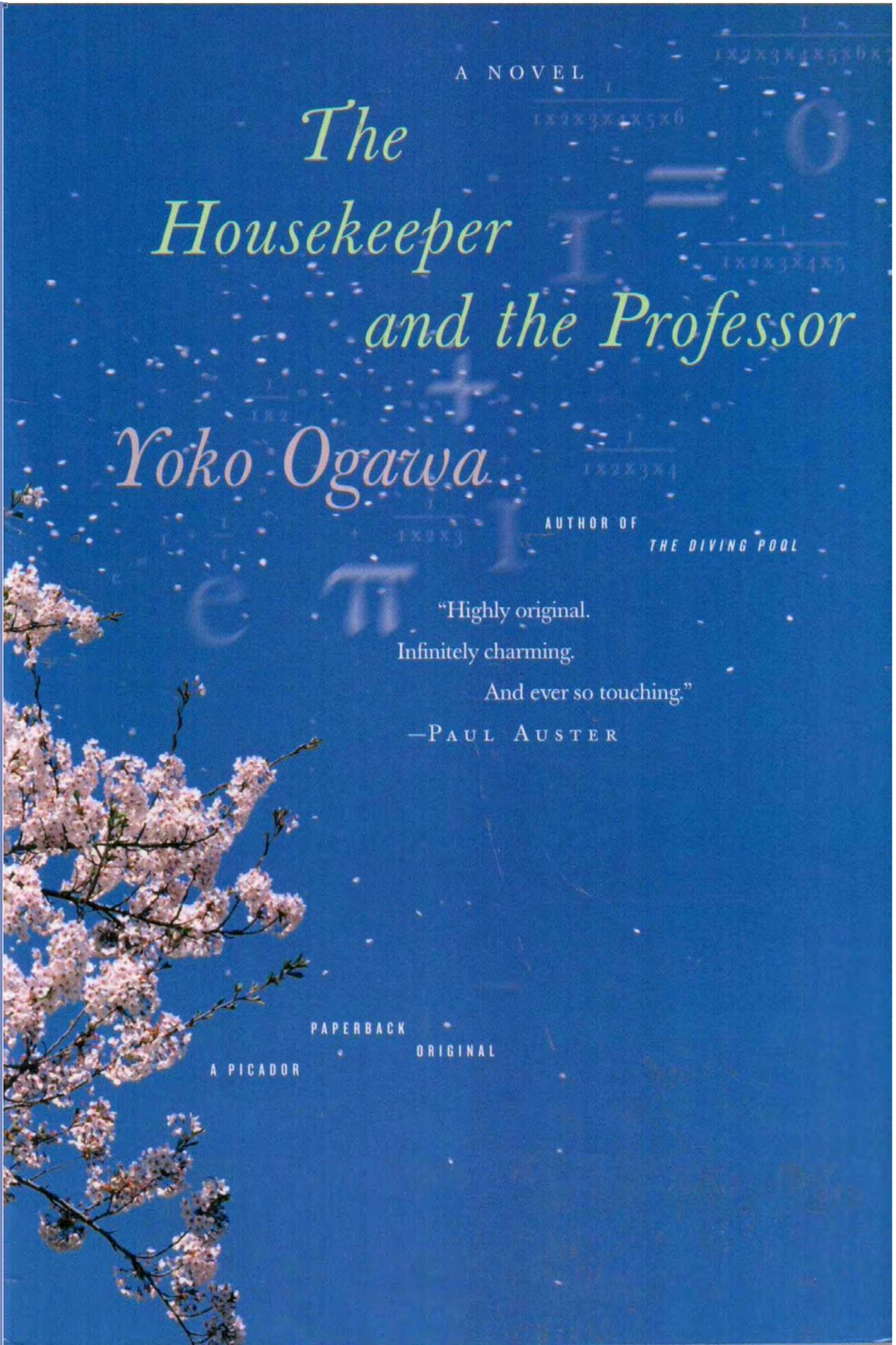


BHS Summer Reading 2011



A NOVEL

*The
Housekeeper
and the Professor*

Yoko Ogawa

AUTHOR OF

THE DIVING POOL

“Highly original.
Infinitely charming.
And ever so touching.”

