

## READING GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Who are the strange angels that appear to Margaret Quinn, and what role does she play in their materialization?
2. Images of birds fly through the story. How do they correspond to the epigram from Emily Dickinson “Hope is the thing with feathers...” at the beginning of the novel?
3. “The Snow Man” by Wallace Stevens opens with the line “One must have a mind of winter...” Why is Angels of Destruction set in winter-time?
4. How is childhood portrayed in the novel? Clearly, Norah stands apart from the other children, but why is Sean Fallon susceptible to her force and vision? Who else bears witness to the miracles and wonders?
5. In the Valentine’s Day scene in the classroom, Norah cites “the seven angels who serve the terrible will of the Lord to punish the faithless,” drawing upon the *Malake Habbalah*, a and there are traditions from many religions about punishing angels. How does this proclamation—and her later acts in Book III—serve to push the adults into confronting their beliefs?
6. At the beginning of Book II, we are suddenly swept back 10 years to the story of Erica and Wiley. In what ways does the author connect their story to the events of Book I?
7. As they pull out in the middle of the night, Erica and Wiley fail to see the girl watching from the side of the road. Who is she and why is she there? How are the other people on the road changed through Erica’s later perspective?
8. How are Una and Mee-maw alike and different from Norah and Margaret?
9. Several of the characters talk about having to change their names. How does Erica’s new identity and pursuit of art and painting play with her desire for redemption?
10. Faith and the desire to believe in things unseen play an important part in the lives of virtually all of the characters. How is Sean’s journey to find Mary Gavin like a pilgrimage? How are the other characters—Norah, Diane, Paul, Wiley, Maya, Erica and Margaret—engaged in some quest for grace?