

and a recent law-school graduate, began volunteering as an interpreter for the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) following the 2004 Supreme Court decision stating that Guantánamo prisoners had to be allowed access to U.S. courts. She first visited the base in January 2006 and met prisoners with widely diverse backgrounds, from a 22-year-old picked up in Pakistan, probably by bounty hunters, and turned over to U.S. forces to detainee #1009, Guantánamo's oldest prisoner, "an illiterate old man from the mountains of Afghanistan." Acknowledging that she had no access to the 14 "high value" detainees with obvious ties to the Taliban, Khan interviews many whose incarceration appears dubious at best. Each has a story of being savagely beaten, deprived of sleep, sexually abused, left in solitary confinement for months, exposed to extreme cold and constant noise—all with no opportunity to prove their innocence. Stunning details all but hidden from the daily news reports may bring American readers to conclude, as has Khan, that "my government has duped me."
—*Deborah Donovan*

Prehistory: The Making of the Human Mind.

By Colin Renfrew.

June 2008. 240p. Modern Library, \$23 (9780679640974). 930.1.

Prominent archaeologist Renfrew reviews the field's history and poses questions about its future in this précis. Summarizing archaeology's beginnings, he notes how speculations gave way to factual foundations through the application of systematic and scientific methods of excavation and interpretation. Nothing has been more important than dating with radioactive elements, which, joined by genetic analysis, permits the establishment of a general chronology of human origins. The most profound question to arise from that achievement, Renfrew stresses, is how to explain "the sapient paradox," the lag of 100,000 years between the emergence of anatomically modern human beings and the earliest material traces of symbolic thought. The question in turn opens avenues of contemporary research with jargonlike names such as material engagement theory and cognitive archaeology, the meanings of which Renfrew delivers with estimable clarity. Beefing up such terms with discoveries in exciting archaeological regions such as Central America, Renfrew projects a vibrancy to the contemporary study of the human past prior to literacy that should attract to the subject readers with an intrinsic or potentially professional interest.
—*Gilbert Taylor*

Return to the Middle Kingdom: One Family, Three Revolutionaries, and the Birth of Modern China.

By Yuan-Tsung Chen.

June 2008. 464p. Sterling/Union Square, \$24.95 (9781402756979). 951.05.

Chen traces her husband's family back

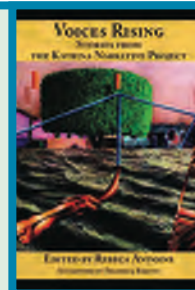
★ Voices Rising: Stories from the Katrina Narrative Project.

Ed. by Rebeca Antoine.

July 2008. 250p. Univ. of New Orleans, \$12.95 (9780972814362). 976.3.

In this astonishing collection of personal narratives, readers come face-to-face with the stark reality wrought by Hurricane Katrina and the failure of the federal levees. Many books have been written about the tragedy, but the work done by University of New Orleans students to collect these survivors' narratives in 2005 is groundbreaking. Every aspect of the post-Katrina New Orleans experience is present here, from areas as divergent as the I-10 overpass, the French Quarter, and shelters across the South. The rescuers and rescued have equal voices and share memories poignant and startling. Perhaps most revealing is the way evacuees were greeted elsewhere. From the Jefferson Parish deputies who were "very sinister" to people at the Oklahoma border who held signs of welcome, the reaction of various communities to the national nightmare is a snapshot of the country's best and worst. Cutting, caustic, and riveting from start to finish, this collection does not shy away from presenting the agonies that often go unrecorded in the aftermath of a sudden disaster. Miles away from academic analysis, this is American social history from the ground up and staggering in its significance.
—*Colleen Mondor*

YA/C: Mandatory for any report on Katrina or the City of New Orleans; it will resonate far more than standard histories of the event. CM.



through several generations, spanning 150 years of Chinese history. Her husband's grandfather, Joseph, was born a peasant but participated in the Taiping Rebellion. After the rebellion failed, Joseph eventually made his way to Trinidad, where he raised his family, including son Eugene, who got his start as a lawyer. In 1912, Eugene answered Sun Yatsen's call for Chinese expatriates to return home to effect change in the government, journeying to Peking and beginning a new career as a muckraking journalist intent on challenging the corrupt new government. Eugene's efforts eventually landed him in jail, but he stayed true to his ideals and passed them on to his son Jack, who accompanied his father on a trip to Russia. Jack became a political cartoonist and allied with Mao against Chiang Kai-shek's anti-Communist government, but he soon soured on the leader when he saw the direction the Cultural Revolution took. Anyone with an interest in Chinese politics and history will find this an informative and engaging read.
—*Kristine Huntley*

YA/C: Will appeal to students studying Chinese language and history. KH.

A Summer in Gascony: Discovering the Other South of France.

By Martin Calder.

June 2008. 256p. Nicholas Brealey, paper, \$19.95 (9781857885064). 914.4.

British student Calder answers an ad for summer farm help in Péguilhan in southwest France's famed Gascony. There he learns the realities of agricultural life in the employ of a family who own a country inn catering to tourists. Gascony is one of France's lesser-known provinces, but its rocky fastnesses have produced luminaries such as Cyrano de Bergerac, D'Artagnan,

and Montesquieu. Independently minded Gascons consider themselves only loosely associated with the rest of France and treat Parisians with suspicion. Originally peopled with barbarian tribes, Gascony absorbed imperial Roman culture only slowly. Gascony boasts a rich culinary tradition of ducks, geese, foie gras, cassoulet, and fine wines. Calder throws his energy into watering tomatoes and learns how to butcher sheep. He masters the art of grilling duck breasts to perfection for the inn's guests. Calder's objective eye never mocks the rustic Gascons, his obvious affection for them shunning shallow sentimentality.
—*Mark Knoblauch*

Walking Tractor and Other Country Tales.

By Bruce Patterson.

June 2008. 288p. Heyday, paper, \$14.95 (9781597140829). 979.4.

Patterson has worked myriad offbeat jobs, from walking tractor, to setting choke, to fleece-stomping, to weed-whacking, to tending hook. Don't worry if all this sounds like gibberish; he explains it all in this down-home, folksy, thoroughly engaging memoir. Like John Steinbeck, Patterson, a truly gifted storyteller, writes about ordinary people—rural people, mostly, California folk who work with their hands and have wonderful stories to tell. A Vietnam vet, Patterson took up writing in the early 1970s and has a style that appears both effortless and carefully crafted—that is, every word seems deliberately chosen, but the choices seem to have been made instinctively. The prose flows like a gentle river, and the people in the stories are as comfortable as old friends. A pleasant feel-good book, full of charm.
—*David Pitt*

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