—PAUL AUSTER

PAPERBACK

ORIGINAL

A PICADOR



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Dear Students:

Brookline High School has selected as its required summer read: The Housekeeper and the Professor by Yoko Ogawa. The story is about a math professor who, as a result of an accident, has a working memory of only eighty minutes. However, he is still able to think and reason mathematically. In September you will share your thoughts about this book in your math class.

Imagine you had a working memory of only 80 minutes; meaning the only events you could remember occurred in the last 80 minutes of your life. The only people you would remember would be those whom you met in the last 80 minutes as well. What could you do to help you function from one day to the next? From one hour to the next? At the same time, you can still reason mathematically. And you remember the math that you've learned. Could you use that ability to help you live your life in a meaningful way?

These are the themes that run through the book as the professor figures out ways to carry out seemingly mundane daily tasks. At the same time, we see how he develops friendships with the housekeeper who takes care of him and her son, who he nicknames "root" (because his head looks like a square root symbol) and with whom he shares a love of baseball. Despite his inability to remember who the boy is from day to day, the professor is able to teach him mathematics by showing him the beauty of numbers and patterns.

The Brookline Public Library and Brookline High School Library will have copies on reserve, or you can buy your own at a local bookstore. In addition, the Brookline High School librarians have prepared a special summer reading list with mathematical themes.

Enjoy!

Bob and Josh

BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER READING LIST 2011

REQUIRED BOOK: *The Housekeeper and the Professor*

The Housekeeper and the Professor by Yoko Ogawa was chosen by the Mathematics Department at BHS. Narrated by the Housekeeper, the other main characters are known only as the Professor and Root, the Housekeeper's 10-year-old son. Once a brilliant mathematician, the Professor was seriously injured in a car accident and his short-term memory only lasts for 80 minutes.

The list begins with books connected to the theme of math and its significance in our daily lives. Additional titles, both fiction and non-fiction, in a variety of genres, are recommended by Brookline High School Librarians. There are thousands of great books out there-- don't forget the classics! Come see us in September and let us know what you recommend.

Math Stories

***A Beautiful Mind* by Sylvia Nasar**

This biography charts the descent into paranoid schizophrenia of mathematical genius John Forbes Nash, a founder of game theory, a RAND Cold War strategist and winner of a 1994 Nobel Prize in economics. Nash's disintegration began at age 30 and lasted for decades until his spontaneous recovery in the early 1990s. Basis for award winning film of the same name.

***Born on a Blue Day* by Daniel Tammet**

This unique first-person account offers a window into the mind of a high-functioning, 27-year-old British autistic savant with Asperger's syndrome. Besides being able to effortlessly multiply and divide huge sums in his head with the speed and accuracy of a computer, Tammet is capable of incredible feats of memorization and mental calculation.

***Breaking the Code* by Hugh Whitmore**

This new play revolves around the life of Math Genius Alan Mathison Turing, who was able to break the Nazi Enigma Code for the British government.

***Bringing Down the House* by Ben Mezrich**

A group of math whizzes from MIT used the art of counting cards, worked as teams, and legally won as much as 4 million dollars during the few years they spent their weekends in the Vegas casinos. Basis of the movie "21".

***A Certain Ambiguity: A Mathematical Novel* by Gaurav Suri and Hartosh Singh Bal**

Suri and Bal's unconventional book praises the beauty of mathematics and the logical inevitability of its proofs.

***Einstein in Love: A Scientific Romance* by Dennis Overbye**

A biography of the physicist reveals Einstein as a passionate man, lovelorn teen, draft dodger, bohemian, poet, and ultimately a scientist.

***Five Equations that Changed the World: The Power and Poetry of Mathematics* by Michael Guillen**

Harvard mathematician Guillen looks at five mathematical breakthroughs and the theorists behind them, among them Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein.

***Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* by Edwin Abbott**

Published in 1880, this short and funny fantasy/satire takes us to a completely flat world of two physical dimensions where all the inhabitants are geometric shapes who think the planar world of length and width that they know is all there is.

