



PINE

Julia Koets

Reader's Guide

Discussion Questions from the Author:

1. Pine is, of course, a kind of tree, one that grows abundantly in the American South, the landscape of the poems in *PINE*. Considering the title of the book, and all of the variations of the word “pine” in the collection, in what ways are desire, loss, and the South linked for the speaker in the word “pine”?
2. How did the epigraphs at the start of the book—including quotations from Sara Ahmed and José Esteban Muñoz—impact your reading of the book? The book is divided into two sections. How do the titles of these sections - potentiality and ephemera - relate to themes explored in the book?
3. *PINE* includes poems written in the form of thank-you notes. How is a thank-you note poem similar to an ode? How is it different? Why call the poems thank-you notes instead of odes to particular people or things?
4. In *The SAGE Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*, Thomas A. Schwandt defines “field notes” as “notes created by the researcher during the act of conducting a field study to remember and record the behaviors, activities, events, and other features of an observation. Field notes are intended to be read by the researcher as evidence to produce meaning and an understanding of the culture, social situation, or phenomenon being studied.” In my poem “Field Notes on Loving a Girl in Secret,” what is the speaker studying? Since the relationship was a secret, how is the poem a kind of evidence that the relationship existed?
5. Multiple villanelle variations appear in *PINE*. How do the variations in the form - like the line breaks in “Vernal Equinox”—create moments of surprise in the poems?
6. Several of the poems reference well-known people, including Sally Ride and Jodie Foster. If you were to write a poem about or addressed to a famous person, who would you choose? What would you say?

Writing Exercises:

Thank-You Note Poem

Write a poem in the form of a thank-you note, in which you center the poem around one object, place, or someone you don't know personally. For example, I wrote a thank-you note poem to the character Elliott in the movie *E.T.* You could pick a pop culture reference like that, or you could pick a specific place, like the bowling alley where you first held hands with someone.

Variation on the Villanelle

My villanelle, “The Boathouse,” varies the traditional form. In the refrain lines, I often only repeat the final word of the line, and sometimes I use homophones (like “feat” instead of “feet”) in place of one of the refrain line end words. I also experiment with partial rhymes. Try writing a villanelle where you play around with the form. For example, try only keeping the final word or words of the refrain lines and use a homophone in place of one of the refrain line end words.