

## SUMMER READING LIST\*

## Dig Into Reading! ~ Grades 9-12

Suggested summer reading compiled for the Connecticut Department of Education by Linda Williams, Connecticut State Library

#### **FICTION**

#### **Everneath** by Brodi Ashton

Regretting her decision to forfeit her life on Earth to become an immortal on Everneath, a world between Earth and Hell, teenaged Nikki is given the chance to return to the Surface for six months, in this story loosely based on the "Hades and Persephone" myth. Lexile: 590

VOYA Best Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror

#### Tales of the Madman Under-

#### **ground** by John Barnes

In September 1973, as the school year begins in his depressed Ohio town, high-school senior Kurt Shoemaker determines to be "normal," despite his chaotic home life with his volatile, alcoholic mother and the deep loyalty and affection he has for his

friends in the therapy group dubbed the Madman Underground. Lexile: 1040

ALA

#### **Bone Dance** by Martha Brooks

When her father wills her a cabin on land in rural Manitoba, Alexandra meets a young man who shares her Indian heritage and her experience of being haunted by spirits.

ÂLA

#### **Guardian of the Dead** by Karen Healey

Eighteen-year-old New Zealand boarding school student Ellie Spencer must use her rusty tae kwon do skills and new-found magic to try to stop a fairy-like race of creatures from Maori myth and legend that is plotting to kill millions of humans in order to regain their lost immortality. Lexile: 790

ALA

### Mudbound by Hillary Jordan

The shaky marriage between Henry Mcallan and his citybred wife Laura becomes even more unstable when his brother Jamie returns from World War II in 1946 to help work the family's miserable cotton farm in the Mississippi Delta, along with his comrade-in-arms Ronsel Jackson, the oldest son of local sharecroppers, who soon learns that his heroics in battle mean nothing in the Jim Crow south.

ALA

#### **The Traitor in the Tunnel** by Y. S. Lee

Queen Victoria has a problem: there's a petty thief at work in Buckingham Palace. Charged with discretion, the Agency assigns quick-witted Mary Quinn to the case. Posing as a domestic in the royal household and fending off the attentions of a feckless Prince of Wales are challenge enough, but when the prince witnesses a murder in an opium den — and scandal threatens the royal family — Mary learns that the accused killer may be someone very close to her. (*The Agency series, book 3*)

**The Beet Fields**: Memories of a Sixteenth Summer by Gary Paulsen

The author recalls his experiences as a migrant laborer and carnival worker after he ran away from home at age sixteen. Lexile: 1070

ALA

### **Buried Onions** by Gary Soto

When nineteen-year-old Eddie drops out of college, he struggles to find a place for himself as a Mexican American living in a violence-infested neighborhood of Fresno, California. Lexile: 850

ALA

## The Crystal Cave by Mary Stewart

Born the bastard son of a Welsh princess, Myridden Emrys — or as he would later be known, Merlin — leads a perilous childhood, haunted by portents and visions. But destiny has great plans for this no-man's-son, taking him from prophesying before the High King Vortigern to the crowning of Uther Pendragon ... and the conception of Arthur — king for once and always. Lexile: 960

ALA

**Daughter of Smoke & Bone** by Laini Taylor Seventeen-year-old Karou, a lovely, enigmatic art student in a Prague boarding school, carries a sketchbook of hideous, frightening monsters—the chimaerae who form the only family she has ever known. Lexile: 850

### Salvage the Bones by Jesmyn Ward

Enduring a hardscrabble existence as the children of alcoholic and absent parents, four siblings from a coastal Mississippi town prepare their meager stores for the arrival of Hurricane Katrina while struggling with such challenges as a teen pregnancy and a dying litter of prize pups. Lexile: 890 ALA

## SUMMER READING LIST

#### **FICTION** (continued)

### Code Name Verity by Elizabeth Wein

In 1943, a British fighter plane crashes in Nazi-occupied France and the survivor tells a tale of friendship, war, espionage, and great courage as she relates what she must to survive while keeping secret all that she can. Lexile: 1020

ALA

# **Tunneling to the Center of the Earth** by Kevin Wilson

Collects eleven short stories from American author Kevin Wilson, including "Grand Stand-in," Blowing Up On the Spot,"and "The Dead Sister Handbook: a Guide for Sensitive Boys."

ALA

#### **GRAPHIC NOVELS**

# Pitch Black by Youme Landowne & Anthony Horowitz

Youme describes her unique collaboration with artist Anthony Horton, which began as the two traveled together on the New York subway system.

ALA

# There's a Hair in My Dirt!: A Worm's Story by Gary Larson

A young earthworm, upset to discover a hair in his dinner dirt, gets a lesson about the realities of nature from his father, and learns about his importance in the perpetuation of life on Earth.

ALA

#### **POETRY**

### Ludie's Life by Cynthia Rylant

A collection of poems that tell the story of Ludie, a poor woman in a coal-mining town in West Virginia, from her childhood to her adolescent years, and then through her married life into her old age.

#### **NONFICTION**

## Corpses, Coffins and Crypts: A History of

Burial by Penny Colman

Documents the burial process throughout the centuries and in different cultures. Lexile: 1190

ALA

### Coal: A Human History by Barbara Freese

Traces the history of coal, discussing how it has been used in different cultures, how it is mined, what negative effects it has had on people, economics, and the environment, and the role it has played in world history and development.

ALA

**Shadow Divers**: The True Adventure of Two Americans Who Risked Everything to Solve One of the Last Mysteries of World War II by Robert Kurson

Tells the story of the discovery in 1991 of a World War II German U-boat, sunk sixty miles off the coast of New Jersey, by deep sea divers John Chatterton and Richie Kohler, and their six year obsession with identifying the submarine which sank with its crew onboard.

ALA

# **Black Gold**: The Story of Oil in Our Lives by Albert Marrin

A history of the slick and foul-smelling substance that drives our existence and that becomes scarcer as our dependence on it grows. Lexile: 1070

NSTA

**Stiff**: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers by Mary Roach

Explores how human cadavers have been used throughout history, discussing how the use of dead bodies has benefited every aspect of human existence. Lexile: 1230

Outstanding Books for the College Bound

#### **BIOGRAPHY**

## The Ditchdigger's Daughters by Yvonne S.

**Thornton** 

The author describes her experiences as an African American girl growing up in Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and how she and her sisters formed a singing group to finance their education and went on to become successful despite the obstacles in their paths.

ALA

<sup>\*</sup>Many listed were selected as exemplary by one or more of the following organizations: the *American Library Association* (ALA), the *International Reading Association* (IRA), the *National Council for the Social Studies* (NCSS), the *National Council of Teachers of English* (NCTE), the *National Science Teachers Association* (NSTA) or the *United States Board on Books for Young People* (USBBY).