***Proof* by David Auburn**

After the death of her mathematical genius father, Catherine, who gave up her own study of mathematics to tend to him, claims that she is the author of a proof found in the attic among his unpublished notebooks. But what "proof" does Catherine have that she, and not her father, is the author? This play won both a Tony and a Pulitzer Prize.

***Pythagoras' Revenge: A Mathematical Mystery* by Arturo Sangalli**

Who would have guessed that a murder-treasure mystery lay hidden behind a geometric formula familiar to every high-schooler? Weaving a wealth of mathematical scholarship into a compellingly plotted novel, Sangalli recounts a fascinating tale of ancient arson and modern sleuthing.

***Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea* by Charles Seife**

Seife provides readers with a clear window to both the powerful techniques of calculus and the conundrums of modern physics in his entertaining, insightful book.

Adventure, Survival and Mystery

***American Rust* by Philipp Meyer**

Compelling literary fiction with the engine of a gripping thriller. The story of the fallout of a murder on a group of connected characters is set in an economically depressed region of Pennsylvania is not for the faint of heart.

***Between a Rock and a Hard Place* by Aron Ralston**

In a personal account of strength in the face of adversity, Ralston presents the shocking story of the self-amputation of his right arm after it was caught between a boulder and a canyon wall during what began as a routine day hike in the Utah Canyons. Made into the film *127 Hours*.

***Blood River: The Terrifying Journey Through the World's Most Dangerous Country* by Tim Butcher**

British journalist recounts his devastating yet strangely exhilarating account of his six-week ordeal during which he retraced the steps of 19th-century explorer H.M. Stanley's Victorian-era travels in a journey through present-day Republic of Congo.

***The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America* by Erik Larson**

The true dark underside of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, where evil and murder mixed with optimism, invention and wonder.

***In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex* by Nathaniel Philbrick**

This is the chilling true tale of the Essex, a whaling ship that was sunk in the middle of the Pacific by an 80-foot sperm whale in 1820.

***Life of Pi* by Yann Martel**

Possessing encyclopedia-like intelligence, unusual zookeeper's son Pi Patel sets sail for America, but when the ship sinks, he escapes on a life boat and is lost at sea with a dwindling number of animals until only he and a hungry Bengal tiger remain.

***London Eye Mystery* by Siobhan Dowd**

When Ted and Kat's cousin Salim disappears from the London Eye ferris wheel, the two siblings must work together--Ted with his brain that is "wired differently" and impatient Kat--to try to solve the mystery of what happened to Salim.

***Please Ignore Vera Dietz* by A.S. King**

When her best friend, whom she secretly loves, betrays her and then dies under mysterious circumstances, high school senior Vera Dietz struggles with secrets that could help clear his name. (2011 Printz Honor Book)

***Ship Breaker* by Paolo Bacigalupi**

The 2011 Printz Award Winner for Excellence in Young Adult Literature is a fast-paced post-apocalyptic adventure set on the American Gulf Coast.

***Story of Edgar Sawtelle* by David Wroblewski**

In this unusual mystery, a boy wonders if his sinister uncle is responsible for his father's death. It celebrates the alliances that can form between humans and dogs when words are difficult.

***True Grit* by Charles Portis**

14 year old Mattie Ross, accompanied by the one-eyed Rooster Cogburn -- the meanest available US Marshall, sets out to avenge her father's death and to pursue his killer into Indian Territory.

***Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* by Laura Hillebrand**

The inspiring true story of a man who lived through a series of catastrophes almost too incredible to be believed. Louie Zamperini was a juvenile delinquent-turned-Olympic runner-turned-WWII Army hero. During a routine search mission over the Pacific, Louie's plane crashed into the ocean; what happened to him over the next three years of his life is a story that will keep you glued to your seat.

***The Watchmen* by Alan Moore**

This graphic novel dissects the concept of superheroes, as a group of familiar characters are stalked by unknown assailants.

Against All Odds

***The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak**

Through the unblinking eyes of Trudi, we witness the growing impact of Nazism on ordinary folk of a German town as they are thrust onto a larger moral stage and are forced to make choices about prejudice and exclusion, secrets that will forever mark their lives.

