You should take time this summer to read and annotate Jon Krakauer’s *Into the Wild* about Christopher “Alexander Supertramp” McCandless (mick-cand-less), who walked into the Alaskan bush and never walked out. Your first test grade will be a timed writing over this book. Make sure that you read (or reread) it close to the school year, so you do not forget the subject matter.

Synopsis of *Into the Wild* from Amazon.com:

In April 1992 a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. His name was Christopher Johnson McCandless. He had given $25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet, and invented a new life for himself. Four months later, his decomposed body was found by a moose hunter. How McCandless came to die is the unforgettable story of *Into the Wild*.

 [...] When McCandless's innocent mistakes turn out to be irreversible and fatal, he becomes the stuff of tabloid headlines and is dismissed for his naiveté, pretensions, and hubris. He is said to have had a death wish but wanting to die is a very different thing from being compelled to look over the edge. Krakauer brings McCandless's uncompromising pilgrimage out of the shadows, and the peril, adversity, and renunciation sought by this enigmatic young man are illuminated with a rare understanding—and not an ounce of sentimentality. Mesmerizing, heartbreaking, *Into the Wild* is a tour de force. The power and luminosity of Jon Krakauer's storytelling blaze through every page.

The focus of English 1301 and 1302 is rhetoric and research. As such, you should be annotating your book for rhetorical elements, overarching topics, and essential questions. Below are some questions to get you started, but this is by no means an exhaustive list of discussion and writing topics. You may consult a list of rhetorical terms on my website to help you also.

1. **How can the natural world provide answers to human questions?**
   a. What answers might the wilderness hold that cannot be found within the bounds of civilization?
   b. What answer does Christopher McCandless find in the wilderness?
   c. Is this question relevant to our society?

2. **Why take risks?**
   a. In what ways is risk-taking appealing?
   b. What is the difference between living deliberatively and recklessly?
   c. What is the role of pride in taking risks?
   d. To what extent was McCandless reckless? “Crazy”?

3. **How can we live deliberatively?**
   a. What does it mean to live deliberatively?
   b. What does it mean to be self-reliant?
   c. To what extent does society create dependence?
   d. How do social conformity and deliberate living interact?
   e. To what extent is a person able to truly pursue his intrinsic goals?
   f. What was McCandless’s goal? Did he achieve it?
   g. Is McCandless to be admired or despised?

4. **In what ways do our relationships shape us?**
   a. How do our relationships with our parents influence us? family in general?
   b. How can feuds and misunderstandings impact a person’s life?
   c. Can we find family outside of our biological or nuclear family? Is it effective?
   d. To what extent was McCandless a product of his family?
   e. Is his assessment of his family fair and accurate?

5. **How do we know what is true?**
   a. What is truth?
   b. Does the truth matter?
   c. What is the role of perspective?
   d. What are McCandless’s truths?
   e. Are there truths that McCandless could not or would not recognize?

6. **What is the role of literature in shaping belief systems?**
   a. Who were McCandless’s literary role models?
   b. According to his highlights and notations of various texts, what were McCandless’s philosophies?
   c. What was his view of institutions (such as colleges)?