

1) Impression: what (if anything) in this book "struck" you - impressed you or annoyed you? Any particular story out of the 13 stories? Why? Read us a quote that stayed with you.

2) Characters: Fully-realized? flat? believable? cliched? "TSTL"? Too perfect? Could you empathize with or relate to some, all, or any of the characters? Which ones and why?

- Marion Quednau says in her Coast Reporter interview that she "has a rule about short stories: they should not merely be about something that happens; whatever happens must also trigger a change in character. I wanted people to shift and change and be accountable for what they say or what they appear to be wanting earlier in the story." Do you think she succeeds? Can you locate these changes in character? – Some of the characters are interrelated. What does that do to our perspective on them? How do we take the unsympathetic characters or unreliable narrators?

3) Plot: any twists that surprised, pleased, annoyed you? Pacing too fast/slow/just right?

- Many of the stories end ambiguously. Why might the author have chosen these endings, and how do they shed light on the story preceding them?

- Marion Quednau says in the Ormsby Review that she likes "inventing some small or large commotion requiring a shift in dynamic, a break or reforming of character." Are her plots character-driven in this way?

4) Theme: What does the title mean? What is this book's theme or themes? How well do you feel the author portrays the theme(s)?

- Many of the stories seem to deal with loss, and the way people may try to minimize or, alternatively, obsess about their experiences of loss. For example, Moira in "Garage Sale", who attacks a table top with a knife; the neighbour raking snow in "Snow Man"; and the family in the titular story who buy a house "where a baby died" after the 17 year old daughter's miscarriage, and call her "sad day", the anniversary of the miscarriage, "her Jimmy"; they "use the day as a marker, to hold our places". Do you think loss in these stories shows itself in odd shapes or unusual ways of coping?

5) Writing style and quality: do present/past tense affect the reading experience? Any unusual structure to the book? Did the language strike you as insightful, descriptive, even poetic? Does each word "earn its keep"?

- What similarities do you find in the "voice" used by the author for different characters? Do the stories vary in tone, or do you find them to be stylistically similar? How would you describe the "flavour" of this writing style? How does the author invoke humour?

- How does the feeling of reading a collection of short stories compare to reading a novel?

6) Personal relatability Does this book remind you of anything, or relate to anything, in your own life?