

BOOK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

What does the accordion symbolize in the memoir, both culturally and personally, for Álvarez?

QUESTION 2

How does Álvarez's exploration of his family's migration from Mexico to Washington shape his understanding of his own identity?

QUESTION 3

How does Álvarez's journey to learn how to play the accordion parallel his journey to understand his place in the world as a father, son and musician?

QUESTION 4

If the accordion were a character in the memoir, how would you describe its personality and influence on Álvarez's life?

QUESTION 5

When Álvarez arrives in Mexico, he describes it as "a drop shock" and wonders how his life would have been different had he been born there. How does the memoir explore the tensions between embracing the culture of the United States and honoring the traditions of ancestors?

QUESTION 6

How does Álvarez reconcile the different narratives of his family's past as he pieces together their history?

QUESTION 7

What role does music play in Álvarez's life as well as in the lives of marginalized communities?

QUESTION 8

When visiting his aunt upon returning from Mexico, she tells Noé, "Your grandfather is not who you think he is." Everyone in the Álvarez family has their own stories about Noé's grandfather. How does the memoir address the trauma of the past and the silence around it within the Álvarez family lineage?

QUESTION 9

A eulogy is a piece of writing that praises a person who has passed away. Consider the title of the memoir. Who or what is being "eulogized" in the story? Do you have a suggestion for an alternate title?

QUESTION 10

Álvarez uses music to connect with his past and better understand his family history. What connects you to your past and family history?

QUESTION 11

The book has three parts labeled Verse, Chorus and Bridge. In what ways does the structure and flow of *Accordion Eulogies* fit the style of a corrido?

QUESTION 12

Why do you think Álvarez describes Yakima as the "Palm Springs of Sadness" (page 73)?

QUESTION 13

Before reading *Accordion Eulogies*, were you familiar with corrido, zydeco and other genres of accordion music? Does the book inspire you to explore listening to or playing accordion music?

QUESTION 14

What music do you associate with your grandparents?

