



These discussion questions were developed in conjunction with Lightbox interviews with [Carl Phillips](#) and [Kim Addonizio](#). For more information, please see www.lightboxpoetry.com.

Discussion Questions:

- Which specific moments give us information about the emotional state of the speaker in “As from a Quiver of Arrows”? What emotional impression do they give us of this speaker? What’s his or her relationship to the other in the poem?
- To whom are the questions in “As from a Quiver of Arrows” addressed? Do you think this speaker imagines a listener? Do you think this speaker imagines there are answers to his or her questions?
- Phillips’s poems seem to have a fascination with power, both wielding it, and giving into it. Trace the shifts and dynamics of power in “Capella.” Which strategies and elements of the poem justify your thinking about these shifts?
- Carl Phillips’s often writes titles that have complex and indirect relationships to the texts of the poems. How is the promise of the title of “If a Wilderness” fulfilled in the poem itself? How does the poem complete the other half of an “if-then” proposition?
- Phillips’s poems seem to manage sound and silence very carefully. Follow moments of overt sound and silence through the movement of “If a Wilderness.” How does Phillips create more silent moments in the poem? Louder moments? How does the “score” of this poem affect its tone and mood?
- What are the different registers of language—bodies of knowledge, styles of speech, high and low diction—Carl Phillips engages in his poem, “Neon”? What effect does the mixture of the philosophical, the colloquial, even the profane, in a single poem have on you, its reader?
- Carl Phillips writes that, early on, he was drawn to Sappho’s poetry because her poems were not just love poems, but also political poems? In what ways might you read Carl Phillips’s poetry as political? How do his love poems reach out and think about the wider world, modern society, and human history?