

Picks of the Month – June 2009

Book Pick:

The Diving Bell and the Butterfly

by [Jean-Dominique Bauby](#)

From Amazon.com: We've all got our idiosyncrasies when it comes to writing--a special chair we have to sit in, a certain kind of yellow paper we absolutely must use. To create this tremendously affecting memoir, Jean-Dominique Bauby used the only tool available to him--his left eye--with which he blinked out its short chapters, letter by letter. Two years ago, Bauby, then the 43-year-old editor-in-chief of *Elle* France, suffered a rare stroke to the brain stem; only his left eye and brain escaped damage. Rather than accept his "locked in" situation as a kind of death, Bauby ignited a fire of the imagination under himself and lived his last days--he died two days after the French publication of this slim volume--spiritually unfettered. In these pages Bauby journeys to exotic places he has and has not been, serving himself delectable gourmet meals along the way (surprise: everything's ripe and nothing burns). In the simplest of terms he describes how it feels to see reflected in a window "the head of a man who seemed to have emerged from a vat of formaldehyde."

Video Pick:

The Diving Bell and the Butterfly (2007)

From Miramax Films, acclaimed director Julian Schnabel, and the screenwriter of "The Pianist", and based on Jean-Dominique Bauby's true story. David Benby of "The New Yorker" calls it "nothing less than the rebirth of the cinema."