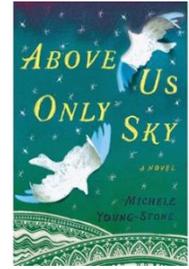


AUGUST ORIENTATION REQUIRED 2017 SUMMER READING

Your first VWC classroom experience!
Available NOW in the VWC Bookstore!!

(Read and complete the Assignment due on August 24.)



Welcome to Virginia Wesleyan! VWC will help you grow through new friendships, new ways of thinking and interacting with others, and new ways of seeing the world. The required summer reading is a first step. **Be sure to buy *Above Us Only Sky* by Michele Young-Stone, read this book and complete your first assignment that is due on August 24, the first day of August orientation.** On August 24 and 25, we—as a campus—will engage and reflect on this book. You will be part of a small group discussion with other students and a professor. In a convocation session, you will hear a panel of four faculty members offer different perspectives on the book. In addition, you will be asked to reflect on the book, engage in related exercises and discussions on the book.

In addition to specific assignment questions, you will find additional discussion questions and information on the common read to help prepare you for August orientation at the FYE Library Guide site, (<http://guides.vwu.edu/c.php?g=655856>)

***Above Us Only Sky*: Summary**

On March 29, 1973, Prudence Eleanor Vilkas was born with heart-shaped wings pressed accordion-style against her back. Considered a birth defect, her wings were surgically removed, leaving only the ghost of them behind.

In 1980, Prudence's mother takes her from Nashville to Florida, to a town inhabited by people who have run as far as they can without fins or wings. In this new town, Prudence is befriended by a boy who can see what others can't, including Prudence's ghostly wings.

The unexpected and unimaginable bubble up from the depths of the Atlantic to confront Prudence when she meets her long-estranged Lithuanian grandfather and discovers a miraculous lineage beating and pulsing with past Lithuanian bird-women, storytellers with wings dragging the dirt, survivors perched on radio towers, lovers lit up like fireworks and heroes disguised as everyday men and women.

Above Us Only Sky spans the 1863 January Uprising against Russian Tsarist rule in Eastern Europe to the fall of the Berlin Wall and Lithuania's independence in 1991. It is a "daring, imaginative" (*Milepost* magazine) story of mutual understanding between the old and young; it is a love story, a story of survival, and most importantly, a story about discovering where we belong in the world" (*Literary Hoarders*).

Simon & Schuster. "Above Us Only Sky." www.simonandschuster.com, 2017.

Your First Assignment (due August 24)

- The goal of this assignment is to provide the opportunity for your FYE professor to get to know you as a thinker and writer, as you write about your experience of reading *Above Us Only Sky*.
- Write a 200-300 word paragraph in which you respond to the following questions: **Which character in *Above Us Only Sky* can you identify with the most, and why? In your answer, identify two or three specific passages in the book that demonstrate why you can relate to that character.** (NOTE: Your FYE professor will share information at June orientation or email you with the specific format of your assignment. However, the default format is a printed copy.)