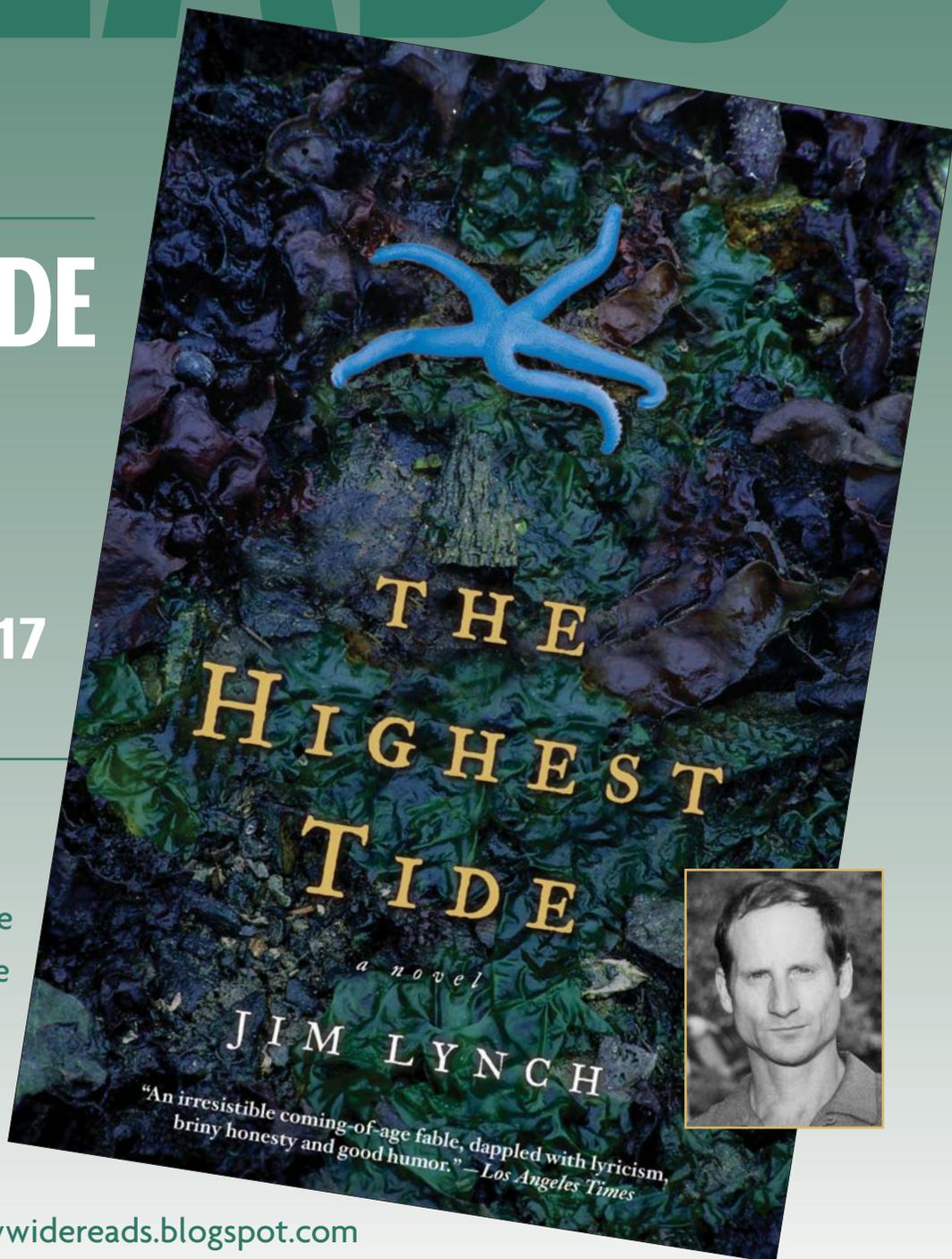


# CITYWIDE

JOIN A  
**CITYWIDE  
BOOK  
CLUB**

**APRIL 12-MAY 17  
2008**

For free public book discussion groups and other events, check the Santa Monica Citywide Reads web site at [www.smpl.org/cwr](http://www.smpl.org/cwr), call 310.458.8600, or visit our blog at [www.santamonicacitywidereads.blogspot.com](http://www.santamonicacitywidereads.blogspot.com)



## CITYWIDE READS

## MAYORAL WELCOME

Welcome to the sixth annual Santa Monica CITYWIDE READS program. This community reading program encourages people who live, work in, or visit Santa Monica to read and discuss the same book at the same time in discussion groups and other events held around the city.