***Dreams from my Father* by Barack Obama**

President Obama tells the story of his life as the son of a black African father and a white American mother, and his personal search for a workable meaning to his life as an African American.

***Feast of the Goat* by Mario Vargas Llosa**

Acclaimed South American writer Llosa, winner of the 2010 Nobel Prize for Literature, offers a vivid re-creation of the Dominican Republic during the final days of General Rafael Trujillo's insidious and evil regime.

***Gilgamesh* by Joan London**

A seventeen-year old girl in rural Australia, captivated by tales of a world far away, then travels to Armenia at the outbreak of War.

***Let the Great World Spin* by Colum McCann**

It's August of 1974, and Watergate and the Vietnam War make the world feel precarious: a man on a cable walks (repeatedly) between the World Trade Center towers. This extraordinary real-life feat by French wirewalker Philippe Petit becomes the touchstone for stories that briefly submerge you in ten varied and intense lives.

***What is the What?* by Dave Eggers**

Fictionalized memoir of real-life hero Valentino Achak Deng, a refugee from the Sudanese civil war--the bloodbath of the 1980's.

Choices, Ethics and Philosophy

***Dive from Clausen's Pier* by Ann Packer**

A riveting novel that examines one woman's struggles with loyalty, betrayal and love.

***The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot**

In 1951, a poor African American woman named Henrietta Lacks dies of cervical cancer, but pieces of the tumor that killed her--taken without her knowledge or consent--live on, first in one lab, then in hundreds, then thousands, then in giant factories churning out polio vaccines, then aboard rocket ships launched into space. The author spent ten years answering questions about her life and family.

***The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga**

A memorable tale of one taxi driver's hellish experience in modern day India.

***Tunes for Bears to Dance To* by Robert Cormier**

Conveys the devastating effects of evil, whether as huge and incomprehensible as the Holocaust, or as small and personal as another human being.

Coming of Age: Literature about Adolescents

***Beautiful Miscellaneous* by Dominic Smith**

Nathan is the average son of a brilliant father, until a terrible accident leaves him with mysterious new abilities to unravel as he also tries to make peace with the crushing weight of his father's expectations.

***Boy Meets Boy* by David Levitan**

In this humorous, hopeful story about life in a town gloriously accepting of differences, the author only occasionally verges on magic realism in his first novel in which same sex preference is not a problem.

***Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz**

The story of lonely outsider Oscar, an unattractive, overweight teen growing up in a Dominican neighborhood NJ. Reading SF and Fantasy give him his only pleasure. He really wants love, and, though his romantic overtures are constantly rejected, he perseveres

***First Part Last* by Angela Johnson**

Bobbie's carefree teenage life changes forever when he becomes a father and must care for his adored baby daughter.

***Grind* by Eric Walters**

Philip, obsessed with skateboarding, finds himself pushed to perform with more and more dangerous stunts when he begins taping himself and posting the movies on a Website to make money.

***Jumped* by Rita Williams-Garcia**

The lives of Leticia, Dominique, and Trina are irrevocably intertwined through the course of one day in an urban high school after Leticia overhears Dominique's plans to beat up Trina and must decide whether or not to get involved.

***Looking for Alaska* by John Green**

Tired of his boring existence, 16-year-old Miles "Pudge" Halter heads off to seek his Great Perhaps at an Alabama boarding school, where new-found freedom, guilty pleasures and an enigmatic girl named Alaska hurl him into life.

***Marcelo in the Real World* by Francisco X. Stork**

Marcelo Sandoval, a seventeen-year-old boy on the high-functioning end of the autistic spectrum, faces new challenges, including romance and injustice, when he goes to work for his father in the mailroom of a corporate law firm.

***Parrotfish* by Ellen Wittlinger**

Wittlinger has done a superb job of untangling the complexities of gender identity and showing the person behind labels like "gender dysphoria" in this novel about transgendered high-school junior Angela McNair, who *knows* that she's a boy and finds the courage to change her hair, clothing and name and, in doing so, finds an identity he can live with.

Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky

We learn about high school freshman Charlie's friendships, family relationships and experimentation with drugs and sexuality through letters to someone of undisclosed name, age and gender.

