

- Is O'Brien still fighting a war by virtue of his writing? If so, against whom or what?
- How does fear change the way someone sees what's happening around them?
- How do Tim and Azar try to scare Jorgenson, and why do they disagree on how far to take their prank?
- Why does Rat Kiley finally lose his cool?
- How does the young Tim experience the death of his friend Linda?
- What do you find important in his description of the dream he has of her?
- Why is a story about a childhood friend included in this book about Vietnam?
- Where in this book do you find hope in the midst of loss?
- What is life-affirming in these stories?
- What instruction do these stories provide us (choose one): 1) on the art of listening? 2) on the value of stories? 3) on why some people need to tell stories, and why some people need to listen to them?

Read Lewis, *A Grief Observed*

- How does Lewis describe his mental, emotional and physical states while he's grieving for his wife?
- What does he mean by "the laziness of grief"?
- What does he do to try to cope with his wife's death, and why in his view do some of these things not help him?
- While he is grieving, what does Lewis think about God?
- How does Lewis talk about his memory of his wife, and why does he think it might be distorted?
- Why does he think that the question of where she is now is not important to the one grieving?
- Does religion offer Lewis any consolation in the face of his loss?
- Why does he describe his faith as "a house of cards"?
- How does Lewis's view of God change throughout the book?
- How does he regain his hope, faith, and will to keep going?
- What do you think of the way Lewis compares himself to an amputee?
- Why does he decide to stop journaling about his grief?
- What is the meaning of the quote from Dante at the end of the book?
- What's the most important thing you've learned about grief from reading Lewis's journal? Explain. *Or*, what does reading Lewis help you understand better about Tim O'Brien's book?

Read Lynch, *The Undertaking*

- In a broad sense, what does Thomas Lynch mean by an "undertaking"?
- What does he mean when he says "the dead don't care"?
- What are some of the ways, according to Lynch, that we have lost sight of the essential and obvious connection between our lives and our deaths (see especially pp. 34-37)?
- Why do we have funerals for our dead?
- What is characteristic of a "good funeral"?
- How is faith relevant to mortality, according to Lynch?
- Is it important for a funeral director to be religious?
- What is Lynch really trying to say in the ironic chapter "The Golfatorium"?
- In the latter, Lynch describes what a certain undertaker did to care for the body of a murdered girl: What did that undertaker accomplish with what he did?
- How does Lynch respond to the claim that funeral directors are "mainly crooks"?
- What does Lynch seem to think about the "pre-arrangement" of funerals?
- Why does Lynch advise against having a party after a funeral (in this case, his own)?
- In describing his vision of his own funeral and burial, what does Lynch stress as the most important thing?
- Why does he offer a "coupon good for Disregard" and another marked "My Approval"?
- The business of "undertaking" is unlikely to die out soon. Could you ever be a funeral director? Why or why not?

Randy Pausch, *The Last Lecture*

- What possibilities does Randy see in giving his last lecture? What is his strongest motivation for doing the lecture?
- How would you describe Randy's response to his diagnosis as expressed in the beginning of his lecture? Randy tells his audience that he is "not in denial" and that he is "aware of what's going on." How would his last lecture be different if he were in denial and if he weren't addressing the elephant in the room?
- How might hearing the news that you have 3 to 6 months of "good health" be an experience of a virtual reality?
- What "lessons" does Randy want people to take from his lecture?
- Describe, in detail, how Randy is living his life. Is it possible to adopt his philosophy for living without having a terminal illness?