Book Club Discussion Guide

1. What causes the dynamic between Tina and Spike to shift from adoration to obsession? Have you experienced female friendships that became especially intense or complicated?

2. What does each woman seek in the other, and how do those needs deepen—or distort—their friendship? Why do you think some friendships are hard to explain to others?

3. How does the author use humor to cut the psychological tension in the novel? Did you find yourself laughing while still feeling on edge? What examples stood out?

4. In the beginning of the novel, Tina talks about "traveling to the edge for an experience" that will make her ask, 'Have I gone far enough to save myself yet?' Why do you think she feels compelled to put herself in danger as a way to reshape her life?

5. How does the novel explore reinvention? How do Tina and Spike each attempt to remake themselves—and how do their approaches differ? Does this theme show up in your own life in any way?

6. Storytelling plays a powerful role in the novel—from the porch conversations at the writers' retreat to the stories Spike tells about her dates and her childhood. As truth and fiction blur, did you find yourself wanting to believe these stories while also questioning them?

7. The novel often pauses to reflect on language itself. Early on, Tina says she needs someone to speak to her directly; later, she describes her dictionary as "too basic for the city." How do these moments shape our understanding of identity and belonging.

8. What meaning do you take from Tina's description of life as a journey around an egg? Where do you place yourself on this metaphorical path?

9. The novel explores conflicted ideals of womanhood in the 1980s. How do the pressures and expectations of that decade—including second-wave feminism—influence Tina's and Spike's efforts to define themselves as strong and independent?

10. How does the author portray parents and families throughout the novel--from Tina's and Spike's families to the Peels, the women in the trailer, the wedding party? What does the book suggest about the complicated, invisible ties that hold families together?

11. Travel, escape, and seeking "a hit of something" is a recurring theme throughout the book. What have you discovered about yourself and your friends by taking trips together?

12. Have you encountered someone like Spike—either in your own life or through someone else's story? If you're comfortable, would you like to discuss it with the group?