A TALE FOR THE TIME BEING

a novel by Ruth Ozeki
MEET RUTH OZEKI

NOVELIST, FILMMAKER, AND ZEN BUDDHIST PRIEST VISITS GRAND JUNCTION MARCH 1

Ruth Ozeki is the daughter of a Japanese mother and a Caucasian-American father, born and raised in Connecticut. She attended Smith College and graduated with degrees in English Literature and Asian Studies. She received a Japanese Ministry of Education Fellowship to pursue graduate work in classical Japanese literature at Nara Women's University. During her years in Japan, she worked in Kyoto's entertainment or “water” district as a bar hostess, studied Noh drama and mask carving, founded a language school, and taught on the faculty of Kyoto Sangyo University.

In 1985, Ozeki returned to New York City and started a film career as an art director, designing sets and props for low-budget horror movies. She then switched to television production, directing documentaries for Japanese TV. In 1994, she started making her own films. Body of Correspondence (1994) won the New Visions Award at the San Francisco Film Festival and was broadcast on PBS. Halving the Bones (1995), an award-winning autobiographical film, was screened at the Sundance Film Festival, the Museum of Modern Art, the Montreal World Film Festival and the Margaret Mead Film Festival, among others.

Her first novel, My Year of Meats, was published in 1998 by Viking Penguin. A sexy, poignant, funny tale about global meat and media production, My Year of Meats tells the story of Jane and Akiko, two women on opposite sides of the planet, whose lives are connected by a TV cooking show. Selected as a New York Times Notable Book, My Year of Meats was translated into eleven languages and published in fourteen countries. It won the Kiriyama Pacific Rim Award, the Imus/Barnes and Noble American Book Award, and a Jury Prize of the World Cookbook Awards in Versailles.

Ozeki's second novel, All Over Creation (Viking Penguin, 2003) shifts the focus from meat to potatoes in a story of a family farmer, his prodigal daughter, an itinerant gang of environmental activists and a New Age corporate spin doctor whose lives and interests collide in Liberty Falls, Idaho.

Again a New York Times Notable Book, All Over Creation is the recipient of a 2004 American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation, as well as the WILLA Literary Award for Contemporary Fiction.

In 2006, Ozeki received an honorary doctorate from Smith College. She has been a contributor to the New York Times op-ed page, and her essays and short fiction have appeared in a number of anthologies. She frequently speaks at colleges and universities.

Ozeki serves on the Creative Advisory Council of Hedgebrook, a women’s writing retreat center on Whidbey Island, Washington, and on the Advisory Editorial Board of The Asian American Literary Review. Starting in 2015, she will be the Elizabeth Drew Professor of Creative Writing at Smith College.

A longtime meditator, Ozeki was ordained as a Soto Zen priest in 2010. She is affiliated with the Brooklyn Zen Center and the Everyday Zen Foundation, and is the editor of the Everyday Zen website. She is married to the German-Canadian environmental artist Oliver Kellhammer. A dual citizen of Canada and the United States, she splits her time between Cortes Island, British Columbia, and New York City.

THE BOOK

Ruth Ozeki’s novel, A Tale For the Time Being, begins with a classic premise — found treasure. Instead of gold or jewels, the treasure in this book takes the form of a Hello Kitty lunchbox. Inside it are an old watch, a packet of letters, and a diary.

This unassuming parcel washes up on the shore of a small island in the Pacific Northwest. There it is found by Ruth, a woman who bears more than a passing resemblance to Ruth Ozeki herself. This Ruth is a writer too, but on this adventure she takes on the role of a reader. The diary she finds turns out to be that of a teenage girl living in Japan. Her name is Nao.

Being a teenager is never an easy proposition, but Nao is having a particularly hard time. Her family has returned to Japan after living for an extended time in the United States. Nao is finding it hard to reconnect with the culture of Japan, she is bullied and ostracized at school, and to make matters worse, her unemployed father is suicidally depressed. Her diary is her refuge as she pours her story into it, imagining somewhere a potential reader, a friend — Ruth, me, you.

As we read Nao’s diary and get to know this bright and engaging young woman, a troubling question looms: If the diary is here, where is Nao? The answer to that question is as surprising as it is fitting. Along the way this novel touches on language, the environment, history, war, Zen, feminism, philosophy and, just for good measure, a dash of magical realism as well.

Told in chapters that alternate between Ruth’s point of view and Nao’s, A Tale For the Time Being entwines their two worlds in ways that grow both increasingly complex and increasingly beautiful.

A diary may be a fairly ordinary thing, but in the hands of Ozeki it becomes extraordinary.
This year’s One Book event lineup is packed with programs that bring *A Tale For The Time Being* to life. From unpredictable weather to spiritual exploration, each program explores a theme of the book and adds depth and understanding to this year’s selection.

Learn about Japanese art forms – including anime, manga, origami, and calligraphy – from artists Charles Hardy, Mitzi Sato-Wiuff, and Rhiannon and Mario Morales. Learn about the delicacies of sukiyaki from sushi chef and owner of No Coast Sushi Christopher Boyd.

All One Book programs are open to the public at no charge and, unless noted, take place in the Central Library Community Room.

**IMAGES**
1. Mezzotint by Charles Hardy
2. Christopher Boyd prepares octopus at his restaurant, No Coast Sushi
3. Clockwork Fantasia by Mitzi Sato-Wiuff
4. Along Came a Spider by Mitzi Sato-Wiuff
One Book, One Mesa County thanks you, our faithful readers, for a decade of stimulating literary company.

Thanks to Mesa County’s wonderful readers, One Book has enjoyed 10 successful years and has become a signature event for Mesa County Libraries. You have supported reading in our community with your thoughtful discussions, insightful questions and strong attendance at programs. From our first book, Bless Me, Ultima, which featured Chicano culture and folk medicine, to last year’s The Dog Stars, with its exploration of a post-apocalyptic Colorado, we have journeyed around the world and have discussed themes such as grief, love, tragedy, honor and happiness. We love your enthusiasm when you ask us “What’s next year’s book?”

One Book, One Mesa County believes that a community that reads together grows together. We have all grown together in each other’s company. We are thankful for our first 10 years and look forward to the many years – and books – to come.

One Book, One Mesa County is available in multiple formats. Pick up your copy today.

This year we’ve made it easier than ever to snag a copy of the 2014 One Book selection, A Tale For The Time Being. The book is available in multiple formats from Mesa County Libraries, including:

- Hardback and paperback (over 150 copies available)
- CD audiobook
- Downloadable audiobook
- Downloadable ebook

Reserve your copy of A Tale For The Time Being online at www.mesacountylibraries.org or by visiting one of eight library locations throughout Mesa County. For more information about reserving your copy of A Tale For The Time Being, call 970-243-4442.