Discussion Questions For "Sing Them Home"

1. Does the Welsh tradition of "singing them home" bring to mind any funeral traditions of your own ethnic or cultural heritage? Has the strength of these traditions diminished over time, and have they been replaced with any new customs?

2. Which of the siblings, Larken, Gaelan or Bonnie, do you most closely identify with? Why?

3. Bonnie is an extreme example of how the premature death of a parent and a sense of abandonment can impact a child. Can you think of other examples of this from literature?

4. Can your best friend betray you and still be your best friend? How did the tangled relationships of Llewellyn, Hope and Viney serve the needs of each individual involved?

5. Larken's fear of flying phobia had a considerably negative effect on her life. Have you discovered any successful strategies for dealing with a major phobia in your life?

6. Bonnie composes an epistle from recovered fragments of her mother's diary (p.303). What message does this epistle contain for Hope's children?

7. How does Hope's gradual realization of her chronic illness alter her relationship with her husband and children? Was she absent from their lives before the tornado swept her away?

8. In addition to the funeral singing custom, in what other ways is music significant in the lives of these characters?

9. Gaelan is an entertaining weatherman rather than a professional meteorologist. Discuss the course of his television career and how it is reflective of contemporary media practices.

10. If a tornado suddenly swept you from your life, how would you wish to be remembered?

11. Did the magical realism aspect of this story make the book more or less appealing to you? Is there a difference between what is real and what is true?

12. At the conclusion of the Wizard of Oz, Dorothy happily returns from her dream world of Oz to Kansas. If the tornado had safely returned Hope to her home, would that have been a happy ending for her?

See also questions at bookbrowse.com