This year's book, *The Highest Tide* by Jim Lynch, follows thirteen-year-old Miles O'Malley during a transformative summer, as he navigates the mysteries of his beloved Puget Sound surroundings and his relationships with family and friends. This novel is a fitting selection for Santa Monica because of its beach community setting, vivid descriptions of marine life, and green themes. A coming-of-age story with appeal for young and older readers alike, it is certain to provide a framework for dialogue in our community.

*The Highest Tide* is available from the Santa Monica Public Library or your local bookstore. Please plan on attending one of the many free public events being held around the city from April 12 to May 17.

I hope that your participation in CITYWIDE READS is a rewarding experience that brings us together as a community through literature.



Herb Katz  
Mayor, City of Santa Monica

## JIM LYNCH

"... part of what I set out to do is to capture that powerful humbling feeling that comes over most people while walking along an ocean or a tidal flat."

Jim Lynch [Bookreporter.com interview, 9/9/05]



Jim Lynch was born in 1961 in Seattle, Washington, and grew up by a nearby lake. He explored Puget Sound during weekend trips aboard his parents' sailboat. He worked in Alaska and Yellowstone, and fell in love with the outdoors and mountaineering.

He received a degree in creative writing and journalism from the University of Washington in 1985. His first journalism job was in Alaska. Mr. Lynch later worked in Washington, D.C.,

writing columns and short fiction for literary magazines. He returned to the Northwest, writing for *The Seattle Times* and *The Oregonian*. While at *The Oregonian*, he was the Puget Sound reporter. Mr. Lynch has won several national journalism awards, including the George Polk Award, the H.L. Mencken Award for Investigative Reporting, and the Livingston Young Journalist Award.

Since he was a teenager, Jim Lynch had wanted to write a novel, and he accomplished that goal with his critically-acclaimed debut, *The Highest Tide*. Now a full-time writer, Mr. Lynch relies upon a daily regimen of running and listening to jazz music to keep the words flowing.

Mr. Lynch lives near Olympia, Washington, with his wife and daughter. Currently, he is working on a novel set in Washington, along the United States and Canada border.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1: Was Miles a likeable and/or a convincing narrator?
- 2: What did the character Phelps and his relationship with Miles add to the story?
- 3: How would you characterize the relationship between Miles and Florence?
- 4: How did you feel about Angie? Miles' parents? Did your feelings change over the course of the book?
- 5: What is stronger in the novel – plot or characters?
- 6: Why do you think Miles was always rescuing (or trying to rescue) people or sea creatures?
- 7: How does the author reinforce the metaphor of and mystery of the ocean?
- 8: How did Miles change over the course of the summer?
- 9: How would you characterize the ending of the novel?
- 10: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the book?
- 11: The film rights to *The Highest Tide* have been sold. Do you think this book will translate well to the big screen? Who would you cast in the main roles?

## READ-ALIKES

***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon**

This book features another precocious and unique child protagonist on a journey of discovery. Christopher, a gifted and autistic fifteen-year-old, investigates the murder of his neighbor's dog.

***Prodigal Summer* by Barbara Kingsolver**

An event-filled summer, environmental themes, and lush prose make this a standout novel. Three strong women have interconnected lives in a vibrant tale set in rural Appalachia.

***Snow Falling on Cedars* by David Guterson**

Looking for another novel set in the beautiful Pacific Northwest? Guterson's quiet story of a town in the 1950s, still reeling from the effects of internment camps, is a page-turner.

***Hoot* by Carl Hiaasen**

A young adult novel that will appeal to readers of all ages, this is the story of a boy who attempts to save owls from a construction project. Themes of environmentalism and friendship, along with a spunky adolescent male character, will speak to fans of *The Highest Tide*.

***Peace Like a River* by Leif Enger**

A strong sense of a place and a remarkable eleven-year-old narrator power this wondrous tale. In 1962, a midwestern family tries to find the narrator's older brother, who escaped from jail after killing two teenagers who harassed the family.

