Laura’s Recommended Reading for Summer 2006 and Other Mental Vacations (30th edition)

“I believe God is a librarian. I believe literature is holy . . . it is the best part of our souls that we break off and give each other, and God has a special dispensation for it, angels guard its making and its preservation.” –Katharine Darnell, in Sarah Smith’s Chasing Shakespeares

THE ALL-STAR TEAM

Jess Walter, Citizen Vince (local author/Spokane mystery/recent big book award winner)
Lee Smith, The Last Girls (women who took Huck’s raft trip in college have a reunion)
Reynolds Price, The Good Priest’s Son (9/11 backdrop; prodigal son theme)
Jan Karon, Light from Heaven (final volume in Mitford series)
Alexander McCall Smith, In the Company of Cheerful Ladies, Blue Shoes and Happiness (latest in the Botswana detective series)

“Now I saw that I had fallen for an old enchantment. I had mistaken the world for a book.” –Shivanathan, in Michelle de Kretser’s The Hamilton Case

OTHER FICTION

Andrzej Szezypiorski, The Beautiful Mrs. Seidenman (Nazi-occupied Warsaw 1942; Vic Bobb’s rec.)
Jack Riggs, When the Finch Rises (South/coming-of-age)
Jane Austen, Juvenilia (early writings); Northanger Abbey (Gothic spoof)
C.S. Lewis, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe
Elizabeth Kostova, The Historian (Dracula-inspired)
Mongo Beti, The Poor Christ of Bomba (Cameroon author; culture/religion clash)
J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (the latest)
Jon Hassler, The Staggerford Murders and The Life and Death of Nancy Clancy’s Nephew (see earlier Hasslers)
Dan Brown, The Da Vinci Code (good treasure hunt novel)
Jenna Blum, Those Who Save Us (survival/legacy of Holocaust; explicit)
Sarah Smith, Chasing Shakespeares (literary adventure)
Yukio Mishima, The Temple of the Golden Pavilion (Japanese novice with a vendetta)
Michelle de Kretser, The Hamilton Case (Ceylon. Complex saga. Magical realism)

“I think we ought to read only the kind of books that wound and stab us. A book must be the axe for the frozen sea inside us.”
–Kafka

MYSTERIES

Laurie R. King, Locked Room (Mary Russell/Sherlock Holmes in San Francisco)
Jacqueline Winspear, Maisie Dobbs, Birds of a Feather; Pardonable Lies (London. 1929-30. Former WWI nurse turned psychologist-detective)
Julia Spencer-Fleming, *In the Bleak Midwinter* (Claire Fergusson, Episcopal priest); *A Fountain Filled with Blood; Out of the Deep I Cry; To Darkness and To Death*

John Dunning, *The Bookman’s Promise* (Cliff Janeway detective series)

Martha Grimes, *Hotel Paradise* (probably more a novel than a mystery)

Mark Schweizer, *The Alto Wore Tweed: A Liturgical Mystery* (a hoot)

Ed McBain, *Let’s Hear it for the Deaf Man* (87th precinct)

Martin Davies, *Mrs. Hudson and the Spirits’ Curse* (Sherlock Holmes knock off with a twist)

Victoria Thompson, *Murder on Lenox Hill* (midwife/police detectives in turn of the century NY)

Laura Lee Hope, *The Bobbsey Twins and the County Fair Mystery*

Janet Evanovich, *Eleven on Top* (latest in the series)

“‘Marilla, isn’t it nice to think that tomorrow is a new day with no mistakes in it yet?’” –Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*

**OTHER NON-FICTION**

Hans J. Massaquoi, *Destined to Witness: Growing Up Black in Nazi Germany* (memoir)

Laura Werlin, *Great Grilled Cheese* (recipes)

Carol Shields, *Jane Austen* (as much an appreciation as a biography)

Tony Hendra, *Father Joe: The Man Who Saved My Soul* (memoir)

**DRAMA**

Tennessee Williams, *The Glass Menagerie* (great rereading; then see Katherine Hepburn DVD version)