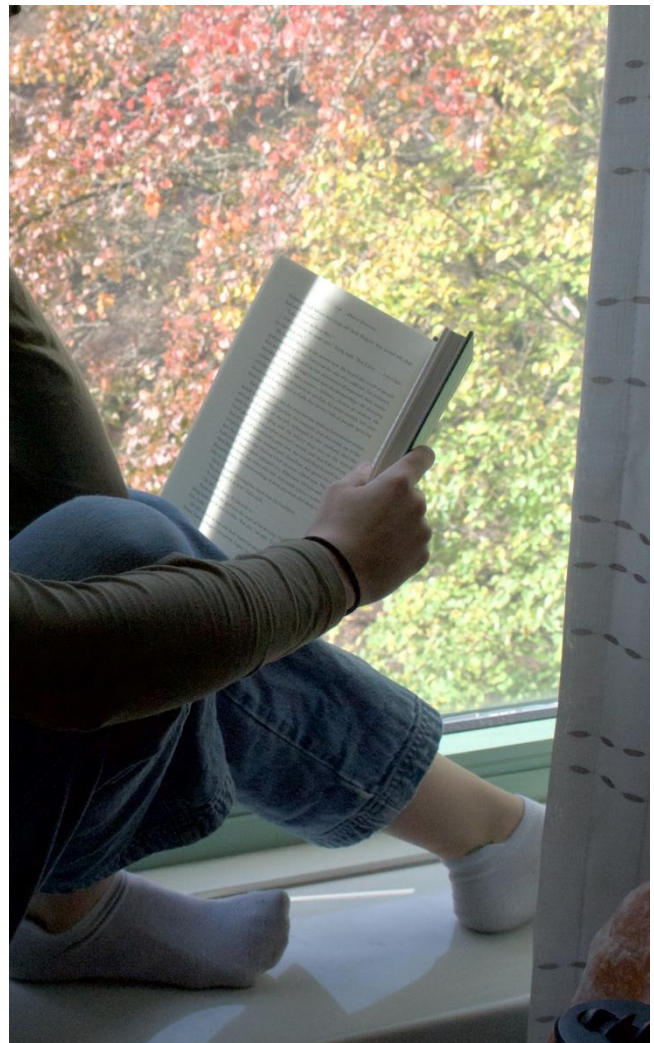
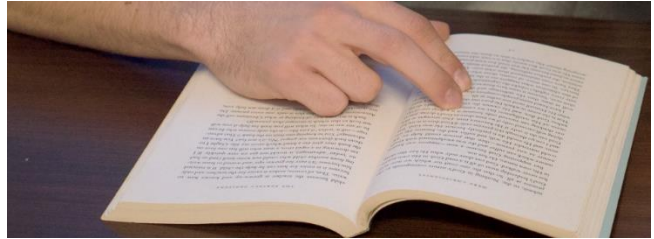
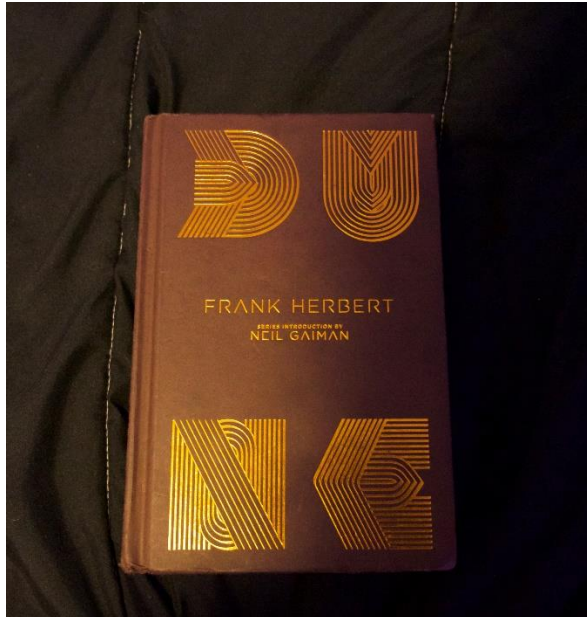


Stories that Fuel Introspection

Photo Essay by Olivia Terry

A composition of friends' verbalizations about their favorite books and the sentiments that they hold for the stories within them. Photos taken in the settings where they each often read most comfortably.



