

Fellow Verbivores: We had a real treat this month meeting at Ann's beautiful home in Castle Rock. We all traveled a bit farther than usual, but Elaine gets the prize for farthest travel - all the way from Arkansas. And Jan gets the prize for fortitude - we're all so thankful that she wasn't hurt worse in the car accident and so impressed with her perseverance. It was a beautiful day, beautiful views, beautiful friendships to nurture! Ann had veggies and dip available before our house tour, and she served delicious chicken salad sandwiches on croissants accompanied by a wonderful fruit salad. Our dessert of pistachio and raspberry semifreddo was delectable and perfect on this warm summer day.

Ann had asked a relative (maybe a niece?) for book suggestions and her only criterion was that everyone would enjoy it. The result was *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi, and it certainly lived up to its mandate. Everyone loved it even though fearful tears were shed. We think (hope) there will be a movie soon. Allen Levi has an interesting past: degrees in English and law followed by a masters in writing from a university in Scotland. Then back to the US and practicing law, then writing and performing music and finally focusing on writing. *Theo* is his first novel.

There were various themes throughout the book, and they were well blended. Sadness, beauty, change were all addressed, but the plot of the book flowed "like a river." This was definitely on point because *Theo's* love of rivers was well presented throughout. Some interesting questions led to good discussions. Why didn't *Theo* hand out (bestow) the portraits in one big ceremony? He wanted to get to know each recipient, look them in the eye and hear their story. If a sequel were written, which character would it focus on? Many were suggested including Simone, Ellen, Willa, Kendrick and Lamisha. Tony was also a favorite character, and Ann went so far as to place a bottle of port from Portugal on the table along with two glasses, just as Tony and *Theo* enjoyed their port together routinely. Ann also found a feather which she placed on the table in reference to Ellen's featherwood.

We also discussed if *Theo* was an angel. He was definitely very kind and shared his kindness with everyone. Allen Levi makes a suggestion to all the Verbivores who loved his book: do something kind for someone in the next month or two and tell NO ONE! Simply register for yourself how your heart responds. "For anything to be good, truly good, there must be love in it."

Our August luncheon will be held at Maggie's, and the date will be Wednesday, Aug. 12. We will be discussing *The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans. And we all have a fun assignment to do before the gathering: write a letter to someone (a friend, relative, neighbor, community leader, the author, really anyone) and bring it with you to Maggie's before you send it. See you all then. Enjoy summer. Pray for rain.

*Laura*