Hi Book Lovers (February 5, 2017)

Our reading experience together has gone through several genres until we come at last to poetry. This is arguably one of the most personal and artistic modes of self-expression. Our selection of the collected poems by Rainer Maria Rilke ($.03 on Amazon) offers an inward journey into the life of a bohemian (he grew up in Prague) who wrote primarily in German. His writing explores complex reflecting pools of relationships, mythology and self-analysis. He makes deep dives into memory, psychology and nature - perhaps not everyone’s cup of tea.

For those uncomfortable on this shifting ground, please be encouraged to make your own reading selection for our next meeting. You may choose any form of written word, lyrics, poetry or song that has particular meaning for you. You are encouraged to read a brief passage to the group, followed by your explanation of what makes it special.

I have been told that our meetings have an academic flavor, a somewhat rarefied atmosphere. Please take this opportunity to open up new avenues of reading and self-expression.

"To me, poetry is somebody standing up, so to speak, and saying, with as little concealment as possible, what it is for him or her to be on earth at this moment." These are the words of U.S. Poet Laureate, Galway Kinnell, born in 1927 in Providence, Rhode Island.

And in the words of Rilke:

Quiet friend who has come so far,
feel how your breathing makes more space around you.
Let this darkness be a bell tower
and you the bell. As you ring,

what batters you becomes your strength.
Move back and forth into the change.
What is it like, such intensity of pain?
If the drink is bitter, turn yourself to wine.

In this uncontainable night,
be the mystery at the crossroads of your senses,
the meaning discovered there.

And if the world has ceased to hear you,
say to the silent earth: I flow.
To the rushing water, speak: I am.
Sonnets to Orpheus II, 29

“Ah, how good it is to be among people who are reading.”
  The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge

I look forward to seeing you again at Spezia’s Restaurant at 11:30 a.m. on March 1, 2017. We will be in the small meeting room on that day.