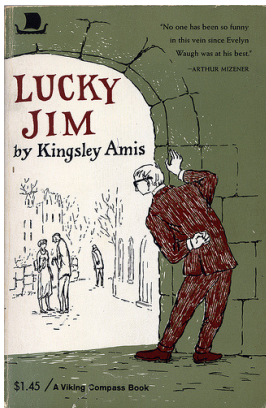


SAINT ANN'S HIGH SCHOOL/FACULTY SUGGESTED SUMMER READING LIST 2011



Amis, Kingsley. **Lucky Jim**

Screamingly funny. A young English professor, hating his job and the hypocrites around him, becomes an incompetent hypocrite himself who throws emotional and intellectual bombs all over the place. Drink is taken. (Ruth Chapman)

Anaya, Rudolfo. **Bless Me, Ultima**

I read this book in college and plan to re-read it this summer. The plot line could be an opera. There is murder, magic and self-discovery. As a young college student I found magical traditions which existed in my own family. (Anna Maria Baeza)

Austen, Jane. **Emma**

Think you must choose between a knee-slappingly hilarious tale of ill-advised matchmaking, and a gut-busting tale of egregious narcissism? In 1815, Jane Austen's *Emma* made that choice unnecessary. The book was published complete with a dedication to the dastardly Prince Regent from "...His Royal Highness's dutiful and obedient humble servant, The Author." Not raucous comedy until one finds out that Jane Austen despised the Prince Regent and his passionless marriage to a cold, haughty woman. In 1815, such a sarcastic emotional curtsy right on a novel's dedication page was as close to Chris Rock-style socio-political stand-up as an authoress could get. *Emma* is a tale of both aristocratic superficiality and ardent love, and if you want to laugh *at* upper-crust society as you laugh *with* a wonderful storyteller, this book can't be missed. (Chloe Tirado)

Blake, William. **Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience**

The perfect accompaniment to catching fireflies this summer. (Brian Deimling)

Briggs, Carolyn S. **This Dark World: A Memoir of Salvation Found and Lost**

"A riveting memoir of one woman's immersion into Fundamentalist faith, and her decision twenty years later to leave it all behind," reads the book description. This is an amazingly touching story of heart and courage.

Beautifully written—a real page turner. Coming out this summer is the film "Higher Ground," directed by and starring Vera Farmiga, based on this book, with the screenplay written by Carolyn Briggs & Tim Metcalfe. (It played at the Tribeca Film Festival in April —Andy Keating's wife, Coleen, was the film's editor.) (Stephanie Sassoon)

Brown, Eleanor. **The Weird Sisters**

The sisters in this novel are not all that weird individually, but together, they make an odd group. They seem to have very little in common, except for their ability to converse through Shakespeare quotations. Otherwise, one can't seem to escape her childhood town, one can't get away fast enough, and another lives a nomadic existence. When family events draw them all back home, they must figure out what they really want from their lives, as well as from each other. This is a lighthearted read — perfect for summer break! (Stephanie Schragger)

Bruni, Frank. **Born Round**

A surprisingly hilarious, endearing, and down-to-earth memoir about the former New York Times restaurant critic's obsessive relationship with food. (Sarah Chen)

Cantrell, Rebecca. **A Trace of Smoke**

Work comes home when crime reporter Hannah Vogel discovers that her younger brother Ernst has been killed. Investigating his murder in 1931 Berlin leads Hannah higher up the Nazi hierarchy than she could ever have expected, and is complicated when a small child appears, claiming that Ernst is his father and she is his mother. Complicated and compelling, I (almost) literally couldn't put it down, and requested the sequel from the BPL before I'd even finished this one. (Rebecca Johnson)

Chandler, Raymond. **The Big Sleep**

Read Chandler for his language and his characters. Immerse yourself in a world of corruption and deceit and realize that it mirrors our own. Could you emulate the hero, so honest he's broke, so cynical his only vice is love? And then of course, there's the plot. (Matthew Bloom)

Chomsky, Noam. **9-11**

As usual, Chomsky appears to blame the U.S. for most of the world's evils, but nearly ten years later it is worth returning to his analysis and predictions made in the immediate aftermath of the September 11th attacks. (Brian Deimling)

