

Classroom & Book Club Guide

for Death Songs – Ten Years Later (Requiem For The First Cut) by Walter Red

1. Introduction

Death Songs is not a traditional poetry book. It is a memoir in fragments, a map through grief, and a queer love letter to survival. This guide is designed to help readers, educators, and book clubs navigate the emotional terrain of the text with care and depth.

2. Key Themes

- Grief as transformation
- Queer identity and emotional intimacy
- Silence, loss, and longing
- Rebirth through vulnerability
- The mythos of memory and metaphor

3. Guided Discussion Questions

1. Which poem in *Death Songs* resonated with you the most, and why?
2. How does the author use imagery of the body to express emotional pain?
3. What does the book say about silence? About confession?
4. Do you see a progression from loss to healing? Where does it begin—or does it?
5. How does queerness inform the structure or voice of the poems?
6. What moments feel most private to you, as if overheard? Why do they matter?
7. In what ways is this book like a journal? A prayer? A scream?

4. Aftercare & Emotional Grounding

Death Songs is emotionally intense. If you're reading this in a group or classroom, please remember that processing pain looks different for everyone.

Here are some gentle prompts and reflections to guide post-reading discussion or solo reflection:

- What part of the book stayed with you after reading?
- Did any poem remind you of something from your own life?
- What do you want to say to your younger self after reading this?
- What's one thing you'd like to remember—or release?

If needed, take breaks. Cry. Write. Hug someone. Go outside. The poems will still be here when you return.