The Bowl with Gold Seams
by Ellen Prentiss Campbell

“Ellen Prentiss Campbell’s debut novel was inspired by an unusual chapter in the history of the Bedford Springs Hotel in Pennsylvania. During the summer of 1945, the State Department selected the resort to serve as the detainment center for the Japanese ambassador to Berlin, his staff, and their families.

The novel tells Hazel Shaw’s story of unexpected personal transformation — both as a young woman working at the hotel among the Japanese, and the further story of the reverberating lifelong consequences of that experience. The final events of the war challenge Hazel’s beliefs about enemies and friends, victory and defeat, love and loyalty. In the ensuing years she remains haunted by memories. Long after the end of the war, an unexpected encounter causes Hazel to return to the hotel and she must confront her past, come to terms with her present life, and determine her future." ~ Goodreads

Classmate and author Ellen Prentiss Campbell will lead the discussion of this book on Friday evening.

When Breath Becomes Air
by Paul Kalanithi

“What makes life worth living in the face of death? What do you do when the future, no longer a ladder toward your goals in life, flattens out into a perpetual present? What does it mean to have a child, to nurture a new life as another fades away? These are some of the questions Kalanithi wrestles with in this profoundly moving, exquisitely observed memoir.

Paul Kalanithi died in March 2015, while working on this book, yet his words live on as a guide and a gift to us all. "I began to realize that coming face to face with my own mortality, in a sense, had changed nothing and everything," he wrote. "Seven words from Samuel Beckett began to repeat in my head: 'I can't go on. I'll go on.'" When Breath Becomes Air is an unforgettable, life-affirming reflection on the challenge of facing death and on the relationship between doctor and patient, from a brilliant writer who became both.” ~ Goodreads

Classmate Miriam Smith will lead this book discussion.