Collins, Suzanne. **The Hunger Games**

Quick, make sure you've read the series before the movie comes out! (It's going to star Jennifer Lawrence, Lenny Kravitz, Donald Sutherland, Woody Harrelson and Josh Hutcherson among others.) In the country of Panem, two children between the ages of 12 and 18 are chosen from each district every year to compete in the Hunger Games, a fight to the death with only one victor. Katniss is chosen to represent District 12. Needless to say, this is not a game that most want to play. Yes, this is a young adult novel, but I promise you won't be able to put it down! **The Series:** *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire*, *Mockingjay* (Ragan O'Malley)

Coover, Robert. **The Universal Baseball Association, Inc., J. Henry Waugh, Prop.**

It's a sports book, but the sport, baseball, is played out in a dice game invented, and played obsessively, by Henry J. Waugh. His life and his game intertwine as only they could in a novel written in the late 1960's. (Andy Keating)

Damrosch, Phoebe. **Service Included: Four-Star Secrets of an Eavesdropping Waiter**

Great book for foodies—fascinating behind the scene look at the opening of one of the world's best restaurants, Per Se. (Sarah Chen)

Danielson, Dennis Richard. **The First Copernican: Georg Joachim Rheticus and the Rise of the Copernican Revolution**

A rigorously researched telling of how the groundbreaking *de revolutionibus* by Nicolaus Copernicus was published. The book depicts European social, religious, academic and scientific communities of the late 15th and early 16th centuries in amazing depth and clarity. A compelling read for historians, mathematicians or anyone interested in Copernicus. (Tom Hill)

Dolnick, Edward. **Down the Great Unknown: John Wesley Powell's 1869 Journey of Discovery and Tragedy Through the Grand Canyon**

This book is suited to those who enjoy stories of exploration, adventure, river running, and the opening of the

American West. Told with humor, intensity and thoughtfulness through the diaries and journals of the men who took the trip down the mighty Colorado River, the book unfolds much like the river itself—you never know what surprises lay ahead. (Tom Hill)

Echols, Alice. **Scars of Sweet Paradise: The life and times of Janis Joplin**

Both Cecil (the security guard at the Farber Building) and I were reading this at the same time, coincidentally.

We both loved it. I'm really bad at writing reviews, so I'll quote the blurb from Susie Linfield of the LA Times from the book cover "A compelling, richly detailed portrait. Echols stares unflinchingly at the fault lines of '60's counterculture." It was truly an enriching, exciting, and heartbreaking read. (Stephanie Sassoon)

Eugenides, Jeffrey. **Middlesex**

I resisted reading this for a long time. It sounds gimmicky—a girl in Detroit realizes she is a hermaphrodite—but it's not. It's a great read. And it covers a lot of ground, from the Greek immigrant experience to the Detroit riots of 1968 to the founding of the Nation of Islam. (Michael Donohue)

Figs, Orlando. **The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalinist Russia**

This is a comprehensive and fascinating "people's history" of a culture created and maintained at enormous human cost. The author also examines the many ways both victims and perpetrators of Stalin's rule form narratives about their pasts. Not everyone tells their stories in quite the ways we might expect. (Jenny Halliday)

Foulds, Adam. **The Quickening Maze**

A remarkable window into the psychology, the poetry, the desperate inner-lives of nineteenth century England. Beautifully written, Foulds offer his readers extraordinary parallel lives: Alfred Lord Tennyson (soon to be poet laureate) and John Clare ("the peasant poet") that do not insect but share a crucial connection with Dr. Matthew Allen, a pioneer in treating "insanity." Here is a fascinating, exquisitely drawn bedlam that questions the convention definition of sanity. (Marty Skoble)

Fraser, George MacDonald. **Quartered Safe Out Here**

A World War II memoir from the author of the *Flashman* series of novels. Fraser served with the British 14th Army in Burma in the last two years of the war, and his account of daily life—fighting, eating, sleeping, and above all listening to the talk of his fellow soldiers—is riveting. (Michael Donohue)

Frazier, Ian. **Travels in Siberia**

Fantastic personal account of challenging travels. Included is a history of Russia as well as stories about other travelers from America, France, etc. from the 18th century on. Thrilling, touching, rich, lovely drawings (one by Katya Arnold) and the rest by the author. (Katya Arnold)

French, Tana. **Faithful Place**

Imagine Robert Parker's wit in a Dickensian Irish setting and you have a great read. French offers us wonderfully vivid writing and a superb story of the struggle to escape one's class and the cost. (Marty Skoble)