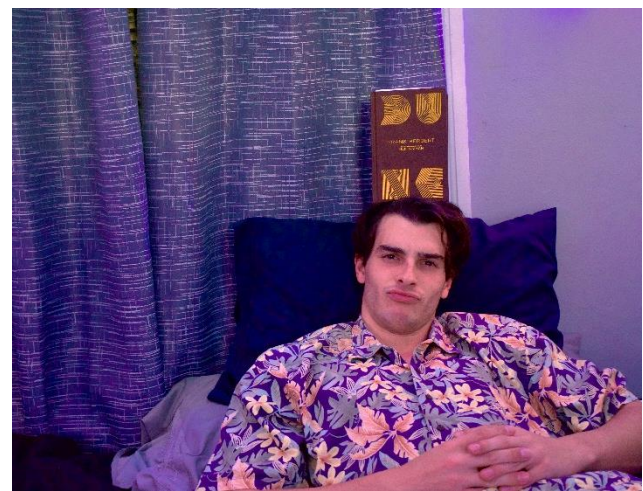


Sam Marzella – *Dune* by Frank Herbert (1965)

“The writer is so genius in how he makes it feel like this is an actual place and he is writing the history of it. [Herbert] does such a great job at building a world... in every detail.”

“I grew up watching Star Wars and loving Star Wars and I adored it for how specific of a genre it made for itself. And while I was reading [*Dune*] I just thought, *oh—this is what Star Wars was inspired by*. And this is an amalgamation of so many other things. It really felt like I was rediscovering a new type of fandom. There’s Star Wars, Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter—all of these crazy imaginary worlds—and this just feels like a whole new one that is as rooted in literature.”

“There’s a lot of different writing styles in it... okay not a lot...there’s like two. But they’re so different from each other. One uses quotes from a future history book about the text you’re reading to start off each chapter, it’s really cool. [Herbert] uses quotes from this future leader who’s talking about being “the chosen one” and about prophecies coming true. He says you have to approach things with a sardonic quality. And I didn’t really know what sardonic meant so I looked it up because it sounded important. It’s like a negative sarcasm where you can’t take it seriously, but you also have to acknowledge it as ridiculousness. To me, it feels like that whole pessimist rule: you will either be right, or pleasantly surprised in the way you feel about things.”



“The book has a glossary in the back because there’s so many new words that the author has created since it takes place 20,000 years in the future. And when I first started reading it, I read for maybe 40 minutes and for half of that I was just flipping through the glossary thinking, *hmm and what is this planet?* And then you read about it and the description references another word, and you think, *ooh what’s that?* And then you read about that thing, and it takes you to something else, and then you’re on this historical journey... which is just so cool. It makes you feel like you’re experiencing it and researching it for yourself, and you have the power to know as much or as little as you want because the author doesn’t hold your hand when using exposition.”

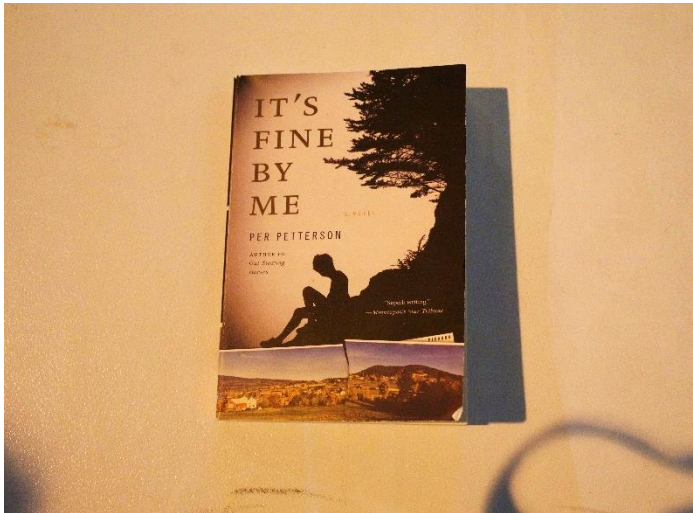
“There’s just so much history that’s there if you want to explore it, but at the same time you don’t *need* it. That’s what makes [*Dune*] so thick and dense when you’re reading it. This narrative is rooted in a reality that has been thought up and thought through and we’re just starting somewhere in the middle of the storyline.”



