



These discussion questions were developed in conjunction with Lightbox interviews with [Jericho Brown](#) and [Malachi Black](#). For more information, please see www.lightboxpoetry.com.

Discussion Questions:

- What is the effect of the device of negation throughout “Prayer of the Backhanded”?
- Describe the syntactic effects of “Prayer of the Backhanded”? How do the sentences work? What effect does that have on you, the reader?
- How does Jericho Brown’s “Romans 12:1” correspond to the biblical passage? How are we meant to understand his poem in relation to the original?
- How does the body function in the poem, “Heart Condition”? How does the poem merge a variety of bodies: erotic, raced, spiritual, physical? How does the poem’s treatment of the body make a statement about the poem’s interest in faith and spirituality?
- What is the “heart condition” of the poem’s title? How are we meant to understand the title’s multiple meanings in the poem?
- How do Jericho Brown’s poems handle tensions around questions of faith and spirituality? How do you think they confront traditional, sanctioned religious belief? You might consider this question in light of Jericho Brown’s essay, “A God in the House...”