Gardam, Jane. **Old Filth**

Sir Edward Feathers is called Filth by everyone, including his wife. This acronym nickname stands for "Failed in London, Try Hong Kong," which is what he did, starting as a young barrister and retiring as a respected, successful judge. Back in England, and safely ensconced in his Dorset country house, he now has the time and, for the first time, inclination to reflect back on a more compelling and dramatic life than one might first expect from this dry and proper man. Filth's life and essence is revealed in a beautifully integrated series of flashbacks,

which also serve to track the history of 20th century Britain. Gardam's writing is funny and acerbic, and there isn't a wasted word in the book. (Amy Fontaine)

Godwin, Peter. **The Fear: Robert Mugabe and the Martyrdom of Zimbabwe**

A portrait of the people of Zimbabwe and an exposé of the chaos and corruption under the dictatorship of Mugabe. Godwin comes from a family of white settlers (it used to be Rhodesia) and had to travel around in secret. (Brian Deimling)

Grann, David. **The Lost City of Z**

About as gripping as they come, Grann's memoir/history of exploration in the Amazon reads as the most literate of mystery stories. Will Percy Fawcett's compulsion to battle the jungle, despite the most dangerous and disgusting conditions, yield anything before he disappears forever? Grann traces Fawcett's doomed 1925 expedition in search of the elusive city of Z with excruciating detail (think insects thriving in human orifices) and weaves in his own story of compulsion—his determined journey to follow Fawcett's exact path into the jungle, not in search of Z, but of this story. (Anna Ziegler)

Hamilton, Gabrielle. **Blood, Bones, & Butter: The Inadvertent Education of a Reluctant Chef**

Gabrielle Hamilton was just named the best chef in New York, which isn't a surprise given the long lines out the door of her restaurant, Prune. But what is a surprise is the quality of her writing – Hamilton has written a moving and funny memoir about her childhood, her education, and her almost accidental career as a chef. There are plenty of fun details about the food industry, but this book is really about the things in life that matter most – family, friends, and of course, food. (Stephanie Schragger)

Hellman, Lillian. **The Children's Hour**

Her pivotal play about school teachers, children, friendship, love, and the destructive power of gossip. (Jane Avrigh)

Hua, Yu. **To Live**

Written in deceptively simple language, this gripping novel follows a Chinese peasant, Fugui, and his struggles beginning during the Chinese Civil War and ending around the Cultural Revolution. The tragedies, hardships and poverty that Fugui and his family face are horrifying, yet Fugui carries on with tenacity and the will to live. (Maria Falgoust)

Ishiguro, Kazuo. **Never Let Me Go**

Lyrical, haunting, understated, deceptively simple but extremely layered. As compelling as it is unsettling. (Jane Avrigh)

Ishiguro, Kazuo. **Never Let Me Go**

This is a beautiful and heartbreaking book. I guess technically it's science fiction, since it focuses on three friends who go to a boarding school where the student body is made up entirely of clones created for the (future) harvesting of their organs. But the science fiction-y part of the tale is more backstory than plot. Instead, the novel focuses on the friendship of two girls and a boy, and the love affair between the boy and one of the girls...or, perhaps more accurately, both of the girls. Ishiguro is, for my money, one of our greatest living writers. The story is quiet and lyrical, the mood haunting. Think of it as a quick read that you should linger over. (Melissa Kantor)

Jacobson, Mark. **The Lampshade**

Jacobson describes how a human-skin lampshade, said to originate in Buchenwald, lands in his life. He then tries to track down its real origin. The result is a wonderful book. Jacobson spoke to the high school in May. (Michael Donohue)

Kalish, Mildred Armstrong. **Little Heathens: Hard Times and High Spirits on an Iowa Farm during the Great Depression**

This book was given to me an older friend who grew up on a farm in Iowa during the Depression. She was delighted with the memories that were brought back to her. I have enjoyed a recounting of a life "unplugged". (Anna Maria Baeza)

Karr, Mary. **Lit**

This was the first time I had read Karr and I was absolutely dumbstruck by the beauty of her writing. This is a wonderfully raw and honest memoir that is as much about addiction and recovery as it is about being a mother, a wife and a poet. Several parts are laugh-out-loud funny to boot. It will leave you racing to find everything else Karr has written. (Anne Conway)

Keefe, Patrick Radden. **The Snakehead: An Epic Tale of the Chinatown Underworld and the American Dream**

