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20th-century Catholic writers: Thomas Merton, Flannery O'Connor, Dorothy Day and Walter Percy. And he states, "If Day is a reformer and Merton a rebel, Percy is a seeker" (and O'Connor is the freak). It turns out that their striving for holiness was no more "saintly" than our own. One of the beauties of this book is that it provides a lengthy list of other titles, in both fiction and spirituality, for the reader to enjoy.



• **High Tide in Tucson: Essays from Now or Never** by Barbara Kingsolver (1995, Harper Collins, 288 pp., \$13): "I enter the writing of a book the same way I enter a cathedral, with my eyes on heaven and hoping I'm worthy," the author explains in her preface. The essays examine some controversial issues yet are still timely 10 years after their original publication. Kingsolver also has a delicious eye for nature, and those essays are the most satisfying.

POETRY



• **Praying Through Poetry: Hope for Violent Times** by Peggy Rosenthal (2003, St. Anthony Messenger Press, 79 pp., \$7.95): If you take a re-

treat this summer, this tiny book is perfect. It's introspective, but not too challenging. Local retreat director Peggy Rosenthal gives the reader all the tools needed to derive personal meaning from the 10 poems she examines in detail. Again, the beauty of her style is that she provides lots of titles and poets to pursue on our own. Don't neglect it because you haven't the time for an organized retreat.



• **Sailing Alone Around the Room** by Billy Collins (2002, Random House, 192 pp., 13.95): Collins was the poet laureate of the United States from 2001-03. He lives where we live and writes about the things we live with: the neighbor's dog, students, a snow day, music, compost. As these are not typical topics for poetic discourse, Collins does not approach them in the usual way. Some serious issues are reduced to near absurdity, and the seemingly trivial elements of life are revealed in their awesome meaning. While not overtly faith-full, Collins reaffirms the value of life and the richness of creation.

Palma is an adjunct English instructor at Nazareth and Monroe Community colleges in Rochester. She earned an MS in education at Nazareth College and an MA in theology at St. Bernard's Institute.

USCCB reviews videos

NEW YORK (CNS) — The following are video capsule reviews from the Office for Film & Broadcasting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

'THE LAST SAMURAI' (2003)

An embittered Civil War veteran (Tom Cruise), retained by the emperor of Japan to train a newly formed conscript army in the ways of modern warfare, finds himself torn between duty and honor when he befriends the man he has been hired to destroy, a Samurai general (Ken Watanabe) who is leading a band of renegade warriors against the imperial forces in an attempt to preserve their fading traditions and halt the encroachment of Westernization into the country. Lavishly shot with painstaking attention to historical detail, director Edward Zwick's epic 19th-century costume drama is, at its center, an intimate tale of one man's search to reclaim his soul; unfortunately, despite lofty platitudes about honor, the film's romanticized portrayal of the samurai's militaristic lifestyle results in an at times exalted view of war. Strong battlefield violence. The

USCCB classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

'PETER PAN' (2003)

Enchanting live-action version of J.M. Barrie's timeless fairy tale about a precocious British girl (Rachel Hurd-Wood) who travels with the title imp (Jeremy Sumpter), a mischievous boy who refuses to grow up, to Neverland, a magical realm of eternal adults-free fun where they must cross swords with the black-hearted Captain Hook (Jason Isaacs), who is obsessed with exacting revenge on Peter. Directed by P.J. Hogan and combining sumptuous storybook visuals and timeless themes about love and lost childhood, there is little in this Peter to pan. Some action violence and a few frightening images. The USCCB classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. MPAA rating, PG — parental guidance suggested.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For hundreds more movie reviews, visit the *Catholic Courier's* Web site at www.catholiccourier.com. Click on the "Faith & Family" tab; then select "Movie Reviews" at left.

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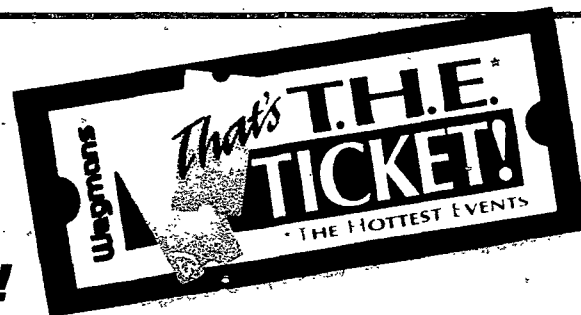
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