Laura's Best of Reading Lists:
The First 29 Years
Alphabetized by Author

Fiction
Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*
Doris Betts, *Souls Raised from the Dead* (dying and coping)
Olive Anne Burns, *Cold Sassy Tree* (coming of age; South)
Joyce Cary, *The Horse's Mouth* (Blake in the 20thc.)
E.L. Doctorow, *The World's Fair* (historical fiction); *Ragtime*
Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (Norton Critical edition, Constance Garnet translation)
Mark Dunn, *Ella Minnow Pea* (for lovers of language)
John Dunning, *Two O'Clock Eastern Wartime* (radio mystery)
Leif Enger, *Peace Like a River* (11 year old witness to miracles)
Charles Frazier, *Cold Mountain* (Civil War)
Ernest J. Gaines, *A Lesson Before Dying* (racial conflict)
George Gissing, *The Odd Women* (19thc. British)
Graham Greene, *Monsignor Quixote* (religious issues)
Jon Hassler, *North of Hope* (and other titles)
Oscar Hijuelos, *Mr. Ives' Christmas* (suffering/religious themes)
John Irving, *A Prayer for Owen Meany* (God's will; Vietnam)
Sue Monk Kidd, *The Secret Life of Bees* (young girl seeking forgiveness finds healing)
E.L. Konigsberg, *The Crazy Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* (children who run away to the museum)
Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*
Jonathan Lethem, *Motherless Brooklyn* (detective with Tourette's)
David Lodge, *Nice Work* (nasty British satire)
Toni Morrison, *Paradise* (perspective and race)
Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried* (Vietnam stories)
Baroness Orczy, *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (French Revolution)
Sembene Ousmane, *God's Bits of Wood* (French West Africa 1947)
E. Annie Proulx, *The Shipping News* (pain and healing)
Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead* (pastor's wisdom to his young son; 2005 Pulitzer);
*Housekeeping* (set in Sandpoint, ID)
Mary Doria Russell, *A Thread of Grace* (WWII in Italy; English Endowed Reader fall 2006)
Ferrol Sams, *The Whisper of the River* (1930's; coming of age at college in the South)
Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* (Robin Hood; Richard the Lionhearted)
Alice Sebold, *The Lovely Bones* (difficult subject; unique point of view)
Carol Shields, *Unless* (couple copes with child who chooses to beg on the streets)
Lee Smith, *Fair and Tender Ladies* (Appalachian)
Muriel Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (for teachers)
Wallace Stegner, *Angle of Repose* (American west); *Crossing to Safety* (faculty lives)
Alexander McCall Smith, *The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency* (and others in this series)
Anne Tyler, *The Amateur Marriage* (tough assessment of a marriage); *The Accidental Tourist*
Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* (race, gender, religious issues; grace and love)
Robert Penn Warren, *All the King’s Men* (integrity; politics)
Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (the American Girl in late 19thc. America)

**Non-Fiction**
Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (autobiography)
Jill Ker Conway, *The Road from Coorain* (autobiography, Australian)
Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Wait Till Next Year* memoir of 1950s in NY; baseball
Melissa Fay Greene, *Praying for Sheetrock* (civil rights; Georgia coast)
Laura Hillenbrand, *Seabiscuit*
Anne Lamott, *Bird By Bird* (writing advice from one of the best); *Traveling Mercies* (essays on faith)
Erik Larson, *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and the Madness at the Fair that Changed America* (Chicago World’s Fair)
Robert Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (travel, life in the 70’s)
Dava Sobel, *Galileo’s Daughter*
Wole Soyinka, *Ake; the Years of Childhood* (Nigerian; memoir; Nobel Prize winner)
Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler* (a 17thc. *Walden*)
Simon Winchester, *The Professor and the Madman* (Oxford English Dictionary)