

Union Congregational Church Palm Sunday Service

Union Congregational Church will celebrate Palm Sunday April 5 at 10 a.m. (via ZOOM - see below.) Hear the Word presented by Rev. Joy Eng Matos.

Palms will be placed on the front doorstep, available and free to the community (as long as supplies last) on Palm Sunday morning. Feel free to stop by and pick one up.

Union Congregational Church is a place where Christ is taught, proclaimed, and lived in loving fellowship with others. Because of the recent concerns with the COVID-19 virus, we are worshipping and having our Bible Studies and church meetings via an online app called ZOOM. If you would like to participate, call the church or send an email to the number or email address below.

With the recent election and dedication of new officers and formation of new Spiritual Team leaders we are getting ready for the 125th year of our church's

HN Church Suspends Services Through End Of April

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Houghs Neck Congregational Church has suspended on-site church services at least through the end of April.

Those interested in taking part in virtual Sunday

ministry in Quincy. Our members believe God is leading us, His church in Quincy, and we are excited to see His plan for our future.

Want to learn more from the Word? Join us Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. (via ZOOM) as Pastor Joy leads "Victory Over the Darkness" This Bible study shares how to (1) Realize the power of your identity in Christ; (2) Free yourself from the burdens of your past; (3) Stand against the spiritual forces of this world; (4) Win the battle for your mind; and (5) Become the spiritual person you want to be. Anyone interested is welcome to join.

Union Congregational Church is a warm, friendly, neighborhood church located on the corner of Beach Street and Rawson Road in Wollaston. All are welcome. Join us for worship.

For more information, call 617-479-6661, send an email to UccWoll@gmail.com or visit the website at www.UnionCongWoll.org

services of worship should contact Pastor Steve Vandergrift at 617-479-8778.

Be wise, be safe, and keep in touch with one another, particularly our most vulnerable.

'The Bridge Home' By Padma Venkatraman

'The Fine Print' Book Review

By LAURIE HIGGINS

As soon as I turned the last page, I thought, what a beautiful love letter!

"The Bridge Home" is a middle grade novel set in present day India. It is a harsh world for children. This might sound like I am contradicting myself. How can the harsh reality of children living in poverty and danger in India equate to a beautiful love story? That is the brilliance of Padma Venkatraman and the way she tells this story of two young sisters making their way alone. Venkatraman tells their story with honesty, hope, faith, and yes, the beauty of love.

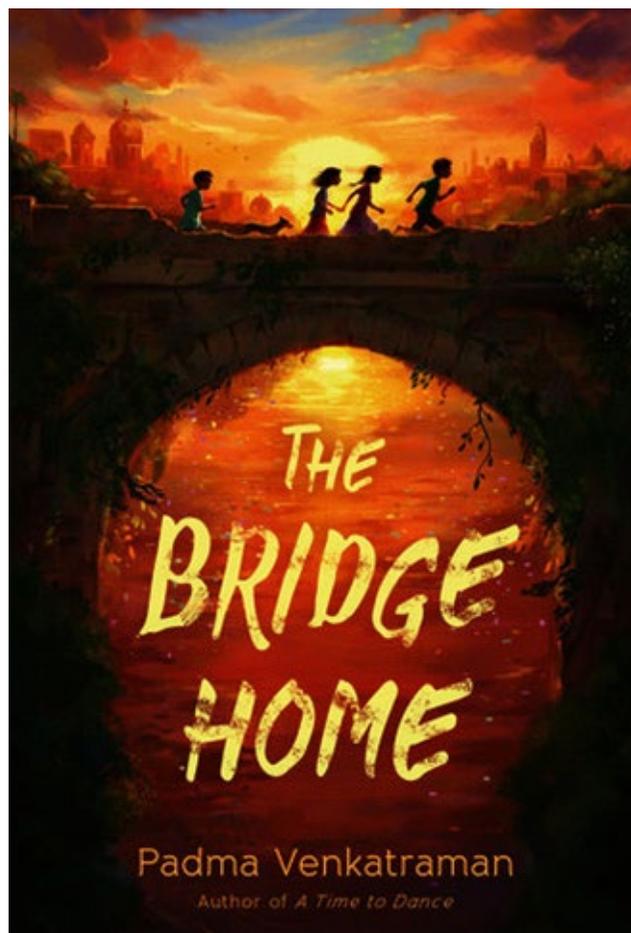
Viji has dreamed of being a teacher. However, she and her older sister Rukku live an impoverished, impossible life. Their mother is frail, their father abusive. One day Viji, out of desperation, takes Rukku and escapes to the city with only a small amount of food, a change of clothes and the money her mother secretly saved as a birthday gift. This is a huge risk, not only because they are young girls in a dangerous world, but Rukku has special needs. She sees the world for all that is good and beautiful. Viji must not only watch out for herself but also her sister. They are scared and