Amna Imran – *It's Fine by Me* by Per Petterson (1992)

“*[It's Fine by Me]* is translated from Norwegian. It deals a little bit about war and parent-to-child trauma. I chose it because it explores dynamics that I haven't read a lot about before.”

“It's about this boy who has been hurt so much as a child to a point where he becomes so nonchalant about all of the messed-up things that continue to happen to him. I try to be more nonchalant with how I deal with situations, because I feel like sometimes I make too much of a big deal. It was sort of a personal thing— I wanted to learn from the book in some ways.”



“I read it slowly, but I read it all at once.”

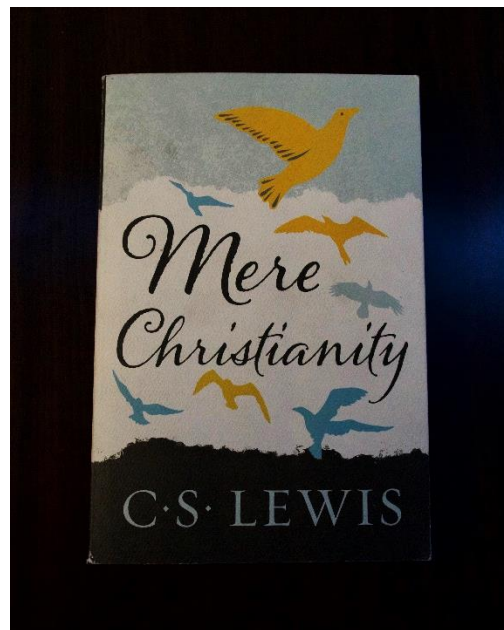
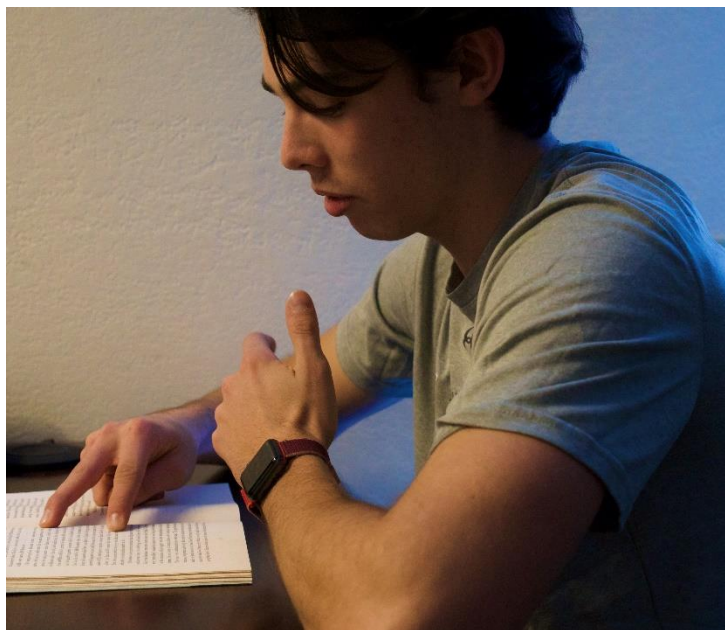
“It's such an intricate and weird structure that takes you on a ride. It starts in the past and jumps back and forth between the past and future. You're trying to figure out the character while also trying to figure out the timeline.”

“I didn't have a traumatic childhood, let's say. So, I wanted to see how trauma during childhood might affect someone and change their perspective on life. I make a big deal about a lot of things. I hoped that learning this boy's past would help me understand why I am the way that I am. Is it because I had different experiences that I overreact in



certain situations versus someone with a more traumatic past who then isn't as reactive towards them?”

“The title gets me. Every single time. It would come into the story over and over and something horrible would happen to this poor kid. He would get beaten up by gangsters and at the end of the day, his mother with drug problems would approach him about it and he would say that it all was “fine by him”. You always expect some huge reaction, but everything is always “fine by him”. It's like [Petterson] is teasing you and you don't get that ever. And then at the end, he explodes. You finally get a reaction out of him, and you just can't stop reading.”

