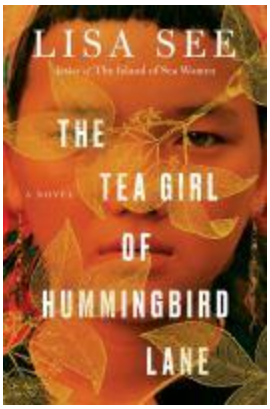

Li-yan and her family align their lives around the seasons and the farming of tea. There is ritual and routine, and it has been ever thus for generations. Then one day a jeep appears at the village gate, the first automobile any of them have seen, and a stranger arrives. Li-yan, one of the few educated girls on her mountain, translates for the stranger and is among the first to reject the rules that have shaped her existence. When she has a baby outside of wedlock, rather than stand by tradition, she wraps her daughter in a blanket, with a tea cake hidden in her swaddling, and abandons her in the nearest city.