



These discussion questions were developed in conjunction with Lightbox interviews with Tyehimba Jess and Solmaz Sharif. For more information, please see www.lightboxpoetry.com.

Discussion Questions:

- Discuss the formal patterns of the poem, “Look.” What is repeated in the poem, either word for word or structurally? What do these repetitions evoke for you? How do these repetitions correspond to and advance what you think the poem aims to tell us?
- Discuss the various forms of address within “Look.” To whom is the poem speaking? How do the shifts in address also shift the emotive registers of the poem?
- What role do the gaps in text play in “Reaching Guantanamo”? Why do you think Sharif chose to erase the text of this imagined letter? What information does she erase? How does this affirm or defy your expectations for erasure?
- How does the poem, “Force Visibility,” play with shifting and expanding definitions of words? How does the speaker’s understanding of fascism, for instance, change throughout the poem?
- What is the effect of the brevity of “Vulnerability Study”? How does the poem organize itself in such a short space? How do each of the images describe, or study, vulnerability? Compare the emotional and intellectual effects of this short poem with the emotional and intellectual effects of a longer poem like “Look.”