

Take My Word For It..."

Looking for a good book to read? Try one of these personal recommendations from members of the Drew community who responded to a campus request for reviews of favorite summer reading. Not surprisingly, a range of books and contributors are represented here.

Posthumous Keats: A Personal Biography, by acclaimed American poet Stanley Plumly (W.W. Norton, 2008), is not only a riveting retelling of the life and death of the English poet John Keats, it also establishes a new subgenre: the *personal* biography. That is to say, the book recounts the life of Keats not in the dry, reserved prose one might expect of such a book, but with all the drama and heartbreak of a fine novel. I can recommend *Posthumous Keats* not only to lovers of Keats' poetry, but to anyone with a taste for a compelling, well-wrought story. — Patrick Phillips, Assistant Professor of English

Oryx and Crake, Margaret Atwood (McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 2003). This book drew me in from the start: It's like nothing else I've ever read. Margaret Atwood is a wonderful storyteller whose version of a post-apocalyptic world is completely different from what you'd expect. — Rosalie Fry, Class of 2012

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close by Jonathon Safran (Houghton Mifflin, 2005). I read this book a few summers ago. It is one of my favorite books that I continually recommend to people---a very heartwarming story that you won't forget. — Sara Koepf, Lab Instructor

Trout Fishing in America, by Richard Brautigan (Delacorte Press, 1967), which I read last summer, was unlike anything I have ever been exposed to. Brautigan's ceaseless descriptions with humorous prose and metaphor made it impossible to put down and left with me an inescapable feeling that I wasn't reading a novel, but hearing stories from an old, yet crazy, friend. Overall, I highly recommend the book to anyone who is hungry for a new perspective and some iconoclastic comical insight. — Alexandra Danoff, Class of 2011

The Shack, by William P. Young (Windblown Media, 2007), is an excellent start to raising and opening up questions about the nature of God, humanity and the nature of forgiveness and judgment. While Young has done a thing in this novel which is highly unexpected in such a time as this, he also falters in some moments, protesting too little and too much of God, but all in all a worthwhile, and fulfilling novel. — Becky Parsons, Theological Student

A Prayer for Owen Meany, by John Irving (Ballantine Books, 1997; original copyright, 1989). Drawing on historical moments like Vietnam in small town New Hampshire, Irving takes you on a moving yet realistic journey through friendship, love, and what it means to live and die. — Becky Parsons, Theological Student

The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492, by Alfred W. Crosby, Jr. (Greenwood Pub Co., 1972). Crosby focuses on exchanges of diseases, plants, and animals between Europe and America after the voyages of Columbus. This stimulating book is carefully researched, full of interesting anecdotes, and would be of interest to a wide audience.---Matthew R. Beland, CSGS, Ph.D. 2008

Predictably Irrational, by Dan Ariely (Harper-Collins, 2008) An illuminating and amusing look at the foibles of human reasoning. In a very accessible and engaging style, Ariely describes some imaginative and clever experiments that consistently reveal error and bias in the way we think and draw conclusions about the world. — Stephen Kilianski, Instructor

Obsidian Butterfly, by Laurel K. Hamilton (Jove Novel, 2000). A story of vampires, witches, and zombies, *Obsidian Butterfly* takes a strong heroin into a world of Aztec lore and the sun-drenched town of Santa Fe to battle one of her most mysterious cases yet. — Ciara B. Perez, Class of 2010

The Crucified God, by Jurgen Moltmann (Harper and Row, 1974). Moltman explores the theological centrality of the cross in regards: who Jesus is, who God is, who we are, and what Christian faith means in the context of personal and societal liberation. A challenging and insightful work that is a "must read" for any serious thinking Christian. — Halley Low, Theology Student

On the Mystery, by Catherine Keller (Fortress Press, 2008) has rightly been described as a 101 course on process theology in a book. A creative theological journey grounded in insightful biblical exegesis, solid philosophical analysis, and contemporary scientific investigation, with important implications for ecological/social issues of our day. — Halley Low, Theology Student

The Fratricides, by Nikos Kazantzakis, trans. Athena Gianakas Dallas, (Simon & Schuster, 1964.) Set in the context of the Greek civil war (1942-49), *The Fratricides* is the story of an arguably Christ-like priest's struggle to restore peace, freedom, solidarity, and justice in his small mountain village. The novel, Kazantzakis' last and least well-known, at once inspires us to hope and compels us to doubt that such struggles for a better world--~~indeed, for a better humanity~~--can succeed. — Kenneth Alexo, Jr., Director of Corporate, Foundation & Government Relations

The Three Musketeers, by Alexandre Dumas, translated by Richard Pevear (Penguin Group USA, 2006). A truly unforgettable book. Rollicking in its adventure, humorous in its dialogue, and memorable in its characters. — Eddie Gonzalez, Class of 2012

Unaccustomed Earth, by Jhumpa Lahiri (Alfred A. Knopf, 2008). This moving collection of short stories explores the many challenges faced by the American-born children of Indian immigrants. The characters are immediately sympathetic, and the writing is beautifully subtle. — Charles Green, Graduate Student

The Lusiads, by Luis Vaz de Camões (or Camoens), translated by Landeg White (Oxford World's Classics, 1997). A new translation of this witty, 1572 Renaissance poem which celebrates the discoveries of Vasco de Gama and the Portuguese opening of the world. Camoens, the first European writer to cross the equator, uses Classical style and imagery, such as Bacchus and Venus competing on Mt. Olympus, to show in mythical terms how new discoveries surpass the ancients' knowledge of the world.--- John R. Lenz, Associate Professor of Classics

Don Quixote, by Miguel de Cervantes (Originally published 1605; Penguin Classics translation by John Rutherford 2003) I was surprised at how readable and contemporary this translation felt, and found myself laughing out loud at the hilarious exploits of the title character and his trusty sidekick Sancho Panza. I even came to understand the true meaning of *quixotic*.---Lee Arnold, Assistant Professor of Art