alone as they navigate the large, noisy, dirty city, but together, Viji and Rukku move bravely forward, with a positive attitude.

Soon they meet Arul and Muthu. Through their burgeoning friendship, Viji and Rukku learn what truly makes a home and family. They make their way by picking through the trash for recyclable items to sell. Within this dark world, there is also light. The four friends enjoy "sweets," find treasures, and tell each other stories. However, life continues to be dangerous, and they soon need help, the help that only an adult can provide. But how can they trust an adult when all the adults in their lives have so far let them down?

Venkatraman shines a light on the harsh world that is a reality for so many children in India. She does this with grace and dignity. Many children in this country live in fear and danger. While she doesn't shy away from these realities, Venkatraman leaves the reader with hope.

Venkatraman also highlights organizations in India working hard to provide safety for children living on the streets. While this story is a work of fiction, it is based on her experiences while growing up in India.



Explaining how her mother worked closely with organizations helping children, Venkatraman shares information about the resources that are available to the children of India. She also encourages all to learn more about not only the sadness but also the beauty of her home country.

This story opens with Viji writing a letter on "paper remade from wilted, dirty, hopeless litter that had been rescued, scrubbed, clean, and reshaped." Through her

journey, Viji discovers much about herself while teaching the reader how we all can be transformed by our circumstances for better or worse. This story, her story, is a beautiful love letter, a love letter to spark hope and recovery.

Don't forget to read...The Fine Print.

Padma Venkatraman lives in Rhode Island where she has worked as chief scientist on oceanographic ships. She is also the author of three other novels.

Fine Print Book Review: 'Sparrow' – A Novel By Mary Cecilia Jackson

By BETH VACCA

"There are two kinds of people on the planet. Hunters and prey ... you can't escape what you are, what you've always been." Quoted from the prologue of "Sparrow" a novel by Mary Cecilia Jackson. A tragic story of the cycle of abuse.

I began reading this novel because I was drawn in by the athletic ballerina on the cover. I had no idea of the ride I was in for.