Rats Saw God by Rob Thomas

A few months before graduation, Steve's guidance counselor intervenes, arranging for Steve to complete a failing English credit by composing a 100 page story about his sophomore and junior years of high school.

Story of a Girl by Sara Zarr

Three years after being discovered in the back seat of a car with an older boy, Deanna's life is crumbling around her and school has become a nightmare. Trying to escape with her brother, she finds the meaning of forgiveness.

Townie by Andre Dubus IV

This beautifully crafted memoir, by the author of *House of Sand and Fog*, describes his childhood in a depressed Massachusetts mill town, saturated with drugs and crime, and his weekly visits with his father, an eminent author who taught on a college campus.

Tyrell by Coe Booth

Fifteen-year-old Tyrell, who is living in a Bronx homeless shelter with his spaced-out mother and younger brother, tries to avoid temptation so he does not end up in jail like his father.

Contemporary Issues

Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers by Alissa Quart

Examines the role of malls, marketing, logos, cinema, video games and media on the buying practices of teens.

Columbine by Dave Cullen

In this remarkable account of the April 20, 1999, Columbine High School shooting, journalist Cullen not only dispels several of the prevailing myths about the event but tackles the hardest question of all: why did it happen?

Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything by Steven Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner

In *Freakonomics*, the co-authors develop a convincing argument: many apparent mysteries of everyday life don't need to be so mysterious: they could be illuminated and made even more fascinating by asking the right questions and drawing connections.

Global Values 101: a Short Course by Kate Holbrook

Student interviews with Howard Zinn, Lani Guinier, Noam Chomsky, Naomi Klein, Katha Pollitt, Robert Reich, and others touch on such subjects as gender, race, inequality and affluence, courage, free speech, and social responsibility.

Hamlet's Blackberry: A Practical Philosophy for Building a Good Life in the Digital Age by William Powers

In this well-researched, thought-provoking book, Powers presents a sobering look at how we have let technology impact our views about the world and our relationship to it.

Spark: the Revolutionary new Science of Exercise and the Brain by John J. Ratey

Latest research shows that exercise charges your mental circuits to sharpen thinking, lift your mood, boost memory and beat stress.

Outliers: The Story of Success by Malcolm Gladwell

Through case studies, the best-selling author of *The Tipping Point* and *Blink* poses a provocative question: why do some people succeed, living remarkably productive lives, while so many more never reach their potential?

Where Men Win Glory: Odyssey of Pat Tillman by Jon Krakauer

Traces the controversial story of NFL player and soldier Pat Tillman, describing the military's efforts to hide the truth about his death by friendly fire, in an account that draws on Tillman's journals, letters and interviews with family members and fellow soldiers.

Historical Fiction

Day of Tears: a novel in dialogue by Julius Lester

A look at slavery in the United States in a way that depicts the human casualties of the institution. Broken families and friendships that were destroyed or the moral and spiritual consequences for slave owners and sellers are all examined here.

Girl with the Pearl Earring by Tracy Chevalier

The subject of a famous Vermeer painting has her own story to tell of the tensions of working in the artist's house and learning secrets.

Incantation by Alice Hoffman

During the Spanish Inquisition, sixteen-year-old Estrella, brought up a Catholic, discovers her family's true Jewish identity, and when their secret is betrayed by Estrella's best friend the consequences are tragic.

***Inés of my Soul* by Isabel Allende**

This well-researched work of historical fiction recounts the astonishing life of Inés Surez, a daring Spanish conquistadora who toiled to build the South American nation of Chile. Tells of the difficulty of subduing the ingenious and fierce Mapuche people.

***The Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara**

This fictional account of four days in July 1863 at the Battle of Gettysburg discusses tactics and battle plans of the North and the South.

***Map of Ireland* by Stephanie Grant**

In 1974, the first year of busing in Boston, seventeen-year-old Ann Ahern is drawn to her African French teacher and learns of struggles of African Americans in the post-Civil Rights era.