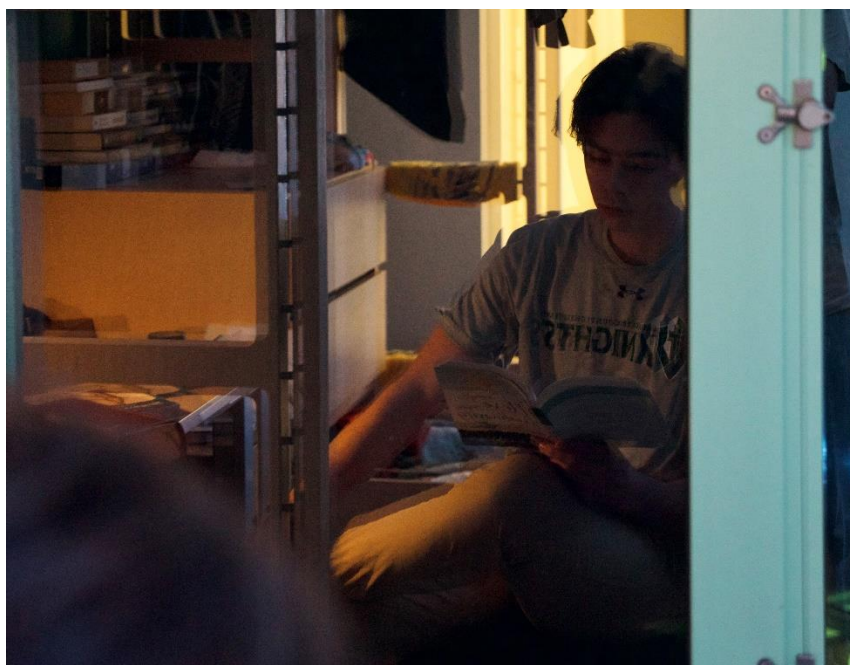


Corin Sacks – *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis (1952)

“The author was a really good thinker and writer, so I knew going in that this book was going to be following in those footsteps.”

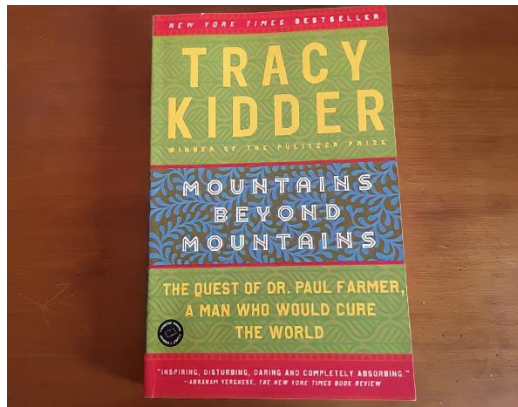
“It is Christianity in its simplest form. It’s the simplicities and complexities and how they kind of work together in explaining a way of living, really.”

“I’ve read it only once and I went slowly through it. There’s a lot of content in it. The way that C.S. Lewis writes... each word has a purpose and there’s no filler words to anything he says. It’s all very meaningful and I wanted to absorb all that he had to say. I hope to read it again sometime soon.”



“It’s a wonderfully written book about something I care very deeply about. It’s really a guidance for life and exactly what I believe in.”

“I would say that certainly it’s not a book that everyone would necessarily pick up and read, given that my beliefs are not what everyone has; I’m a Christian and not everyone else is a Christian. But, it’s still a book that non-Christians have read and appreciated for who C.S. Lewis was and what his writings were. The value it has to me is that it gives guidance which I know is tried and true.”



Molly Evans – *Mountains Beyond Mountains* (2003) by Tracy Kidder

“The setting is in Haiti where Paul Farmer opens a medical clinic... the title comes from a Haitian proverb that’s translated as, ‘beyond the mountains, there are more mountains.’”

“I probably finished this book in a total of two days. I just read all the time-- literally walking between classes in the hallways. Couldn’t put the book down.”

“The story of Paul Farmer is really inspiring for what I want to do in the future. I’ve always known that I wanted to go into healthcare, but I’d never had a real direction. I kind of assumed I would end up practicing in a hospital, but now I’m more on the track of realizing that I don’t need to do that necessarily... that I can go work in a third world country and help people that way.”

“Based on the time I’ve spent in American hospitals and how they’re directed towards profit... this book turned me off to American healthcare and opened my eyes to global healthcare.”