## THE HIGHEST TIDE

*"To adequately tell Miles' tale and crawl inside his marine-obsessed character, I spent lots of time on the water and the flats, watching, listening, learning."*

Jim Lynch [Original Essay at [www.powells.com](http://www.powells.com)]

Published by Bloomsbury in 2005, Jim Lynch's *The Highest Tide* received critical praise for its lyrical writing, sense of wonder about the natural world and its moving story. The protagonist, Miles O' Malley, is an endearingly quirky thirteen-year-old boy with a passion for sea life. Driven to explore the waters outside his home at night due to insomnia, he discovers a rare sea creature. It turns out to be a giant squid and causes a huge stir in marine biology circles as well as in Miles' small Puget Sound community. *The Highest Tide* follows Miles during the transformative summer of his discovery, trying to balance his newfound notoriety with the unraveling of his parents' marriage, his crush on the troubled girl next door, and his relationship with his octogenarian best friend.

The author's goal was for Miles to have an odyssey that leads him to a deeper understanding about himself and the greater world. The idea for the novel came to Jim Lynch after a rare deep sea fish washed up on a beach near his house. Intrigued, he later learned that children often make these exotic discoveries.

Jim Lynch's extensive knowledge of and passion for the marine setting are evident in the green themes of the novel. Though he doesn't consider himself an environmental activist, he believes that we need to pay attention to our environment, and the more knowledge we have, the less likely we are to do it harm. Mr. Lynch balances the weighty themes of coming of age, loss, and mental illness with heart-touching humor. At the book's conclusion, the reader will have witnessed changes both in Miles and the coastline that he adores.

Among its many prizes, *The Highest Tide* was a YALSA Best Book for Young Adults by the Young Adults Library Services Association in 2006, a Borders Original Voices book, and a BookSense pick. Film rights were purchased by the actor, Fisher Stevens, who narrated the novel in its audiobook format.

## RESOURCES

- Jim Lynch's website, [www.thehighesttide.com](http://www.thehighesttide.com)  
The author's website has questions and answers, news about marine life, and an opportunity to email the author.
- Puget Sound Online, [www.psat.wa.gov/About\\_Sound/AboutPS.htm](http://www.psat.wa.gov/About_Sound/AboutPS.htm)  
Find extensive information and photographs of Miles' beloved Puget Sound. The Puget Sound Partnership, comprised of citizens, governments, tribes, scientists and businesses, produces the site.
- Puget Sound Marine Life Photos, <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/waterres/marine/photos.htm>  
Miles would love this online virtual photo album of marine life found in Puget Sound by the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks.
- *Silent Spring*, by Rachel Carson  
Credited with launching the environmental movement, Miles' heroine definitely ruffled some feathers with her exposé on the effects of pesticides. This was Rachel Carson's most famous book and remains powerful evidence of why her legacy lives on.
- *The Gentle Subversive: Rachel Carson, Silent Spring, and the Rise of the Environmental Movement*, Mark H. Lytle, 2007, Oxford University Press.  
This biography chronicles Rachel Carson's life and her rise as a conservationist, her contributions to the field, and how she accomplished all of it during a time of gender prejudice. It contains fascinating information about a fascinating woman.
- Rachel Carson, [www.rachelcarson.org](http://www.rachelcarson.org)  
Linda Lear, a biographer of Rachel Carson's, details her subject's life and legacy with information and photographs.
- Heal the Bay, [www.healthebay.org](http://www.healthebay.org)  
This local nonprofit works hard to make the Santa Monica Bay safe and clean through advocacy, education, and research.

## RELATED PROGRAMS

### Cover Me! Teen Book Cover Art Contest March 15 to April 30

Ever wished you could design your own book cover? Here's your chance. Design a cover for *The Highest Tide* by Wednesday, April 30 and submit your design to the Youth Reference Desk at the Main Library. Entry forms are available on March 15. Winners will be invited to a private "meet and greet" with the author, Jim Lynch. Participants MUST be teenagers, ages 13 to 18 or in grades 8 to 12.

### CultureJam: Around the World in 4 Hours Saturday, April 12 from 12 to 4 pm

Main Library, North Entry Courtyard

Kick off Citywide Reads and National Library Week with a tour around the world! "Travel" to different regions and celebrate cultures through food, dance, cultural performances and art. Stop by the Citywide Reads booth. Brought to you by the Santa Monica Teen Advisory Council.

