

June, 2016

Dear IRP Proust readers,

Welcome to IRP Proust II for fall semester, 2016. We'll study *Within a Budding Grove* (WBG) – the second volume of Marcel Proust's masterpiece *In Search of Lost Time* (ISOLT). If you are new to Proust and have not read the first volume (*Swann's Way*), not to worry. All is excellently summarized in the *Guide*. Additionally, our in-class review at the beginning and throughout the semester will benefit both the seasoned reader, the beginner (and the coordinator!)

Within A Budding Grove has two distinct parts. The first part, “Madame Swann at Home”, continues the story of Swann and Odette. Swann, an elegant and cultured Jew, through his wit, wealth and education had broken barriers and risen to the pinnacle of aristocratic society. Odette the cocotte, through her Boccaccio beauty and her artful ways captured him into marriage, her disreputable station notwithstanding. Come September, we'll go quickly through the first part reserving the bulk of the semester for the second, "Place-Names - the Place", where the focus falls squarely on the Narrator and his budding aesthetic and his sexual longing. We continue to love Proust's astonishing metaphors, humor and learn from his insights into external society and the innermost reaches of the individual psyche.

We use two texts:

In Search of Lost Time: Within A Budding Grove by Marcel Proust, translated by Moncrieff, Kilmartin and Enright, {Volume 2 of 6, Modern Library, ISBN 0375752196}.

Marcel Proust's Search for Lost Time: A Reader's Guide to The Remembrance of Things Past by Patrick Alexander, {Vintage, ISBN 0307472329}.

NB: PLEASE ACQUIRE NO OTHER edition/translation of WBG – it's impossible to study Proust in a group when page numbers vary.

I am looking forward to meeting you again (and some new Proust readers.). Since, much “Joy of Proust” (that will be the title for “my book”) lies in the re-reading, I hope that you will let this be your summer read. You can go lightly on the first part (“Mme Swann at Home”). And, don't be afraid to mercilessly cut this heavy book up such that you can always have a substantial section with you in case you get trapped in the subway or in a line at the market or just wish to have it with you with a glass of wine at your beach or boulevard cafe.

Best wishes for a happy summer (along with Marcel who is summering at the beach resort of Balbec in the second part of WBG.)

Sharon

August, 2016

Dear Proust readers,

In a week we begin Proust II - *Within A Budding Grove*. We observe Marcel as he penetrates the inner sanctum of M and Mme Swann. Then, it's beach time; we are off to Balbec. We meet the summer crowd, the bourgeois in their dazzling white suits, the artist and his impressionism, the odd behavior of M Charlus and the encounter with girls ... girls ... girls in a clump - a "polypary".

Each week you receive a set of questions by eMail. The questions are posed to help focus the reading; Proust can be - hazy, dense, non-linear and associative. Attention can flag. Sometimes there are little essays planted right there *in situ* within a narrative thread without any warning. We get used to it. Some find working on the questions in advance useful; some don't. Answering these questions is totally up to you, optional. But, in any case ... please print and bring to class.

For the first 3 weeks, we discuss about 100 pages per session (covering *Mme Swann at Home*). Then we slow down to about 50. I hope you've already dipped into Proust this summer. Re-reading is ever more rewarding, fun, enlightening, revealing. The question set is transmitted to you as an attachment. If you are not eMail savvy, don't know how to open and print an attachment, please take advantage of our tech help. See "ask For Tech Help" on the IRP zine.

I'm trying to stay cool with fizzy beverages and showers in this re-blast of the heat wave. I'm really, really ready for Fall. You?

Sharon

NB Please reply "OK" to this eMail; I'm testing our distribution list.