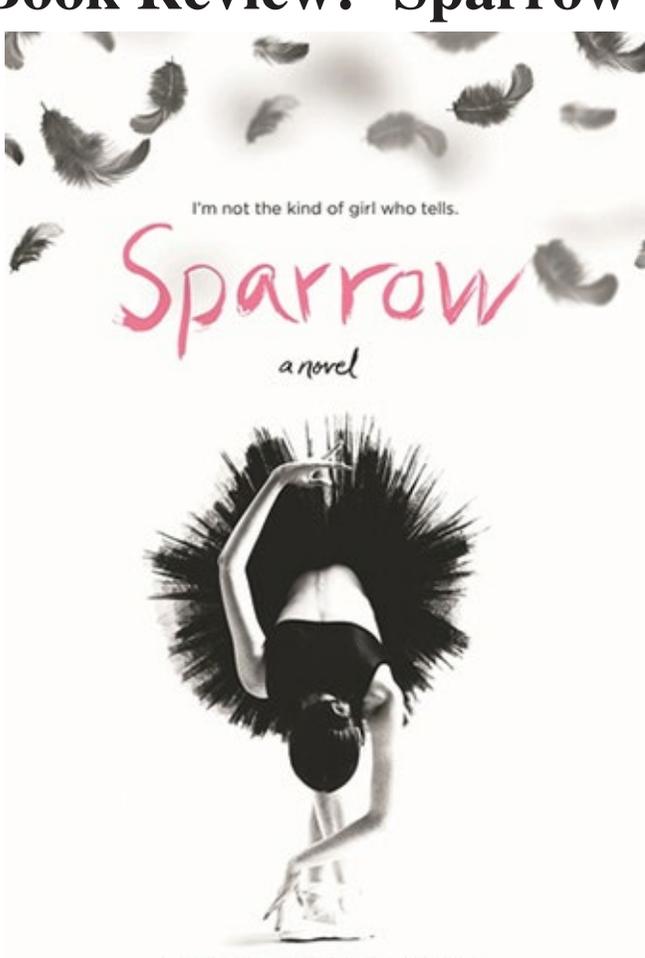
Savannah Darcy Rose, "Sparrow" to her friends and family, is a talented ballerina, a good friend and a keeper of secrets. She's been taught from a young age. Never tell.

When Sparrow's mother dies she thinks she is finally safe. She'll just bury her secrets. Her fear.

Years later Sparrow learns that burying feelings doesn't always work out the way we want. As Jackson quotes, "What's past is prologue", William Shakespeare, The Tempest.

It turns out that Sparrow is still her mother's daughter. An excellent secret keeper. Still prey. Still unable to escape.

Sparrow's story is not a heartwarming story. It is about fear, anger, hatred, unforgiveness and denial. Her



story is a tragic and stark reminder of the evil present in our world and the expected and unexpected places where it can be found.

In Sparrow's story we are shown that life is hard. We know this. There are so many circumstances we have no control over. We are shown through Spar-

row however, that although we may lack control, we do have choices. We have a voice. And our voice matters.

This story is also told in the voice of Lucas, Sparrow's friend and dance partner.

Lucas knows the girl whom he adores is in a bad

relationship, but she won't talk. She never does.

Lucas must deal with the guilt of having not spoken when he had the chance, with the injustice of the guilty not being punished and the loss of a friendship. With the recent death of his father from a terminal illness Lucas is filled with so much anger that he cannot control. He begins to lash out at those he loves most. He begins to self-destruct, and his family is afraid for his future.

Jackson's novel highlights the dangers of secrets. The dangers in not dealing with our emotions and how our actions never only affect just ourselves. Jackson re-

minds us that "... you can't be brave until you're frightened out of your wits and still do the thing that needs doing."

Leaning on family. Asking for help. Exposing our insecurities. Admitting our flaws. Acknowledging that our lives are messy. Understanding that "brave" doesn't always look like what we might think. And seeing our unselfish acts as not only benefiting others, but as a chance to grow. All things that need doing.

Jackson's love for the arts shines through in her writing. Her love for the ballet, classical music and Shakespeare woven throughout her novel brings together

tragedy and hope in such a way that has made me a fan who wants more.

Especially more Lucas. A talented, strong, masculine and typically teenaged boy who unabashedly loves ballet. A boy who learns that forgiveness is for yourself even more so than it is for someone else. A boy who understands that if you love someone it might mean letting them go. A boy who understands what it means to be a friend.

I make house calls!



Interior decorating, home décor sewing, downsizing/decluttering, home staging, decorating seminars

Secretary of the Interior

Creative solutions at reasonable rates
Call Barbara at 617-921-6033
www.sec-interior.com

JOAN'S OLYMPIC GYM
Gymnastics & Dance School

NOW ACCEPTING NEW REGISTRATION

Call for a **FREE Trial Lesson**
Ages 2 yrs thru teens

Voted #1 On The South Shore

781-843-9624

An excellent educational environment for your child.
197 Quincy Ave. Braintree
joansolympicgym.com