As you wind down your junior year, we congratulate you on your successes this year in a very challenging academic program and we wish you a relaxing summer. Before you leave Robinson to begin your summer break, we want to tell you a little bit about the IB English II HL course so that you will know what to expect and how to prepare.

The first semester will focus on a detailed study of works from different genres: essays, poetry and short stories. The Internal Assessment is oral, administered in December or January, and focuses on a close analysis of poetry and a scholarly discussion of the implications of the other works studied in the fall. In the second semester, we will focus on a group of works which connect under the theme of the Novel and Society by reading two novels and two sets of short stories. Exam paper two asks you to analyze two of these four works in a compare/contrast essay. Throughout the year, along with our close reading of literature, we will engage in lively conversation and thoughtful writing. We will take a number of papers through revision and maintain a writer’s notebook.

**Purpose of Summer Assignment:** There are two key questions we will explore throughout the year: one is academic and one is personal. In literature, we will explore how the way in which a writer chooses to tell his/her story affects the meaning of the work. In other words, how do the choices about narrative structure contribute to the author’s larger purposes. Narrative structure refers to the chronology, the point of view and the use of interpolated texts as well as other decisions that the writer makes to tell his or her story. On a more personal level, senior year is about forming and reconsidering our own identities. We will discuss how your own writing is reflective of your identity in college essay writing, as well as consider how authors form and develop character identities throughout their writing.

**Directions:** In order to begin our exploration of these questions, we would like for you to choose one of the titles on the attached annotated bibliography and read it prior to the first day of class. We would like you to read with the purposes of the assignment in mind.

**Assessment:** One of the first units of study we will do in the fall is to work with these books and the purposeful choices that your authors have made to construct meaning. We will do some writing and our work with these books will culminate in a Socratic Seminar.

**Due Date:** Please come to school the first day of class having completed reading your book.

Contact Person: Wendy Vu (wmvu@fcps.edu)

NOTE: The English department at Robinson owns copies of many of these books and we will be happy to check them out to you for the summer if you wish to borrow one. If you would rather have your own copy if you wish to annotate, the titles are all available in local bookstores and through amazon.com. Please see Mrs. Vu in the IB office if you would like to check out a book.

*Although not required for an English grade, we also recommend reading the Robinson common read, *I Will Always Write Back* by Caitlin Alifirenka and Martin Ganda*
• *The Vanishing Act of Esme Lennox* by Maggie O'Farrell. Chic and independent, Iris Lockhart is tending to her vintage-clothing shop in Edinburgh when she receives a stunning phone call: her great-aunt Esme—whom she never knew existed—is being released from Cauldstone Hospital, where she has been locked away for more than sixty years. Iris’s grandmother Kitty always claimed to be an only child. But Esme’s papers prove she is Kitty’s sister. Esme has been labeled harmless—sane enough to coexist with the rest of the world—but she’s still basically a stranger, a family member hidden away who will surely bring secrets with her when she leaves the ward. Moving expertly among the voices of Iris, Kitty, and Esme herself, Maggie O’Farrell reveals the story of Esme’s tragic and haunting absence.

• *Please Look After Mom* by Kyung-Sook Shin. When sixty-nine-year-old So-nyo is separated from her husband among the crowds of the Seoul subway station, her family begins a desperate search to find her. Yet as long-held secrets and private sorrows begin to reveal themselves, they are forced to wonder: how well did they actually know the woman they called Mom? Told through the piercing voices and urgent perspectives of a daughter, son, husband, and mother, *Please Look After Mom* is at once an authentic picture of contemporary life in Korea and a universal story of family love.

• *Book of Jonas* by Stephen Dau. Jonas is fifteen when his family is killed during an errant U.S. military operation in an unnamed Muslim country. With the help of an international relief organization, he is sent to America, where he struggles to assimilate. Eventually, he tells a court-mandated counselor and therapist about a U.S. soldier, Christopher Henderson, responsible for saving his life on the tragic night in question. Christopher's mother, Rose, has dedicated her life to finding out what really happened to her son, who disappeared after the raid in which Jonas' village was destroyed. When Jonas meets Rose, a shocking and painful secret gradually surfaces from the past, and builds to a shattering conclusion that haunts long after the final page.

• *Tortilla Curtain* by T. C. Boyle. Topanga Canyon is home to two couples on a collision course. Los Angeles liberals Delaney and Kyra Mossbacher lead an ordered sushi-and-recycling existence in a newly gated hilltop community; he a sensitive nature writer, she an obsessive realtor. Mexican illegals Candido and America Rincon desperately cling to their vision of the American Dream as they fight off starvation in a makeshift camp deep in the ravine. And from the moment a freak accident brings Candido and Delaney into intimate contact, these four and their opposing worlds gradually intersect in what becomes a tragicomedy of error and misunderstanding.

• *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khalid Hosseini. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is at once an incredible chronicle of thirty years of Afghan history and a deeply moving story of family, friendship, faith, and the salvation to be found in love. Born a generation apart and with very different ideas about love and family, Mariam and Laila are two women brought jarringly together by war, by loss and by fate. As they endure the ever escalating dangers around them—in their home as well as in the streets of Kabul—they come to form a bond that makes them both sisters and mother-daughter to each other, and that will ultimately alter the course not just of their own lives, but of the next generation. With heart-wrenching power and suspense, Hosseini shows how a woman's love for her family can move her to shocking and heroic acts of self-sacrifice, and that in the end it is love, or even the memory of love, that is often the key to survival.

All summaries are taken directly from www.amazon.com