



BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

THE ART OF DEPARTURE

1. Did you sense an overall theme to the stories in this collection? If so, what was it? If not, what do you think was lacking?
2. In the first story, *Somebody Has to Lose*, how do you think Paul Wainwright became so estranged from the rest of the town?
3. How could Paul have handled the situation with his star basketball player in a way that might have worked out better for everyone?
4. We see Ross Newbry at two stages of his life, in the stories *She's Gone* and *Quantum Physics and the Art of Departure*. How do you think his experiences as a young man affected the decisions he makes in the latter story?
5. What was the most powerful of the stories? The least? Why?
6. Did you sympathize with Kevin Gilchrist, the disgruntled reporter at the center of *The Paper Weight*? Why or why not?
7. What do you make of the lovers at the heart of *Cruelty to Animals*?
8. How did the appearance of Jim Quillen, the father character from *The Summer Son*, affect the arc of the story in *She's Gone*?
9. Which story would you want to read more of, and why?
10. Was the feel-good *Comfort and Joy* out of place in the collection? Why or why not?