## Notes on Unit 3--World Literature

**“The Tell-Tale Heart”**

* Edgar Allan Poe—the man and the writer
* What kind of body language do you imagine the narrator having in the first paragraph of the story? Point out the “first person” perspective.
* Is the narrator crazy? What arguments does he make against his madness? Do you buy it? Would a sane person need to argue the point so vehemently? Discuss the “unreliable narrator”
* The narrator tells us that he was perfectly at ease after the crime—do his actions support this claim? What prevents him from being at peace?
* Do you think that guilt could actually make a person hear or see things that don’t exist outside of himself?
* Guilt can grow stronger and stronger within us until it overpowers all other obstacles. Guilt is obviously a powerful force in our lives—is it a good thing?
* If the narrator is insane, should he be held accountable for his sin in the same way as a sane person?
* Maybe the narrator is simply telling the story to make it look like he is insane in order to get himself off the hook…

**“The Raven”**

* Listen to Garrison Keillor’s recitation of the poem
* Tell me what is going on in the poem
* Poems like this often take some digging and some research to figure out the full meaning
  + Why a raven? Some ancient cultures thought that the raven’s black feathers were magical;  Poe may also be referring to Norse mythology, where the god Odin had two ravens named Hugin and Munin, which respectively meant "thought" and "memory."
* “Lenore”

Ah, broken is the golden bowl! the spirit flown forever!  
Let the bell toll! -a saintly soul floats on the Stygian river -   
And, Guy De Vere, hast thou no tear? -weep now or never more!  
See! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love, Lenore!  
Come! let the burial rite be read -the funeral song be sung! -   
An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young -   
A dirge for her, the doubly dead in that she died so young. […]

* Could the Raven be something inside the narrator’s own head? What might it represent?
* Narrator vacillates between wanting to forget and wanting to remember; he wants assurance that his beloved is in heaven and wonders if he will see her again
* What allusions are found in this poem?
* Reading a poem—not sing-songy; don’t stop at the end of the line unless punctuation calls for it

**“The Red-Headed League”**

* Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes
* List and identify the characters in this story
* What did you think of Holmes’s powers of observation?
* Let’s make sure everyone understands the plot of this story—What happens?
* From what perspective is this story written? First, second, or third person? What point of view?

**“The Inspiration of Mr. Budd”**

* Dorothy Sayer
* What is Sayer’s writing style like? What is the mood of the writing? Can you tell the author has a sense of humor?
* There is some quotable stuff in this story—can you find some examples? Read some portions together
* When did you first realize that Mr. Budd’s client was the murderer?
* Mr. Budd did not have the physical prowess and unflinching confidence that Homes had—what did he have instead? Sometimes having a sharp mind and a good imagination is worth more than sheer physical strength and bravado
* What do you think Mr. Budd’s future was like?

**“The Skater of Ghost Lake”**

* William Rose Benet—American
* Skating on a large lake on a cold moonlit night—sounds Great!
* Why do you think Randall and Cecily are meeting out on this lake at night?
* What is the plucking sound the poem talks about?
* What happens in lines 57-60?
* What is the mood of the poem?
* List some of the similes in the poem …and some metaphors

**“An Uncomfortable Bed”**

* How many of you have had anything like this happen to you?
* Suspicion is a powerful thing—it can make a person see things that really aren’t there. What’s the lesson in this for us?
* Irony—Why do we like irony so much? Why is it funny?
* Give students a heads-up about the legend of the Erl-King

**The Erl-King**

* Play Schubert’s “Der Erlkonig”
* Talk about Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
* What happens in the poem?
* The symbolism of the erl king—the constant lure of evil; parents need to be on guard; we all need to be on guard

**The Listeners**

* Read poem out loud and notice the sense of stillness in the poem

**Leiningen Versus the Ants**

* What is the context for the story?
* The title of the story is Leiningen versus the ants and the whole story is portrayed as a war—what advantages do each side have?
* What was the first line of defense? Who won the first battle?
* What was the second line of defense? Was that successful?
* What would you say was Leiningen’s most important character quality?
* Talk about his life motto—*The human brain needs only to become fully aware of its powers to conquer even the elements—*what is good about this perspective and what is the problem with it