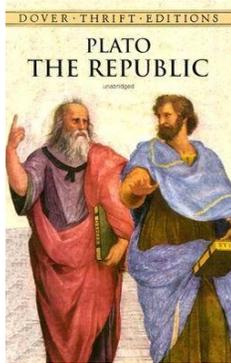


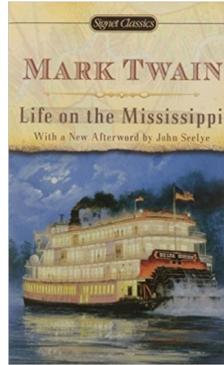
# Mary's Potpourri

A new, eclectic book club!

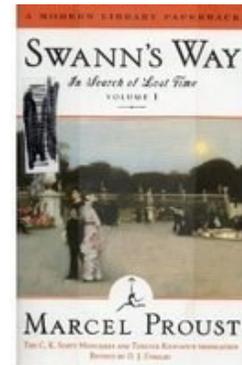
Meets on the 4th Thursday of each month at 10am



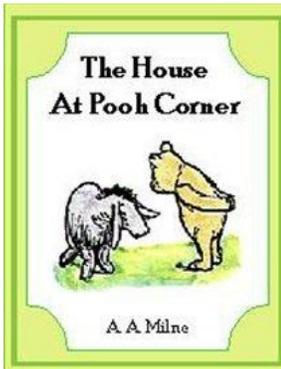
**January 26**  
*The Republic*  
By Plato



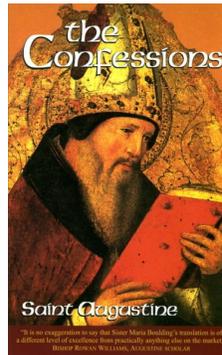
**February 23**  
*Life on the Mississippi*  
By Mark Twain



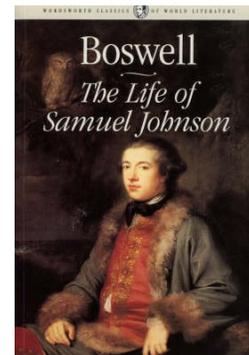
**March 23**  
*Swann's Way*  
By Marcel Proust



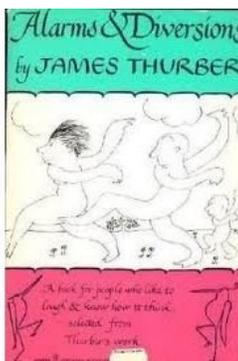
**April 27**  
*The House at Pooh Corner*  
By A.A. Milne



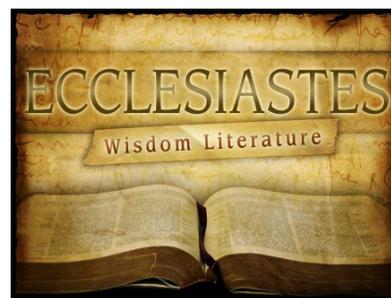
**May 25**  
*The Confessions*  
By Saint Augustine



**June 22**  
**July 27**  
**August 24**  
*The Life of Samuel Johnson*  
By James Boswell



**September 28**  
*Alarms and Diversions*  
By James Thurber



**October 26**  
*Book of Ecclesiastes*  
In the Bible

**January 26 *The Republic* by Plato**

Written in the form of a dialog in which Socrates questions his students and fellow citizens, *The Republic* concerns itself chiefly with the question, "What is justice?" as well as Plato's theory of ideas and his conception of the philosopher's role in society. To explore the latter, he invents the allegory of the cave to illustrate his notion that ordinary men are like prisoners in a cave, observing only the shadows of things, while philosophers are those who venture outside the cave and see things as they really are, and whose task it is to return to the cave and tell the truth about what they have seen. This dynamic metaphor expresses at once the eternal conflict between the world of the senses (the cave) and the world of ideas (the world outside the cave), and the philosopher's role as mediator between the two.

