine. Most are clearly troubled and searching for ways to deal with emotional pain. Depression and substance abuse flow throughout the novel. Struggles to understand what it means to be a mother, a father, a brother, or a grandparent, the com-

Shooting the Heart

by Paul Cody; New York, Penguin, 2004, 254 pages, \$23.95

Nancy Byatt, D.O., M.B.A.

Shooting the Heart is an engrossing book about a man tormented by the fear that he may have murdered the love of his life. Earl Maden, once a teacher at a private high school, is now on a locked unit of a state psychiatric hospital in Boston. The reader moves back and forth in time with Earl as he recalls his past while trying to make sense of the

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