Mirrors and Windows: Exploring Cultures

***All Rivers Run to the Sea: Memoirs* by Elie Wiesel.**

Elie Wiesel recounts his life story, telling of his childhood in the Carpathian mountains, his imprisonment at Auschwitz and Buchenwald, and his career as a journalist.

***American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang**

A graphic novel tells three interrelated stories about the problems of young Chinese Americans trying to participate in popular culture.

***American Son* by Brian Ascalon Roley**

A divorced mother from the Philippines looks on sadly as her teenage sons are swallowed up by the American dream, the lure of gangs, and the promise of the prosperous life. Told from one son's viewpoint, the occasionally vicious tug of wills between brothers rings true.

***After This* by Alice McDermott**

An Irish Catholic family loses a son in Vietnam and struggles to hold their values and their teenage children, doubtful and rebellious.

***Caucasia* by Danzy Senna**

Two sisters, one light-skinned like their mother, the other dark like their father, are separated after their parents divorce and go on to lead very different lives while hoping for a reunion with each other. Written by a BHS graduate.

***The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* by Francisco Jimenez**

Explores a migrant family's experiences moving through labor camps, facing poverty and impermanence, and discusses how they endure through faith, hope, and back-breaking work.

***Cutting for Stone* by Abraham Verghese**

Twin brothers born from a secret love affair between an Indian nun and a British surgeon in Addis Ababa, Marion and Shiva Stone come of age in Ethiopia, where their love for the same woman drives them apart. Although their paths diverge, they both choose to dedicate their lives to medicine.

***Getting Away With Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case* by Chris Crowe**

Presents a true account of the murder of fourteen-year-old, Emmett Till, in Mississippi, in 1955.

***A Hope in the Unseen: An American Odyssey from the inner city to the Ivy League* by Ron Suskind**

Cedric Jennings' life is not only one of struggle and success in arriving at Brown, but of the reality of his unrealized dream of belonging.

***Keoko* by Linda Sue Park**

With national pride and occasional fear, a brother and sister face the increasingly oppressive occupation of Korea by Japan during World War II, which threatens to suppress Korean culture entirely.

Out of this World: Science Fiction and Fantasy

***Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card**

Ender, who is the result of genetic experimentation, may be the military genius Earth needs in its war against an alien enemy.

***Fledgling* by Octavia Butler**

Butler takes on the vampire theme and cleverly develops her favorite themes of prejudice, power and transformation.

***Little Brother* by Cory Doctorow**

Set in the near future, Doctorow's novel blurs the lines between current and potential technologies in this Orwellian infused tale of a cyber-savvy teen caught in the aftermath of a terrorist attack.

Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro

There's a dark secret at the Hailsham School, where the students live in ordered, idyllic isolation, ignorant of their planned future.

Neverwhere by Neil Gaiman

This darker and more horrific version of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* teaches that no good deed goes unpunished. This frightening mystery of villains, murder, mayhem begins when a 16-year-old runaway discovers that statues are street "immobilists".

The Road by Cormac McCarthy

This powerful post-apocalyptic story imagines a future in which father and son, sustained by love for each other, walk through a burned out America, destined for the coast, not knowing what lies ahead.

The Telling by Ursula LeGuin

Quiet humor, references to the dangers of restricting freedoms, and beautifully visualized worlds continue the Hainish cycle story.

Sports Stories

The Assist by Neil Swidey

A riveting basketball story about two African-American players at state champion Charlestown High School.

The Beautiful Game by Jonathan Littman.

Littman describes a soccer season that changed everything for the girls on the team.

The Blind Side by Michael Lewis

Tells the story of University of Mississippi football player Michael Oher, who was raised by a crack addicted mother and adopted at the age of sixteen by a wealthy family.

Friday Night Lights by H.G. Bissinger

Chronicles a football season in Odessa, Texas, exploring the role of high school sports in America, uniting and destroying communities.

In These Girls Hope is a Muscle by Madeleine Blais

Follows the Amherst Massachusetts Lady Warriors basketball team during the season which led up to their state championship.

The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams by Darcy Frey

A story of dreams and cynicism, the often naive hopes of youth played out against the realities of SATs, the NCAA, and the brutal world of college athletic sports recruitment.