

## Reading group questions for *Calling Me Home*:

1. When Isabelle first grows close to Robert, is her interest in him genuine, or does it have more to do with disobeying her parents and her society's constraints? How does their relationship change as it grows?
2. What attracts Isabelle to Robert? What attracts Robert to Isabelle? In what ways do they compliment each other?
3. Were there moments during their courtship that you, as a reader, felt that they should not continue their relationship because of the risks?
4. What is the most important thing that Isabelle's story teaches Dorrie? How does she apply Isabelle's lessons to her relationship with Teague?
5. How do you feel about Dorrie's choices in dealing with her son's troubles?
6. What makes Dorrie and Isabelle's friendship unique? How did you feel about the way they each reacted to others' assumptions about them? Do you have a close relationship with your hairstylist? If not, do you think Dorrie and Isabelle's friendship is more unique to Isabelle's generation?
7. Do you feel that *Calling Me Home* accurately portrayed today's lingering racial injustices and resentments? Did *Calling Me Home* cause you to examine your own prejudices, if any? Has it inspired you to think or act differently? How?
8. Do you have any sympathy for Isabelle's mother? What about for Isabelle's father?
9. How did you feel when you discovered Robert's fate? Were you surprised to learn whose funeral Isabelle and Dorrie were attending?
10. Have you ever experienced a forbidden love relationship, or has anyone in your life fallen in love with someone "inappropriate" due to family or societal constraints? How did reading this story make you feel about that relationship? Did it change any of your thoughts or beliefs about how the relationship played out?
11. Did you enjoy the dual narratives in the past and present day? Were you more interested in one or the other? Why?
12. What was your reaction to learning the story was inspired by the author's own family lore (Her father told her that her grandmother fell in love with a black man in an era and locale that made it impossible)? Does knowing that make the story feel more "real?"
13. Had you heard of "sundown towns" before reading this story? What was your experience with them, if so, and what was your reaction to learning about them, if not?