

Readings in Literature – Honors, 12th grade, 2011 summer reading

Before September, I want you to read at least one book of poetry and one book of prose from the following six titles. Chronicles, by Bob Dylan, coupled with listening to a lot of Dylan, will count, for our purposes, as a book of poems. Your first writing assignment for me will be based on your summer reading.

These aren't in any particular order.

Breath, Eyes, Memory (novel), by Edwidge Danticat. We'll read some stories from Danticat's collection Krik? Krak! during the school year. If you've already read her novel, you'll be a few steps ahead. Other students who've read Breath, Eyes, Memory have praised it.

Picnic, Lightning (poetry), or Questions About Angels (poetry), by Billy Collins. He has a wonderful voice: smart, funny, sensitive. I think you'll find things in his poems that will appeal to you. He also has his own web site, so if you like his stuff you can hear him read some of it on the internet.

Tell Me (poetry), by Kim Addonizio. A book of poems that involves gritty living and rawness inside lyricism. Tell Me was a finalist for the 2000 National Book Award for Poetry. It's love (good and bad) and loss and the goofed-up beauty of relationships.

Unless (novel), by Carol Shields. This is a fairly large book (336 pages) that, for me, was a page-turner. I missed it when I was through. There's subtle humor and lots of careful observation of human frailties in here. There's also mystery and love.

Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned (stories), by Walter Mosley. Socrates Fortlow is the main character. He lives up to his Greek namesake in what he does and says. Mosley is a writer who has crossed over from crime fiction to serious literature. His books are hard to put down.

Chronicles (memoir), by Bob Dylan. I loved reading this book. The voice (apparently Dylan's own, not a ghostwriter) is folksy & wry. There's an exuberance & hopefulness in the book that stayed with me for a while after reading it. See note above (re poems).

These books are in paperback. You can call me at home (612 616-1825), if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Mike Powers
June 8, 2011