A snakehead is a smuggler of humans. This action-packed and meticulously-researched work of journalism explores U.S. immigration policy and the snakehead business, using the story of a middle-aged Chinatown shopkeeper called Sister Ping as a jumping off point. Sister Ping earned tens of millions of dollars smuggling penniless immigrants to the U.S. in the 80s and 90s, including many of the passengers who sailed here on the infamous Golden Venture. Some of their stories are also told in the book. It is shocking and humbling to see what people endure for the chance to live in this country. (Denise Rinaldo)

Kingsolver, Barbara. **The Lacuna**

This book imagines the political climate that envelops Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera and a boy growing up in their midst. It is thrilling to read, especially when Trotsky comes to stay. Tucked into luscious descriptions of landscape and the brushstrokes of dinner parties are the characters themselves, coming to terms with their relationship to their gifts and their times: "I think an artist has to tell the truth. You have to use the craft very well and have a lot of discipline for it, but mostly to be a good artist you have to know something that's true." (Cathy Fuerst)

Lee, Janice Y. K. **The Piano Teacher**

Two stories, both taking place in Hong Kong, are told simultaneously. One features Will (a British ex-patriot) and Trudy (a Chinese/Portuguese beauty) who meet in pre-World War II Hong Kong where they fall in love amidst the wealth of the privileged set in Hong Kong. The other story is about Claire Pendleton, a twenty-eight year-old British woman who follows her new husband to Hong Kong in 1952. We follow Will and Trudy through World War II when Hong Kong was occupied by the Japanese. We also follow the story of Claire as she settles in Hong Kong and begins to give piano lessons. Eventually the two stories collide and neither Will nor Claire will ever be the same. (Ragan O'Malley)

Lehane, Dennis. **The Given Day**

From the writer of *Mystic River* and *Gone Baby Gone*, this is a big historical novel set in 1918 Boston, the year of the police strike. Characters include corrupt cops, Irish nurses, and one George Herman Ruth not long before he was sold to the Yankees. (Michael Donohue)

Lewis, Matthew. **The Monk**

Lewis's playful novel has all of the right ingredients: a deceitful, lecherous monk, lovers trapped in an underground cavern, and an assortment of oddball creatures. When it was published in 1796, *The Monk* was such a sensation that Lewis was later referred to as Matthew "Monk" Lewis. If you long to find an under-appreciated gem with splashes of the grotesque, look no further! But beware: reading a tale as demented as *The Monk* is not without moral implications. Don't say you weren't warned! (Alex Levin)

Link, Kelly **Magic for Beginners**

Incredibly imaginative, wacky, wryly narrated short stories about haunted handbags, mixed marriages (between the living and the dead) and the like. Link's first book, *Stranger than Fiction*, is even better. (Jane Avrich)

Macintyre, Ben. **Operation Mincemeat**

The true story of a World War II British intelligence plot to convince the Germans that the Allies were not going to make a landing in Sicily, but rather in Sardinia and Greece, by landing a corpse carrying misleading communiques on a Spanish beach. Surprisingly entertaining and full of compelling characters, this is perfect for anyone who is at all interested in the era or in espionage. As the man at the bookstore said when he saw me contemplating it, "Oh, if you're at all interested you have to read that; it's fantastic. So much fun!" (Rebecca Johnson)

Mantel, Hilary. **Wolf Hall**

Inside the mind of Thomas Cromwell, one of the world's great (and good?) men: biography, history, and the imagination at work. A sharply drawn and fresh perspective on struggles over class and religion in the time of Henry VIII, superbly personalized! (Marty Skoble)

Mason, Zachary. **The Lost Books of the Odyssey**

Termed a novel by its cover, this is much more a series of superbly imagined prose poems: meditations on infinitely alternative realities of conception and composition. Every one of these "what if..." scenarios is elegantly presented, metaphorically and metaphysically provocative. In its own way a terrific page turner. (Marty Skoble)

Maugham, Somerset W. **Cakes and Ale**

Surprisingly good novel about the unconventional marriage between a male writer and a decidedly nonbookish woman. Said to be partly based on the life of Thomas Hardy. (Michael Donohue)

McCann, Colum. **Let the Great World Spin**

A rich and intensely felt tapestry of disparate characters and their lives all linked to the miraculous thread of Philippe Petit's tightrope walk between the towers of the World Trade Center. Another time, another world, yes, but the New York McCann gives us is truly ours. (Marty Skoble)