**February 23 *Life on the Mississippi* by Mark Twain**

In this classic of American literature, Twain offers lively recollections ranging from his salad days as a novice pilot to views from the passenger deck in the twilight of the river culture's heyday. Under the tutelage of the most celebrated pilot on the Mississippi, young Twain acquires the skills to navigate a constantly changing riverscape, avoiding potential collisions with other boats and traversing winding channels in the dead of night. The vivid and ever-engaging narrative encompasses tales of riverside town feuds, the professional vicissitudes of a riverboat gambler, dramatic accounts of life in Vicksburg as the city lay under siege during the Civil War, and many other scenes from a now-vanished way of life. These antebellum visions take on a bittersweet cast with the author's postwar return to the region, when railroad competition has largely doomed the commercial steamboat and the old ways of life are passing into history.

**March 23 *Swann's Way* by Marcel Proust**

*Swann's Way* tells two related stories, the first of which revolves around Marcel, a younger version of the narrator, and his experiences in, and memories of, the French town Combray. Inspired by the "gusts of memory" that rise up within him as he dips a Madeleine into hot tea, the narrator discusses his fear of going to bed at night. He is a creature of habit and dislikes waking up in the middle of the night not knowing where he is. He claims that people are defined by the objects that surround them and must piece together their identities bit by bit each time they wake up. The young Marcel is so nervous about sleeping alone that he looks forward to his mother's goodnight kisses, but also dreads them as a sign of an impending sleepless night. One night, when Charles Swann, a friend of his grandparents, is visiting, his mother cannot come kiss him goodnight. He stays up until Swann leaves and looks so sad and pitiful that even his disciplinarian father encourages "Mamma" to spend the night in Marcel's room.

**April 27 *The House at Pooh Corner* by A.A. Milne**

Classic children's book about friendship and growing up.

**May 25 *Confessions* by Saint Augustine**

The son of a pagan father and a Christian mother, Saint Augustine spent his early years torn between conflicting faiths and world views. His *Confessions*, written when he was in his forties, recount how, slowly and painfully, he came to turn away from his youthful ideas and licentious lifestyle, to become instead a staunch advocate of Christianity and one of its most influential thinkers. A remarkably honest and revealing spiritual autobiography, the *Confessions* also address fundamental issues of Christian doctrine, and many of the prayers and meditations it includes are still an integral part of the practice of Christianity today.

**June 22, August 24, July 27 *The Life of Samuel Johnson* by James Boswell (Discussion takes place for three meetings)**

Through a series of richly detailed anecdotes, Johnson emerges as a sociable figure, vigorously engaging and fencing with great contemporaries such as Garrick, Goldsmith, Burney and Burke, and of course with Boswell himself. Yet anxieties and obsessions also darkened Johnson's private hours, and Boswell's attentiveness to every facet of Johnson's character makes this biography as moving as it is entertaining.

**September 28 *Alarms and Diversions* by James Thurber**

Another collection of Thurberiana, unique in that it contains a peppering of the author's favorites, also an introduction to his "serious comedy." Among the 32 stories lurk joyosities such as "The Lady of Orlon," "The Psychosemanticist Will See You Now, Mr. Thurber," "Get Thee to a Monastery" and "The Moribundant Life, or Grow Old Along with Whom?"

**October 26 *Book of Ecclesiastes* in the Bible**

No time period or writer's name is mentioned in the book, but several passages strongly suggest that King Solomon is the author. On the other hand, the writer's title (teacher, Hebrew—qoheleth), his unique style of Hebrew, and his attitude toward rulers may point to another person and a later period. Teacher lived in a world of change and challenge not unlike our own. His teachings, known as the Book of Ecclesiastes, sought to empower people not unlike ourselves, which is why this book of the Hebrew Bible still speaks to us—people of all faiths—today.

**November 23**—NO meeting (Library Closed)

**December 28**—TBD