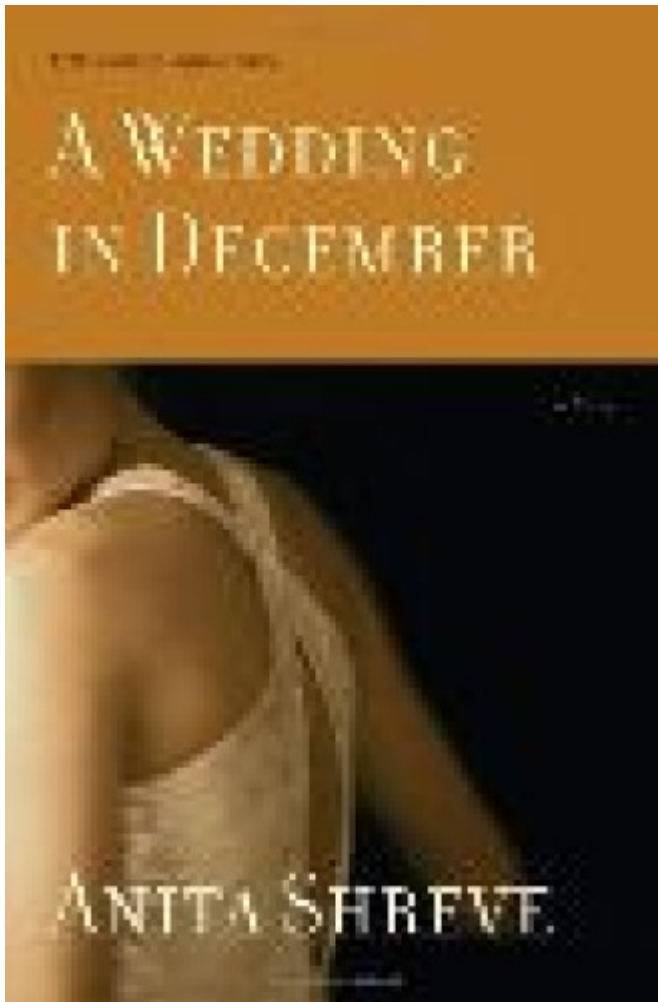


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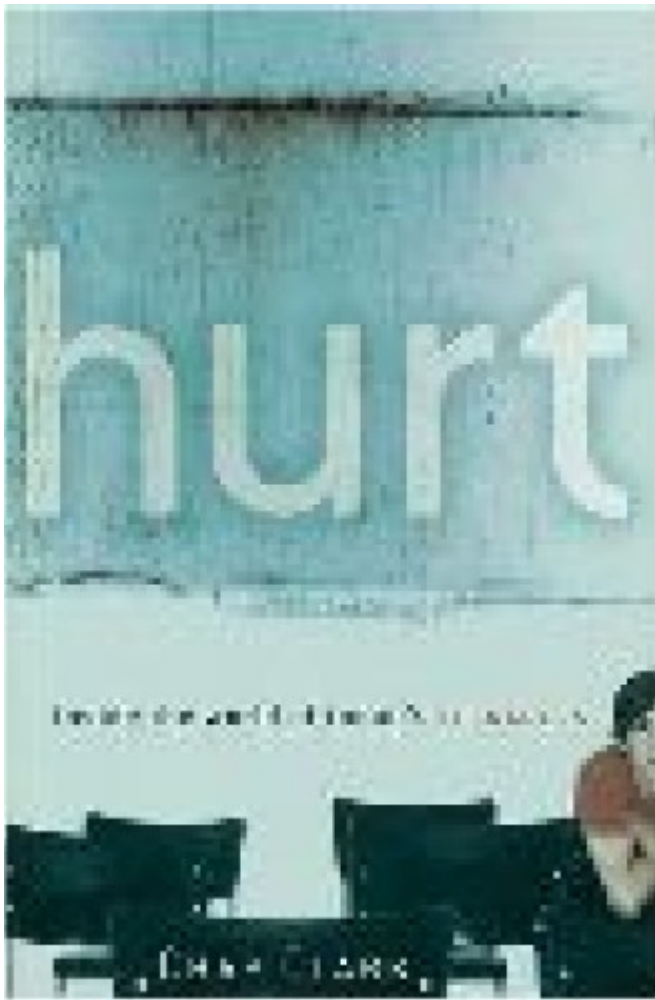
Books in the [April 18, 2006](#) issue

In Review



A Wedding in December

Anita Shreve
Little, Brown



Hurt: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers

Chap Clark
Baker

PSALMS

THE SAINT JOHN'S BIBLE



The Saint John's Bible: Psalms

Donald Jackson
Liturgical Press

Shreve writes so well that for a while she seems able to reinvigorate the tired plot device of gathering a group of school friends for an unexpected reunion in middle age. Reunions of this kind invariably spark soul searching and reawaken old romantic feelings. Here a group of seven gather at an elegant Berkshire inn to celebrate the wedding of two high school sweethearts who separated in college and then, some 20 years later, found each other again. Their new marriage is burdened by the bride's battle with cancer, and the whole group is haunted by a tragedy that occurred shortly before graduation. The characters are engaging, and the secrets and confessions that emerge in the course of the weekend bring some suspense to the novel. But rather than fully exploring the issues of guilt, forgiveness and lost opportunities that the book raises, Shreve too often focuses on the trivial. There are

long, dull stretches in which her characters do little more than wander around admiring the decor, thinking about their meals and plotting trips to the nearby mall.

Adults tempted to think they know what teenagers are experiencing because they once were teenagers should read *Hurt*. Clark argues that current teenagers have experienced a sense of abandonment by parents, schools and churches, which is the root cause of the fragmentation and callousness that characterize their lives. As a consequence, youth have created a “world beneath,” an alternative social world. Clark examines this world in a number of spheres (school, family, sports, sex, etc.) and then suggests five strategies for addressing the sense of abandonment.

This is the second in a seven-volume series by illuminator Donald Jackson. (For an introduction to this project and the first volume, *Gospels and Acts*, see “The Beauty of the Text,” *Century*, August 9, 2005.) In *Psalms* Jackson used a computer map of chanting monks of several religious traditions as the background for the illuminations, indicating that the Psalms have their natural home in communal praise. Jackson chose colors to represent five different themes in the Psalms (creation, law, nationhood, monarchy and God’s deliverance) and designs to symbolize different types of psalms (hymns, laments, thanksgiving, royal psalms, and wisdom). Regrettably, there are fewer illuminations in this volume than in the previous one.