Mitchell, David. **Black Swan Green**

This wonderful story is about a teenage poet and the power of words. It includes secret gangs, a brilliant mentor, a tomboy, a charismatic thief, girl trios ("the fairer sex hunts in packs"), the shadow of the Falklands War, teachers, bullies, sex, and hints of death. (Mike Roam)

Mitchell, David. **Cloud Atlas**

Six interwoven narratives in six different styles spanning six centuries. Fun, riveting and intriguing. (Paul Lockhart)

Mitchell, David. **Cloud Atlas**

Mitchell has an ear for language, inventive and musical, at times kinetic, at times harmonic. The range of his imagination is majestic, his planning meticulous. Themes and characters stray from one incarnation to the next (and from one book to the next). His writing borrows from science fiction to potboiler to fairy tale. I got caught up in his books in succession, and it was pure pleasure, but it was his fascination with clouds that stirred my close reading. "I watched clouds awobbly from the floor o' that kayak. Souls cross ages like clouds cross skies," says one character, a cosmic link to a seemingly disparate character in another section: "Young ruddy fool. What wouldn't I give now for a never-changing map of the ever-constant ineffable. To possess, as it were, an atlas of the clouds." (Cathy Fuerst)

Mitchell, David. **Cloud Atlas**

The best of every best author: the humor, poetry, & philosophy of Shakespeare; the surprises, aesthetics, & interwoven architecture of Nabokov; plots and characters worthy of Calvino; adrenaline of Lee Child; cleverness of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes; compassion and ethics of the Good Samaritan. (Mike Roam)

Nichols, Peter. **A Day in the Death of Joe Egg.**

This play about the parents of a seriously disabled child is not sunk in despair, as one would think. Despite its darkness, the play is full of hilarious dialogue, witty banter and hysterical antics, all of which deepen its complex themes. (Jane Avrich)

Nottage, Lynn. **Ruined**

Nottage, a Saint Ann's alum, writes about atrocities and hope in the Congo through the lens of a brothel and bar proprietress, Mama Nadi. A quick read, *Ruined* is based on the stories told to Nottage during her pilgrimage to Africa. (Maria Falgoust)

Oates, Joyce Carol. **Foxfire: Confessions of a Girl Gang**

'FOXFIRE REVENGE' In a town in upstate New York, a group of teenage girls led by the charismatic beauty Legs Sadovsky form FOXFIRE in response to the deceitful world that seeks to denigrate and subjugate them. 'FOXFIRE NEVER LOOKS BACK'. FOXFIRE takes control and establishes consequences. 'FOXFIRE NEVER SAYS SORRY'.

For Maddy, Goldie, Lana, Rita and Legs, 'FOXFIRE IS YOUR HEART'. Let them into your heart and experience 'FOXFIRE BURNS AND BURNS'. (Matthew Bloom)

Orringer, Julie. **The Invisible Bridge**

Andras Levi, a young Hungarian Jew in the late 1930's, wins a scholarship to study architecture in Paris at the Ecole Speciale d'Architecture. To the middle son of a hard working, close-knit family, the scholarship is quite an honor. Life in Paris is hard at first, especially for a Jew, but Andras soon gets his bearings. He is a talented architect and luckily happens to meet the love of his life, Klara. After two years in Paris, his visa isn't renewed and he is forced to return to Hungary. What follows is the unraveling of his family as they are forced to endure the tortures visited upon them by the war. Hungary sided with Germany in the war and interestingly enough, Hungarian Jews fared slightly better for slightly longer than most other European Jews, although this isn't saying much. A painful story to be sure, but ultimately one of survival and throughout it all, love. (Ragan O'Malley)

Pearson, Allison. **I Think I Love You**

When Petra is 13 years old, all she wants to do is meet David Cassidy, which seems like an impossible life goal. And obviously, it doesn't happen. But 25 years later, she's given the chance to relive her teenage dream, and to get a second chance with her own life. If you've ever had a celebrity crush, or ever just been age 13, this book will resonate with you. It's a perfect beach read! (Stephanie Schragger)

Remnick, David. **The Bridge: The Life and Rise of Barack Obama**

Wonderful insights on Obama's family history, youth and maturation as a person and politician, plus a great refresher on civil rights history. Remnick's finely tuned narrative sense makes this intimidatingly long book skip along like a beach read! Well, a non-fiction beach read, anyway...(Anne Conway)

Richards, Keith. **Life**

Fun, easy and informative read for anyone interested in the life of a Rock and Roll legend. (Paul Benney)