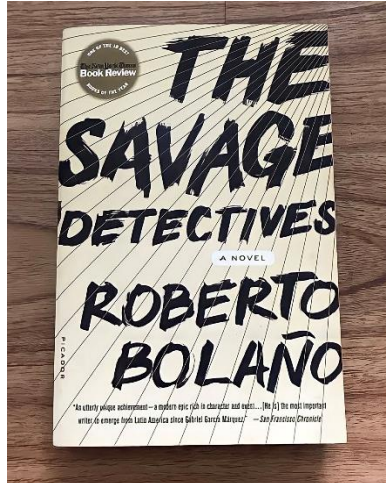


“It’s not that I necessarily relate to Paul Farmer-- it’s just more of an inspiration type thing. He cares for each patient with this intense passion. There’s nothing that he wouldn’t do for them. It’s something that I would hope most doctors and physicians would also hold, and it’s something that I do and hope to practice as a physician as well.”

“He would work insane hours and travel very long distances by foot, up mountains, to get to a Haitian house. He tried so hard to get people the care they needed. These people couldn’t take the medication they needed each day, or they couldn’t make it to their follow-up appointments.”

“A child in Haiti was very sick and probably going to die of cancer. [Farmer] wanted to take him to America to get a very specific treatment for his disease and the only way to get him there was by helicopter... which is obviously a very expensive endeavor. The kid had about a 2% chance of surviving even if they brought him to America, but they still spent the money. Sadly, the kid did not survive in America, but [Farmer] still said he wouldn’t have chosen any other way because you always have to do everything you can for your patient, no matter the cost. It’s a life, you can’t put a price on it. I thought that was so indicative of Paul Farmer’s character.”

“If anyone wants to gain a perspective on universal healthcare, it’s definitely a good read for that. I think in America we’re so used to dealing with insurance to cover things and relying on that system that is built to profit off people dying and being sick. This is very different... it’s extremely different. It’s nice to see someone who cares about more than just the money. [Farmer] doesn’t live in a very nice house either. He’s not super rich as a doctor. Most people would assume doctors go to medical school so they can earn a lot of money. This man has so little money. I would totally be fine with that as long as I was giving back.”



Matt Jordan – *The Savage Detectives* (1998) by Roberto Bolaño

Jordan, who has the final page of *The Savage Detectives* tattooed onto his left forearm (its writing translates in English to, 'What's outside the window?'), refused to spoil too much of his favorite book. Instead, he insists, "Read the book."

"My brother begged me to read this. I read another book by Roberto Bolaño and it was really weird... so then I read this one too."

"So, it starts in 1976 for the first section. The second section takes place between '77 and '93. Then it goes back to what happens in '76. I stopped reading after I got through the first section because the shift was really drastic, so it almost felt like starting a different book. I put it down for about a month and then came back again. But the story is my favorite because of the thrill of adventure and the constant searching for answers to this one major question. There's also something about deserts that really appeals to me, and the edge of civilization."

"The detectives had been trying to find this poet whose poetry had the same name as their own. They were obsessing over it while also running away from someone else. It seems like kind of a fruitless chase, and then they find the poet and it's not at all what they expected. There's nothing artistic about her, she's basically come to be a peasant woman that's really old. They reach a place in their work where they thought they had found what it was they were looking for... but then the search turns into something completely different and kind of grotesque. But the shift puts everything else into context and you understand what they were really chasing the whole time."

"The main character... well I don't really think he's the main character... but he writes a journal entry at the end. He's not really mentioned at all throughout the second section, so it's just assumed that he fizzles out and disappears and doesn't pursue poetry or anything. And that his future is completely ambiguous. I thought that that was really kind of cool. And also kind of sad and scary. I kind of really related to that. After I personally had a beatdown while in New York City, I was like, you know, this could be a defining moment. This is going to be something that I'm going to be trying to live up to. It was weird. It kind of means to me that the future is both really open and closed... I don't know. It's pretty complicated I guess."

"I have a lot of different interpretations of the ending. And none of them are most accurate because they just keep on changing. I went through the book and I highlighted the number of times in the last section that [Bolaño] writes 'window'. The detectives keep staring out a window, expecting to see something different, but it was always the same... until it wasn't..."

It's like the window and its setting always remain the same, but what you see outside of it could change at any given moment. That was one interpretation in terms of being open to the possibility of everything being both unlimited and limited at the same time."

"I cried a bunch reading this book. It's not even exactly the content in the book, it's just aspects that I related to... especially the ending."

