

what the deep water knows

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What has been your experience reading poetry? Did the arc of this collection change the experience for you?
2. This collection is broken into six sections as it traces the course of a woman's life. Did one of the sections resonate with you most? Which one and why?
3. How did you interpret the narrator's relationship with her mother?
4. How do you believe the narrator's relationship with her mother was different from her relationship with her own child?
5. Throughout this collection, we can see how each section of the narrator's life is defined by the principal relationship of that period. How is the end of the collection different?
6. While this collection spans a woman's life, it also chronicles the lifespan of a marriage. How did you feel about the narrator's marriage?
7. There are vibrant descriptions of the natural world throughout this collection. How do they add to the meanings behind the poems?
8. Was there a poem in particular that stuck with you? Why did it resonate?
9. Why do you believe the author chose to title the collection "What the Deep Water Knows"? How does that poem and title speak to the collection as a whole?
10. If you were a reader of The Paper Palace, did you find any similar themes that Heller interweaves throughout that novel and this collection?