



These discussion questions were developed in conjunction with Lightbox interviews with [Rickey Laurentiis](#) and [Maurice Manning](#). For more information, please see www.lightboxpoetry.com.

Discussion Questions:

- In his interview, Rickey Laurentiis writes, “The irony is that, at least for me, it’s only distance that grants the clarity necessary to be able to write about any given thing.” Is there anything you feel too close to (or distant from) to write about?
- “[Crescendo](#)” by Rickey Laurentiis has the epigraph, “New Orleans, Louisiana August 2005.” His poem “[You Are Not Christ](#)” has the epigraph, “New Orleans, Louisiana.” What effect does marking a particular time or place in the epigraph have on your reading?
- What kind of meaning do you think you would glean from “You Are Not Christ” or “Crescendo” if you didn’t have any information about New Orleans, Louisiana in August 2005? What does that tell you about other layers of meaning in the poem?
- How would you describe the effects of the line to the music and to the meaning of Laurentiis's poems? How do you read and experience poems differently that are written in stanzas and poems written in a single block of text?
- What is Southern about the poem “[Southern Gothic](#)”? What is gothic about “Southern Gothic”?
- Compare “[Southern Gothic](#)” with “[Conditions for a Southern Gothic](#).” What do these poems seem to imagine a “southern gothic” is? How does the poem “Southern Gothic” speak back to the conditions explored in “Conditions for a Southern Gothic”?