

# San Antonio Express-News

---

## Winter/spring book offerings provide some bright spots

By **Steve Bennett** - Express-News Book Editor, January 11, 2009

Three years ago, Dr. Abraham Verghese gave a reading from his long-awaited first-novel-in-progress at the St. Anthony Hotel that had men in the audience squirming in their seats and women laughing nervously.

Honored with Gemini Ink's annual literary achievement award, the good doctor, whose nonfiction works include the National Book Critics Circle Award-nominated "My Own Country" and "The Tennis Partner," read a passage in which a fictional missionary physician in Africa teaches a colleague how to perform a vasectomy. Verghese went into excruciating detail, painfully describing the procedure mastered by a man "personally responsible for so many people not being here today." That novel, titled "Cutting for Stone" (go ahead, make your own bad joke), finally arrives Feb. 6 from Knopf.

It is one of several sunny spots on a winter/spring publishing calendar darkened by a economically stormy industry forecast.