

# HAVERHILL HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER READING LIST 2008

## Entering Senior Year

Listed below are the summer reading selections for students entering Grade 12 at Haverhill High School. Choose at least one book and have it read by the start of the school year. An assignment will be given during the first two weeks of school IN ALL ENGLISH CLASSES and this score will be averaged with your first quarter grade. Books can be found at the Haverhill Public Library or at local bookstores. Note: Students may read any title specifically recommended by the librarian in place of one on the list.

### FICTION:

#### *Till We Have Faces*

CS Lewis

*Till We Have Faces* retells and enriches the myth of Cupid and Psyche, although a lack of familiarity with the myth in no way diminishes from the enjoyment of the book. In Lewis' hands, the story sorts through issues of family, jealousy, gender, faith, and ultimate meaning, culminating with a frightening and yet wonderful 'face to face' scene that gives rise to, and explains, the book's title.

#### *A Prayer for Owen Meany*

John Irving

Owen Meany is a dwarfish boy with a strange voice who accidentally kills his best friend's mom with a baseball and believes--accurately--that he is an instrument of God, to be redeemed by martyrdom.

#### *Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister*

Gregory Maguire

Gregory Maguire's chilling, wonderful retelling of *Cinderella* is a study in contrasts. Love and hate, beauty and ugliness, cruelty and charity--each idea is stripped of its ethical trappings, smashed up against its opposite number, and laid bare for our examination.

#### *My Name Is Asher Lev*

Chaim Potok

Asher Lev is born to parents who are devoted to the life of the Ladover Hasidic Jew. From a very young age, Asher has a deep sense of art, and learns to express his innermost feelings through his creativity. As with any artistic genius, creating art is in Asher's blood and it soon gets in the way of his schooling and his religion and culture. Torn between his great desire to express himself as an artist and the need to please his parents and in particular his father, Asher's life is full of torment and guilt.

#### *The Alchemist*

Paulo Coelho

This inspirational fable by Brazilian author and translator Coelho has been a runaway bestseller throughout Latin America and seems poised to achieve the same prominence here. The charming tale of Santiago, a shepherd boy, who dreams of seeing the world, is compelling in its own right, but gains resonance through the many lessons Santiago learns during his adventures. He journeys from Spain to Morocco in search of worldly success, and eventually to Egypt, where a fateful encounter with an alchemist brings him at last to self-understanding and spiritual enlightenment.

#### *On the Road*

Jack Kerouac

*On The Road*, the most famous of Jack Kerouac's works, is not only the soul of the Beat movement and literature, but one of the most important novels of the century. Like nearly all of Kerouac's writing, *On The Road* is thinly fictionalized autobiography, filled with a cast made of Kerouac's real life friends, lovers, and fellow travelers. Narrated by Sal Paradise, one of Kerouac's alter-egos, *On the Road* is a cross-country bohemian odyssey that not only influenced writing in the years since its 1957 publication but penetrated into the deepest levels of American thought and culture.

***She's Come Undone***

**Wally Lamb**

"Mine is a story of craving; an unreliable account of lusts and troubles that began, somehow, in 1956 on the day our free television was delivered." So begins the story of Dolores Price, the unconventional heroine of Wally Lamb's *She's Come Undone*. Dolores is a class-A emotional basket case, and why shouldn't she be? She's suffered almost every abuse and familial travesty that exists: Her father is a violent, philandering liar; her mother has the mental and emotional consistency of Jell-O; and the men in her life are probably the gender's most loathsome creatures. But Dolores is no quitter; she battles her woes with a sense of self-indulgence and gluttony rivaled only by Henry VIII.

***How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents***

**Julia Alvarez**

It's a long way from Santo Domingo to the Bronx, but if anyone can go the distance, it's the Garcia girls. Four lively Latinas plunged from a pampered life of privilege on an island compound into the big-city chaos of New York, they rebel against Mami and Papi's old-world discipline and embrace all that America

**NON FICTION:**

***Reading Lolita in Tehran***

**Azar Nafisi**

In 1995, after resigning from her job as a professor at a university in Tehran due to repressive policies, Azar Nafisi invited seven of her best female students to attend a weekly study of great Western literature in her home. Since the books they read were officially banned by the government, the women were forced to meet in secret, often sharing photocopied pages of the illegal novels. For two years they met to talk, share, and "shed their mandatory veils and robes and burst into color." Though most of the women were shy and intimidated at first, they soon became emboldened by the forum and used the meetings as a springboard for debating the social, cultural, and political realities of living under strict Islamic rule.

***First They Killed My Father***

**Loung Ung**

Written in the present tense, *First They Killed My Father* will put you right in the midst of the action--action you'll wish had never happened. It's a tough read, but definitely a worthwhile one, and the author's personality and strength shine through on every page. Covering the years from 1975 to 1979, the story moves from the deaths of multiple family members to the forced separation of the survivors, leading ultimately to the reuniting of much of the family, followed by marriages and immigrations. The brutality seems unending--beatings, starvation, attempted rape, mental cruelty--and yet the narrator (a young girl) never stops fighting for escape and survival.

***Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance***

**Robert Pirsig**

Arguably one of the most profoundly important essays ever written on the nature and significance of "quality" and definitely a necessary anodyne to the consequences of a modern world pathologically obsessed with quantity. Although set as a story of a cross-country trip on a motorcycle by a father and son, it is more nearly a journey through 2,000 years of Western philosophy. For some people, this has been a truly life-changing book.

***Into the Wild***

**Jon Krakauer**

In April 1992, a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. He had given \$25,000 in savings to a charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet and invented a life for himself. Four months later, his decomposed body was found by a moose hunter.

***When I Was Puerto Rican***

**Esmeralda Santiago**

Esmeralda and her seven siblings live in a corrugated metal shack in Puerto Rico. She is uprooted as a result of poverty and her parents' quarreling and suffers blows to her ego from their expectations of her. The girl goes to New York, where her grandmother lives, and must rely on her intelligence and talents to help her survive in an alien world in which being Puerto Rican is not advantageous. Her story rings true and will be an inspiration to YAs forced to make their own way in a sometimes hostile environment.