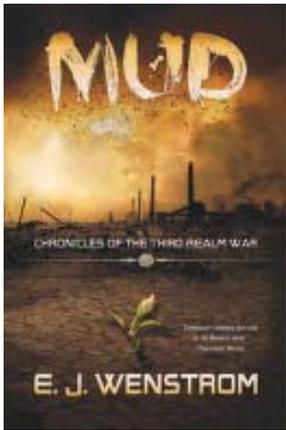




# the LITERARY HILL

A Compendium of Readers, Writers, Books, & Events

by Karen Lyon



In "Mud" a golem descends into the Underworld to find an angel's lost love – and gain a soul.

## Adem Down Under

Pity the poor golem. Created from mud to do man's dirty work, Adem dwells alone in his tower, forced to kill anyone who seeks the magical box that is both his treasure and his curse. "Every day is the same," he thinks. "There is no rest." Then an angel appears and offers him a path to freedom. All he has to do is descend into the Underworld and bring back the angel's human lover and he will be granted a soul.

"Mud," E.J. Wenstrom's first book in her "Chronicles of the Third Realm Wars" series, is a fantastical tale of gods, demon kings, evil, and love, told in the voice of the golem. Adem is a faithful narrator of his dangerous quest, often muddled, sometimes despairing. "More questions, nothing but questions," he laments. "Almost wish I could disappear back into my temple tower ..."

Yet he presses on, risking his life and making mistakes that could set in motion the third and final Realm War. Will he get a chance to make right what he has broken before the world explodes in cataclysm? Will he ever get a soul? The dark but absorbing mythology of "Mud" reels you in and

leaves you wanting more. Thankfully, the second book in the series, "Tides," is coming soon.

E.J. Wenstrom is a fantasy and science fiction author who calls herself "a DC girl at heart." "Mud," her debut novel, has been recognized as a Royal Palm Literary Award semifinalist. Visit her at [www.ejwenstrom.com](http://www.ejwenstrom.com).

## The Book of Esther

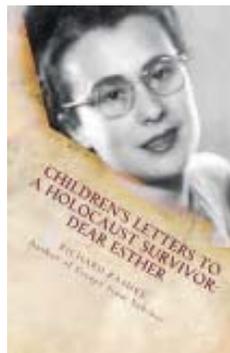
In "Escape from Sobibor" author Richard Rashke interviewed Esther Raab, one of the 300 Jews who escaped from that notorious Nazi death camp. When the book became a movie in 1987, Rashke asked Raab to serve as its survivor-consultant. And when her name appeared in the film's credits, it changed her life.

Teachers found her and begged her to come talk to their students – which she did, for more than 20 years. In "Children's Letters to a Holocaust Survivor: Dear Esther" Rashke offers a sampling of the more than 2,000 missives Raab received, as well as the moving and powerful play he wrote based on them.

In the letters her young fans praise Raab's courage, sympathize with her pain, and struggle with the horror of what she witnessed ("How could the Nazis kill so many people they didn't even know?"). Some are inspired to new-found resiliency ("I don't have my own room, but you stayed in a haystack for months! So I'll survive.")

They also provide what Rashke calls "a chorus of hope," pledging to become living witnesses. "I promise to tell my kids," writes one. And another adds, "As future leaders of the world, we will make sure that the treatment of the Jews during World War II is not forgotten. Thank you for ... [sharing] your story with us." And thanks to Richard Rashke for sharing Esther's story with all of us.

Richard Rashke is also the author of "The Whistleblower's Dilemma: Snowden, Silkwood and Their Quest for the Truth," "The Killing of Karen



A local writer compiles letters that children wrote to a woman who escaped a Nazi death camp.

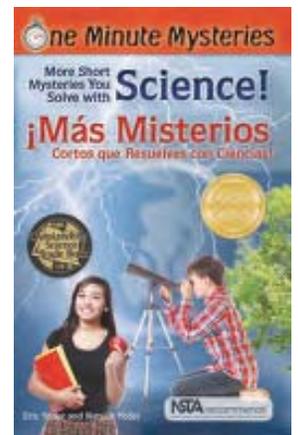
Silkwood," and "Useful Enemies: John Demjanjuk and America's Open-Door Policy for Nazi War Criminals."

## Science Sleuths

Matt is on a whale-watching trip, but there's not a baleen to be seen. Then the captain spots some large dots on sonar and assures him they'll be in luck soon. But wait. Don't fish stay under the water? How does the captain know that the whales will actually surface?\*

Local publisher Science, Naturally! is once again making learning fun with its new bilingual book for grades 4-8 called "One Minute Mysteries: More Short Mysteries You Solve with Science!" Match wits with the father-daughter writing team of Eric and Natalie Yoder, who have created science mysteries that take only a minute to read but challenge reading, reasoning, and language skills as well as knowledge of science. Now both Spanish- and native English-speakers can enjoy the bilingual edition. For more visit [www.scienceenaturally.com](http://www.scienceenaturally.com).

\*A whale is, of course, not a fish but a mammal and has to come to the surface to breathe. But you knew that already (naturally!).



Local publisher Science, Naturally! presents a new bilingual book of science mysteries.

## National Book Festival

More than 120 writers, poets, and illustrators will converge on the Walter E. Washington Convention Center on Saturday, Sept. 24, from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. for the 16th annual National Book Festival.

The Library of Congress event has attracted a