



These discussion questions were developed in conjunction with Lightbox interviews with [Tarfia Faizullah](#) and [Phillip B. Williams](#). For more information, please see www.lightboxpoetry.com.

Discussion Questions

- In his interview, Phillip B. Williams claims that the question for him is not, “How will I write about this moment?” but rather, “Why am I compelled to write about this moment I have or have not lived?” Think of some of your recent poems. What was it that “compelled” you to write about them?
- Discuss the balance of statement and description in “Vision in Which the Final Blackbird Disappears.” What effect does this balance have on the poem’s movement?
- Why do you think the body at the center of “Vision in Which the Final Blackbird Disappears” becomes monstrous? How does the description in the poem signal these transformations?
- Describe the ways in which “Theory of Moths” merges the erotic and the political. How does Williams use imagery, specifically, to draw connections between these elements?
- Compare Williams’s treatment of the body in “Speak” and “Theory of Moths.” How do elements of the poem’s different forms enact their respective intellectual and emotive claims.
- Read and look at “Inheritance: Anthem.” What do you notice about its visual arrangement? What do you make of the fact that parts of the poem are moving through a circle containing the language of the Miranda Rights?
- In what ways do Phillip B. Williams’s selection of poems correspond to his and Tarfia Faizullah’s definitions in their Lightbox interviews?