Richards, Keith. **Life**

Keith regales us with picaresque tales—much as if Tom Jones or Tristram Shandy had been transported to the second half of the twentieth century fired with the glorious mission of bringing American blues music to the downtrodden English masses. (Jenny Halliday)

Saramago, Jose. **Death with Interruptions**

Recently deceased Saramago is a master of narrative and invention. What happens when death takes a vacation, and eternal life is at your doorstep?? Not what you think... (Paul Benney)

Schiff, Stacy. **Cleopatra**

For anyone interested in the life and leadership of this intriguing ruler. Schiff presents thorough research that contains a few surprises. She portrays not just a portrait of the character of Cleopatra, but a comprehensive view of the Mediterranean world in ancient times. (Felicia Kang)

Sebald, W. G. **The Rings of Saturn**

Sebald haunts you relentlessly. You visit and revisit Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson*, bump into Joseph Conrad and Roger Casement, dig up and re-bury a skull, walk through Suffolk on lonely beaches, and endure the continual haunting and resurrection of memory. Sebald takes snapshots—real ones—and imbeds them in his revolutionary text. The text itself takes pictures that you read, hold onto, and then watch disintegrate until you re-develop them in new contexts. History exiles and cocoons you, then releases. This writer changes everything. (Ruth Chapman)

Simenon, Georges. **Monsieur Monde Vanishes**

Simenon was a popular Belgian author, famous for his voluminous output. Written in the 1950s, this short book tells of Monsieur Monde, a successful Parisian industrialist who, on his forty-eighth birthday, abandons his life without premeditation, leaving no word behind him. He ends up on the Riviera where happenstance leads to him living life amongst the detritus of its demi-monde. The story and its consequences are observed without judgment, leaving readers to their own opinions. (Matthew Bloom)

Small, David. **Stitches: A Memoir**

This gorgeous, heart-wrenching graphic novel chronicles David's childhood, growing up in an extremely dysfunctional family in Detroit. (Maria Falgoust)

Steinberg, Avi. **Running the Books: The Adventures of an Accidental Prison Librarian**

After a stint working at the Boston Globe writing obituaries, Steinberg found himself running a prison library without any training. Idealistic and inexperienced, he recounts stories filled with absurdity, power plays, love, redemption, humor, and violence. Although Steinberg struggled with forming boundaries when dealing with the inevitable daily dramas, disputes, and special requests, he truly put his whole heart into the job. Using humor, amidst the gritty reality of many of the prisoners' lives, Steinberg ultimately tells a good story. (Maria Falgoust)

Strout, Elizabeth. **Olive Kitteridge**

This story takes place in a small town in Maine, and basically just follows the characters' lives over a period of time. What I loved about it is the detailed character development, as the author puts you in the minds of each of the characters. My favorite book from last summer. (Navid Karimeddiny)

Thompson, Jim. **The Killer Inside Me**

A sheriff in a small Texas town, a good guy well-liked, is psychotic. Watch as his insanity emerges, marvel at his cunning capacity for deception and wonder at the women who love him to death. (Matthew Bloom)

Tinti, Hannah. **The Good Thief**

I read *The Good Thief* over winter vacation, and it was delightful -- an old-fashioned, Robert Louis Stevenson-style romp. There's not much in the way of character development, but that's okay when you're looking for a swashbuckling adventure! (Eva Zasloff)

Tuchman, Barbara. **The Proud Tower**

Unbelievably riveting history about Europe in the years just before World War I. (Michael Donohue)

von Kleist, Heinrich. **Michael Kohlhaas**

Kleist either was or was not the DF Wallace of German Romanticism. He weathered a freakout when Kant's *Critique* convinced him as a teenager that a mind could know only its own projections of a world, never the world itself. He refined the subtlest, queasiest irony of style I know of, at least until Kafka, who revered him. And he shot himself one morning in his thirties by a lake in an impromptu pact with a depressed woman he'd met the night before. The hundred-page "Kohlhaas," available in *The Marquise of O and Other Stories*, is the stirring tale of a medieval horse dealer's quest to receive adequate compensation from regional Dresden bureaucrats for the mistreatment of his horses at the hands of a minor local nobleman. The other stories are no less exciting, shorter, and equally Kleisty, the half-fabulous plots and undercooked symbolism of classics like "The Earthquake in Chile" and "Betrothal in Santo Domingo" yielding the same seasick sense that you're getting only half the joke. (Ben Rutter)

