

EMERGING FROM LOSS: NOVELS OF CONFRONTING AND TRANSCENDING LOSS

Coordinator: Arlette Sanders

**“When sorrows come, they come not single spies but in battalions”
Hamlet Act IV, Scene 5**

Life is meaningful when we discover passion – for someone, someplace, familiarity. What does profound loss do to us? Do we collapse, lose balance, or attempt to regain footing? Giving up our dreams and replacing them is a universal and on-going reality of life. We discuss contemporary works that depict individuals living under stress - how they are compelled to readjust expectations. The books depict diverse struggles; the beliefs of academics from Colombia and from Indiana are upended; an isolated female translator is described by a male Lebanese writer; Parisian nightclub cross-dressers and their supporters struggle under an increasingly harrowing Nazi regime; a 1944 classic is re-envisioned sixty years later by an Algerian writer. These protagonists compel us to reflect on our own struggles. 80-100 pages of reading per week.

Readings

Fowler, Karen. *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*

Vasquez, Juan. *The Sound of Things Falling*

Alameddine, Rabih. *An Unnecessary Woman*

Prose, Francine. *Lovers at the Chameleon Club, Paris 1933*

Camus, Albert. *The Stranger*

Daoud, Kamel. *The Meursault Investigation*.

Arlette Sanders was a school administrator and teacher of English. She currently conducts adult book discussion groups and has led about six IRP study groups focused on literature.

******* Syllabus - A Work in Progress *******

Weeks 1 and 2 – *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*– An “academic” Middle American family confronts prevailing “scientific research.”

Weeks 3 and 4 - *The Sound of Things Falling*– The Colombian drug wars has a profound effect on its survivors.

Weeks 5 and 6 - *An Unnecessary Woman*– A socially isolated Lebanese woman copes with her loss of dignity and purpose.

Weeks 7, 8, and 9 - *Lovers at the Chameleon Club, Paris 1933*–LGBT men and women and their supporters struggle to deal with the repressive conditions which Parisians face during WW2.

Week 10 - *The Stranger* A quick re-reading of the French/Algerian “existential” (and more) classic in preparation for ...

Weeks 11 and 12 - *The Meursault Investigation*–A response, 60 years after Camus’ classic, by an Algerian writer. He rehabilitates the “Arab’s” identity 60 years after Meursault killed him.