

Discussion Questions for Lynn Hoggard's *Motherland, Stories and Poems from Louisiana*

1. How does the title, *Motherland*, work at multiple levels in the book?
2. How do the book's three sections—The Source, Eros, The Storm's Eye—fit together?
3. What is gained or lost by mixing poems with stories?
4. How important is the South Louisiana setting to what you see as the book's main point?
5. Based on the way the book ends, what will become of Cassie?
6. What are the major challenges Cassie faces as she grows up?
7. Discuss the relationship between Cassie and Martha LaPlace.
8. How is the mother-daughter relationship resolved (or not) at the end of the book?
9. What importance do you give to elements of joy, play, and silliness in the book, despite its steady look at pain and death?
10. Why does Cassie call South Louisiana the place that put "the marrow in my bones, the arrow through my heart"?