9-1-2011


Judi Morrel  
Butler University, jmorrel@butler.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/las_bookreviews](http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/las_bookreviews)

**Recommended Citation**
[http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/las_bookreviews/86](http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/las_bookreviews/86)

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in LAS Faculty Book Reviews by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact omacisaa@butler.edu.
Because Ideas Matter...

The faculty and staff of Butler University's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences presents

Recommended Readings

**Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter: A Novel (P.S.)**

by Tom Franklin, Harper Perrenial, 2011

Reviewed by Judi Morrel

Authored by Tom Franklin, who won an Edgar award for an earlier short story collection, the novel Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter is set in present-day Mississippi and involves an unsolved cold case from the 1970's. Larry Ott, the child of lower-middle-class white parents and Silas Jones, the son of a poor black single mother, were unlikely childhood pals and high school classmates when tragedy struck. Larry took a girl on a date and she disappeared, never to be heard from again. Despite any evidence, Larry was suspected and Silas left town for college. Twenty-five years later, that disappearance still unsolved, Larry, now a loner mechanic, and Silas cross paths again. Another girl disappears, Larry is suspected yet again, but now Silas is the local constable. The two are forced to examine their broken friendship and the buried past.

While Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter has a mystery at its core, it is not a mystery novel; rather, Franklin, who holds the John and Renee Grisham Chair in Creative Writing at the University of Mississippi, displays some of the best characteristics of Southern literature with excellent character development, pitch-perfect dialogue, and unexpected plot twists. (By the way, the title refers to a pneumonic device used to teach Southern children how to spell "Mississippi," as in M-I-crooked letter-crooked letter-l-crooked letter-crooked letter-I-humpback-humpback-l.)

- Judi Morrel is Professor of Mathematics at Butler University.