



Boston Collegiate Charter School
High School Summer Reading
Students Entering 9th Grade Honors English

Ms. Veeder will assess summer reading in class at the beginning of the 2011/2012 school year. **Be prepared to participate in seminars on *This Boy's Life* starting on the 2nd day of school.** Please speak to your current English teacher or to Ms. Veeder (room 280) with questions about summer reading.

Students taking Ms. Veeder's 9th Grade Honors English must read:

This Boy's Life: A Memoir by Tobias Wolff

- The story is pretty grim: Teenaged Tobias moves with his divorced mother from Florida to Utah to Washington State to escape her violent boyfriend. When she remarries, Wolff finds himself in a bitter battle of wills with his abusive stepfather, a contest in which the two prove to be more evenly matched than might have been supposed. Deception, disguise, and illusion are the weapons the young man learns to employ as he grows up--not bad training for a writer-to-be. Somber though this tale of family strife is, it is also darkly funny and so artistically satisfying that most readers come away exhilarated rather than depressed.

AND

ONE of the following books (reviews/annotations courtesy of Amazon.com):

- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
 - A freshman in high school, Charlie encounters the same struggles that many kids face in high school -- how to make friends, the intensity of a crush, family tensions, a first relationship, exploring sexuality, experimenting with drugs -- but he must also deal with his best friend's recent suicide.
- *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles
 - The volatile world of male adolescence provides the backdrop for John Knowles' engrossing tale of love, hate, war, and peace. Sharing a room at Devon, an exclusive New England prep school, in the summer prior to World War II, Gene and Phineas form a complex bond of friendship that draws out both the best and worst characteristics of each boy and leads ultimately to violence, a confession, and the betrayal of trust.

- *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd
 - Lily, a teenage girl from South Carolina, escapes her abusive father and searches for answers about the mother she barely remembers, and whom she may have killed.

- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon
 - A fifteen-year-old boy with autism finds his neighbor's poodle dead, impaled with a garden fork. He sets out to solve the mystery of the murdered dog and a social worker at his school advises him to write a book about his trials, of which this novel is the result.

- *Ellen Foster* by Kaye Gibbons
 - "When I was little I would think of ways to kill my daddy." So begins this tale of a young girl in search of a safe home and a place to belong.

- *In These Girls Hope is a Muscle* by Madeleine Blais
 - They were a talented basketball team with a near-perfect record but a reputation for choking in the crunch of the state playoffs. Finally, after five straight years of disappointments, the Amherst Lady Hurricanes found they just might have what it took to go all the way. This is a fierce, funny, and intimate look into their minds and hearts during one very special season. A finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award for nonfiction.

- *It's Not About the Bike* by Lance Armstrong
 - The autobiographical account of how Lance Armstrong beat cancer and became the most dominant cyclist in history.

- *All Souls* by Michael Patrick MacDonald
 - In this plainly written, powerful memoir, MacDonald, now in his 30s, details not only his own story of growing up in South Boston but examines the myriad ways in which the media and government agencies exploit marginalized working-class communities.

- *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* by Julia Alvarez
 - Fifteen tales vividly chronicle a Dominican family's exile in the Bronx, focusing on the four Garcia daughters' rebellion against their immigrant elders.

- *Sacred Hoops* by Phil Jackson
 - An inside look at the higher wisdom of teamwork from Chicago Bulls' head coach Phil Jackson. At the heart of the book is Jackson's philosophy of mindful basketball -- and his lifelong quest to bring enlightenment to the competitive world of professional sports, beginning with a focus on selfless team play rather than "winning through intimidation." *Sacred Hoops* is not just for sports fans, but for anyone interested in the potential of the human spirit.

- *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou
 - In this first of five volumes of autobiography, poet Maya Angelou recounts a youth filled with disappointment, frustration, tragedy, and finally hard-won independence. Sent at a young age to live with her grandmother in Arkansas, Angelou learned a great deal from this exceptional woman and the tightly knit black community there. These very lessons carried her throughout the hardships she endured later in life.

- *Into Thin Air* by John Krakauer
 - A bank of clouds was assembling on the not-so-distant horizon, but journalist-mountaineer Jon Krakauer, standing on the summit of Mt. Everest, saw nothing that "suggested that a murderous storm was bearing down." He was wrong. The storm, which claimed five lives and left countless more -- including Krakauer's -- in guilt-ridden disarray, would also provide the impetus for *Into Thin Air*, Krakauer's epic account of the May 1996 disaster.