**Honors English II**

**Socratic Seminar**

The term “Socratic” comes from the Greek philosopher Socrates. Socrates believed that his students would learn best when he stepped out of the way and let the students do the talking with one another. In fact, if a student asked Socrates a question, he was likely to fire another question back at the student.

As it turns out, Socrates was a pretty smart guy, and thousands of years later, we’re still using the same strategy.

This week we will be conducting a mini-Socratic seminar – mini only in the fact that I will be participating and guiding you in order to help you along. Later in the year we will have Socratic seminars that are entirely student-lead, but for now I’ll help you to understand what one should look like when everything goes well. Here are the main things you need to remember:

1. **Everybody participates!** I know speaking up in class is not everybody’s strong suit, but as this is an honors class, I have an expectation that you will be able to find a way to get over your fears and talk with the whole class – even if it’s just to ask a question.
2. **Everybody listens!** I’ll be more impressed if you can recall a comment that somebody else made during the discussion rather than interrupt someone to get your crucial analysis through.
3. **Every comment counts!** I’ll be keeping track of what you add to the discussion. Remember, questions (as long as they are high-value) are just as important as comments.

Everybody must participate in this discussion, as it is a major part of your summer reading grade. If for whatever reason you happen to miss class on the discussion day (which you sure as shucks shouldn’t be doing this early in the school year) you will be required to stay after school and have a one-on-one seminar with me ASAP.

The dates for our discussion will begin Wednesday, August 20 and Thursday, August 21. You should all have read the assigned poems and prepared comments or questions about those poems for the day of your discussion.

Don’t worry. The point of this isn’t to freak you out. It’s to prepare you for the year and help you make sense of all the crazy things you read this summer. RELAX!!