Verghese, Abraham. **Cutting for Stone**

Sister Mary Joseph Praise is a 19-year-old nun from India on her way to Africa to make a difference in the world when she meets Thomas Stone, a young British surgeon (born in India) who is also en route to Africa. Eventually Thomas Stone and Sister Mary end up at Missing Hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This, however, is only the beginning of this epic novel. The twins of an illicit union between Thomas Stone and Sister Mary grow and flourish; we come to love the amazing doctors who end up raising the twins, we learn about revolution in Ethiopia, and along the way we read with fascination countless descriptions of disease and surgery. The medical aspect of this novel is present throughout, but it never intrudes and is always accessible. (Ragan O'Malley)

Wilkerson, Isabel. **The Warmth of Other Suns**

A meticulously researched and eloquent narrative describing the black migration from the South to industrial cities in the North and West Coast. Centered on the true stories of three emigrants, Wilkerson takes you on their journeys that span decades. Compelling and informative! (Felicia Kang)

Wilkerson, Isabel. **The Warmth of Other Suns**

An amazing and beautifully written account of the great internal migration of millions of workers from south to north between 1914 and the early seventies. This history is a remarkable and often desperate one as people took enormous risks for the chance to find work and freedom for themselves and their families. (Jenny Halliday)

Wills, Gary. **(Any of his books will do.)**

A journalist and historian who writes superbly, Wills began as one of William F. Buckley's young conservatives on *The National Review*, a Catholic intellectual trained by Jesuits in the Greek and Latin classics; but that was years ago, before he figured out that the "conservative" Nixon was indifferent to the Constitution (*Nixon Agonistes: The Crisis of the Self-made Man*, 1970), and that he was not the only president who was; that there was something decidedly un-Christian about the Catholic Kennedys (*The Kennedy Imprisonment: A Meditation on Power*, 1982); and that there were even some quite un-Catholic things about the Pope (*Papal Sin: Structures of Deceit*, 2000).

At the same time Wills developed a minor in U.S. intellectual history, altering a vast historiography with *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (1978) and four sequels, culminating with the Pulitzer-Prizewinning *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America* (1993), and driven home with a riveting exposition (*Negro President: Jefferson and the Slave Power*, 2003) of how American politics really worked when all slave state residents—plus 3/5 of every slave—were counted to determine how many representatives a state could send to Congress, while state law allowed only the owners of lots of property—like slaves—to vote.

Wills also kept returning to his roots in the history of religion. Wills's *Saint Augustine* (1999) rivals Peter Brown's for insight. I read *Under God: Religion and American Politics* (1990) last year and found it, despite all its contemporary references to the election of 1988 and now-forgotten candidates like Pat Robertson and Jesse Jackson, to be as spot-on about the historical effect of religion in American politics as any of the many, many books I've been reading on this evergreen subject.

I've just been finishing Wills's latest, *Bomb Power* (2010), about a topic I have written about myself but not as well: how the U.S. presidency has developed, finding by finding, from Executive Order to Executive Agreement, from the Espionage Act (1917) to the USA PATRIOT Act (2001), from Watergate to Afghanistan, into a power center that is secret, fully militarized, above the sovereign people and beyond the reach of law—and as grave a danger to the liberties of the next generation as global climate change, demographic explosion, financial collapse, or nuclear war.

Read anything by Garry Wills. Almost all of it is in print. You will be pleurably instructed by one of the best informed, least patronizing, and least dogmatic of American nonfiction writers. (Bill Everdell)

Wodehouse, P.G. **Right Ho, Jeeves** (or any other Jeeves and Wooster book).

I can't think of a pastime more pleasant than sitting in the park on a summer day and reading any one of the 10 novels or 35 stories that P.G. Wodehouse wrote about idle, rich, faintly dim-witted Bertie Wooster and his brilliant valet Jeeves. What makes them great isn't just Wodehouse's delicious fantasy version of England in the early 1900s (breakfast in bed, a jaunt to the club for a couple of snifters, lawn games at a school chum's country estate, the season at Cannes...), or Bertie's nature as a total ass with a heart of gold, or Jeeves's love of Spinoza and expertise with hangover cures. It's the fantastically brilliant Wodehousian language, combining Shakespeare allusions, goofy idioms, droll understatements, hilarious abbreviations and turns of phrase that you will want to incorporate into your own conversation. Carry on! (Denise Rinaldo)

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED.

HAPPY READING!