



PRESS RELEASE

Louisa May Alcott's ORCHARD HOUSE – Home of *Little Women*

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The Concord Bookshop Welcomes Geraldine Brooks, Author of *March: A Novel*

On **March 13, 2005 at 3:00 p.m.**, *The Concord Bookshop* welcomes acclaimed author **Geraldine Brooks**, who will discuss and sign copies of her third book, *March*, an historical novel for adults based on the character of “Mr. March” from Louisa May Alcott’s beloved classic, *Little Women*. Miss Alcott herself -- as portrayed by **Jan Turnquist**, Executive Director at Louisa May Alcott’s Orchard House -- will make an appearance to congratulate Ms. Brooks on her new publication. The public is invited to take part in this unique interaction at this free event!

At the end of *Jo’s Boy*, Louisa’s final book of the March family trilogy, she wrote, “... let the music stop, the lights die out, and the curtain fall forever on the March family.” Now Ms. Brooks, lauded for her first novel, *Year of Wonders*, sets her hand to that curtain. She raises it to tell a story of the man known primarily in *Little Women* as a Union army chaplain -- “far away, where the fighting was” -- but finally given a story of his own.

Like Louisa’s own father, A. Bronson Alcott, the fictional Mr. March is father of four daughters, but appears ever so briefly in *Little Women* after returning home from The Civil War. In *March*, however, he is able to tell of battle and its aftermath, and of running a school for contraband slaves on a plantation under Union control but rented by a Northerner. Initially lit with flashbacks of Mr. March’s first visit to this same plantation many years before, the story continues with recollections of his relationships with Emerson, Thoreau, and John Brown, his courtship of “Marmee,” and his attraction to an educated slave, Grace.

When Mr. March is wounded and in hospital in Washington, Grace, now a nurse, is there with him. At this point, Marmee picks up the tale as it draws to conclusion. Reviewer Sue Monk Kidd writes, “Geraldine Brooks tantalizes the reader with familiar flashes of the March family, while brilliantly weaving an entirely new story that is filled with the ache of love and marriage and with the power of war upon the mind and heart of one unforgettable man.” Brooks masterfully blends exhaustive research on A. Bronson Alcott’s own life and 19th century history in general to craft a book that leaves readers wanting to find out more about the real-life man and his unforgettable family.

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Other works by Brooks include *Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague*, set in an English town during the 17th century outbreak, and *A Penpal's Journey from Down Under to All Over*, which draws upon her childhood in Australia. Her international experience includes 11 years as a correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal*, with coverage of areas such as Bosnia, Somalia, and the Middle East, and a non-fiction work, *Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women*. She currently lives in rural Virginia with her husband and son. This Fall, Brooks will serve as a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies at Harvard University.

19th century Concord notables will again be a topic at *The Concord Bookshop* in June, when Amy Belding Brown, author and staff member at Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House, will discuss her new book, *Mr. Emerson's Wife*.

This event is free and open to the public. *The Concord Bookshop* is located at **65 Main Street, Concord, MA**. For more information, please contact *The Bookshop's Publicity and Events Coordinator, Kate Bird*, at **978.369.2405**, or visit www.concordbookshop.com.

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