

## DANA HALL SCHOOL 2010 FACULTY & STAFF SUMMER READING BIBLIOGRAPHY

### FICTION

*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Stieg Larsson (2008)

Once you start *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, there's no turning back. This debut thriller--the first in a trilogy from the late Stieg Larsson--is a serious page-turner. Mikael Blomkvist, a once-respected financial journalist, watches his professional life rapidly crumble around him. Prospects appear bleak until an unexpected (and unsettling) offer to resurrect his name is extended by an old-school titan of Swedish industry. The catch--and there's always a catch--is that Blomkvist must first spend a year researching a mysterious disappearance that has remained unsolved for nearly four decades. With few other options, he accepts and enlists the help of investigator Lisbeth Salander, a misunderstood genius with a cache of authority issues. Little is as it seems in Larsson's novel, but there is at least one constant: you really *don't* want to mess with the girl with the dragon tattoo. (Dave Callanan, *Amazon.com*)

*The Help*, Kathryn Stockett (2009)

What perfect timing for this optimistic, uplifting debut novel set during the nascent civil rights movement in Jackson, Miss., where black women were trusted to raise white children but not to polish the household silver. Eugenia Skeeter Phelan is just home from college in 1962, and, anxious to become a writer, is advised to hone her chops by writing about what disturbs you. The budding social activist begins to collect the stories of the black women on whom the country club sets relies and mistrusts enlisting the help of Aibileen, a maid who's raised 17 children, and Aibileen's best friend Minny, who's found herself unemployed more than a few times after mouthing off to her white employers. The book Skeeter puts together based on their stories is scathing and shocking, bringing pride and hope to the black community, while giving Skeeter the courage to break down her personal boundaries and pursue her dreams. Assured and layered, full of heart and history, this one has bestseller written all over it. (*Publishers Weekly*)

*Imperfect Birds*, Anne Lamott (2010)

It is sobering to think that Rosie Ferguson is your typical teenage girl. On one hand, she's in the throes of her senior year in high school: concerned with body image and boyfriends, BFFs and boredom, and, of course, the daily trauma of living with parents who are so hopelessly, well, hopeless. On the other hand, she is an adept addict who's never met a substance she wouldn't abuse or a male she wouldn't seduce. Juggling these two worlds demands bigger and more frequent scores, and more facile lies, while Rosie's parents, recovering alcoholic Elizabeth and workaholic stepfather James, are reluctant to enforce even the lamest disciplinary rules for fear of losing Rosie's love--until one night when her world comes crashing down, and Elizabeth and James have no choice but to send Rosie to a wilderness rehab program. Reprising characters from her previous novels, *Rosie* (1997) and *Crooked Little Heart* (1998), Lamott intuitively taps into the teenage drug culture to create a vivid, unsettling portrait of a family in crisis. As she eschews the cunning one-liners and wry observations that had become her signature stock-in-trade, Lamott produces her most stylistically mature and thematically circumspect novel to date. (Carol Haggas, *Booklist*)

## NONFICTION

*Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, Daniel H. Pink (2009)

According to Pink, everything we think we know about what motivates us is wrong. He pits the latest scientific discoveries about the mind against the outmoded wisdom that claims people can only be motivated by the hope of gain and the fear of loss. Pink cites a dizzying number of studies revealing that carrot and stick can actually significantly reduce the ability of workers to produce creative solutions to problems. What motivates us once our basic survival needs are met is the ability to grow and develop, to realize our fullest potential. Case studies of Google's 20 percent time (in which employees work on projects of their choosing one full day each week) and Best Buy's Results Only Work Environment (in which employees can work whenever and however they choose—as long as they meet specific goals) demonstrate growing endorsement for this approach. A series of appendixes include further reading and tips on applying this method to businesses, fitness and child-rearing. Drawing on research in psychology, economics and sociology, Pink's analysis—and new model—of motivation offers tremendous insight into our deepest nature. (*Publishers Weekly*)

*The Gardner Heist*, Ulrich Boser (2009)

In the early morning hours of March 18, 1990, thieves posing as cops entered Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and left with a haul unrivaled in the art world, including three Rembrandts and a Vermeer, valued today at \$600 million. Boser, a contributing editor at *U.S. News and World Report*, turned amateur sleuth after the death of a legendary independent fine arts claims adjuster, Harold Smith, who was haunted by the Gardner robbery. Boser carried on Smith's work, pursuing leads as varied as James Whitey Bulger's Boston mob and the IRA. Along the way, he visited felons—including the notorious art thief Myles Connor—and Bob Wittman, the FBI's only art theft undercover agent. Boser's rousing account of his years spent collecting clues large and small is entertaining enough to make readers almost forget that, after 18 years, the paintings have still not been found: the museum is offering a \$5 million reward for information leading to their return. (*Publishers Weekly*)

*The Power of Half: One Family's Decision to Stop Taking and Start Giving Back*, Kevin and Hannah Salwen (2010)

In this well-meaning but self-congratulatory memoir, the Salwen family decides to sell their gorgeous Atlanta mansion, move to a home half the size, and commit half the proceeds to the needy. Putting their plan into action, a raft of family decisions and meetings are led by mom Joan, a former corporate consulting executive and teacher, with the help of an actual whiteboard. Entrepreneur and activist Kevin, a former *Wall Street Journal* editor, writes with daughter Hannah, who, as instigator of the family project, provides commentary and practical suggestions. The chronicle is intriguing and the cohesiveness of the four family members is remarkable: "Friends and others... always focused on... the big house, the big donation, or the trip to Africa" with their eventual partner, The Hunger Project, rather than "the transformational energy" of "a family eager to stand for something collectively." (*Publishers Weekly*)

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