### Santa Monica Festival Saturday, May 10

Clover Park, 2600 Ocean Park Blvd.

Stop by the Library booth and chat about the book and the Citywide Reads program.

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOR SUPPORTING BOOK DISCUSSIONS AND PROGRAMS:



THANKS TO THE FRIENDS OF THE SANTA MONICA PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE PRINTING OF THIS RESOURCE GUIDE.

# SPECIAL CITYWIDE READS EVENTS Free admission. Seating is on a first-arrival basis.

## Exploring Our Environment with Jean-Michel Cousteau

**Sunday, April 13 at 2 pm** | Main Library, MLK Jr. Auditorium

Ocean explorer and educator Jean-Michel Cousteau addresses the issues of environmental education, ocean conservation, and sustainable living. Hands-on demonstrations and informational booths, sponsored by the Ocean Futures Society, Catalina Environmental Leadership Program, and Ambassadors of the Environment, will be available after the presentation.

## Flavors of the Sea with the Too Hot Tamales

**Sunday, April 20 at 2 pm** | Main Library, North Entry Courtyard

Border Grill and Ciudad proprietors, Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feiniger, better known as the Too Hot Tamales, present a *Highest Tide*-themed, seafood cooking demonstration.

## Getting to Know Rachel Carson

**Tuesday, April 22 at 6:30pm** | Main Library, Multipurpose Room

The Santa Monica Pier Aquarium's Tara Treiber presents an introduction to pioneering writer, scientist and ecologist, Rachel Carson, the heroine of *The Highest Tide's* Miles O'Malley.

## City-TV Call-In Show

**Wednesday, April 23 at 6:30pm**

Tune in to Channel 16 for a live, moderated discussion of *The Highest Tide*.

## The Santa Monica Bay

**Thursday, April 24 at 7 pm** | Main Library, Multipurpose Room

Learn about the unique ecology of the Santa Monica Bay. This Heal the Bay presentation focuses on the causes and consequences of ocean pollution. The audience will discover what they can do to decrease their impact on the Santa Monica Bay.

## Documentary Screening: Deep Blue

**Tue, April 29, 7 pm & Sat, May 3, 3:30 pm** | Main Library, MLK Jr. Auditorium

You have two chances to check out this breathtaking BBC documentary on underwater and seaside life. The April 29 screening will feature closed captions for the hearing impaired.

## Paul Tracey's Little Blue Planet

**Thursday, May 1 at 7 pm** | Main Library, Children's Activity Room

Accompanied by an eight-foot globe, entertainer Paul Tracey encourages children to care for our planet by using music to draw attention to saving forests, inter-cultural understanding, and endangered species.

## An Afternoon with Jim Lynch

**Saturday, May 17 at 3 pm** | Santa Monica College, Pavilion, 1900 Pico Blvd.

The award-winning author of *The Highest Tide* presents a reading and discussion, followed by a book signing. Co-sponsored by the Santa Monica College Associates.

## BOOK DISCUSSIONS

*Trained volunteer facilitators lead these free public book discussions. No registration is required.*

**Monday, April 14, 12 pm** | Main Library, Multipurpose Room\*

**Wednesday, April 16, 7 pm** | Montana Ave. Branch\*, 1704 Montana Ave.

**Friday, April 25, 3 pm** | Cafe Bolivar, 1741 Ocean Park Boulevard

**Saturday, May 3, 11 am** | Ocean Park Branch\*, 2601 Main Street

**Sunday, May 4, 2 pm** | Joslyn Park Craft Room\*, 633 Kensington Road

**Thursday, May 8, 6:30 pm** | Santa Monica Aquarium\*

1600 Ocean Front Walk. Below the Pier's Carousel. Aquarium will be open after its regular hours to host the discussion.

**Saturday, May 10, 1 pm** | Fairview Branch Library\*, 2101 Ocean Park Blvd.

**Monday, May 12, 7 pm** | Main Library, Multipurpose Room\*

**Tuesday, May 13, 7:30 pm** | Barnes & Noble, 1201 3rd Street Promenade

**Friday, May 16, 2 pm** | It's A Grind, 602 Santa Monica Boulevard

\*City of Santa Monica facilities are wheelchair accessible. To request a disability-related accommodation, call Library Administration 310-458-8606 (TDD 395-8499) at least 3 working days (Monday-Friday) in advance.



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DATED MATERIAL