

American Literature Book Discussion for Scholars

October 13: Two by Poe!

What better way to get in the Halloween spirit than by reading a couple of short stories by the master of horror himself, Edgar Allen Poe! We'll read and discuss two of Poe's better known (and chilling) stories, *The Premature Burial* and *The Cask of Amontillado*. You can find them here:

<http://poestories.com/read/premature> (The Premature Burial)

<http://poestories.com/read/amontillado> (The Cask of Amontillado)

November 10: *Letters From the Earth* by Mark Twain

Mark Twain is one of America's most beloved writers. His work is still entertaining, relevant, and thought-provoking today. "Letters from the Earth" consists of eleven letters written by the Archangel Satan to archangels Gabriel and Michael, as he makes observations on the curious proceedings of earthly life and the nature of man's religions. Here is the link:

<https://www.cs.umd.edu/~mvz/bible/ltrs-from-earth.pdf>

December 14: *The Gift of the Magi* by O. Henry

This is a beloved tale about a young married couple and how they deal with the challenge of buying secret Christmas gifts for each other with very little money. A perfect short story for the Christmas season!

https://www.auburn.edu/~vestmon/Gift_of_the_Magi.html

January 5: *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien

The Things They Carried has been established as one of the most important works of Vietnam War literature. It is a meditation on war, memory, and imagination, a profound study of men at war that illustrates the capacity, and the limits, of the human heart and soul. We'll read and discuss an excerpt, found here:

http://pages.uoregon.edu/eherman/teaching/texts/OBrien_TheThingsTheyCarried.pdf

February 9: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*

This is the autobiography of the most well-known African American of his time and one of the finest slave narratives ever written. It tells of Douglass' early life, and ends soon after his escape from slavery at about age twenty. The story focuses on experiences that stand out in his life as examples of the cruelty of slavery and of his ability to endure and rise above such conditions with his humanity intact.

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglass/douglass.html>