

## READING GROUP GUIDE

### KNITTING THE FOG by Claudia D. Hernández

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1. In “Facts on How to Be Born: Life,” Claudia’s mother describes her daughter’s birth. In what ways does Claudia’s spinning body—defying the partera’s assertion that “*boys are usually born facing down and girls are born facing up*” (3)—foreshadow her later experiences of sexuality and gender?
2. In “Tempting Mud,” Claudia tastes the mud that her sister Sindy loves to eat and states, “It was a different type of hunger we both had” (6). What do you think Claudia means? How does this moment illustrate the similarities and differences between the two sisters?
3. How does “The Art of Peeing” emphasize the struggles faced by migrants? How does it represent the changes that will soon inhibit Claudia’s life in El Norte?
4. In “District Six,” Mrs. Gray struggles to understand Claudia’s accent. How do scenes like this one demonstrate the ways that large-scale forces like colonization manifest in Claudia’s life? What are other moments where her experience as an immigrant comes into conflict with the norms and values of white America?
5. In “Lentils, Anyone?” Claudia’s mother punishes her by making her kneel on hard, uncooked lentils for hours until her stepfather intervenes. What do you make of this memory? Where do your sympathies lie? How does the stubbornness Claudia and her mother share connect to their experience as immigrants in a daunting new nation?
6. Claudia’s relationship with her mother is a major thread of the book. What does *Knitting the Fog* suggest about mother-daughter relationships? What role does each play in the family, and how are those roles occasionally reversed?
7. Arriving in El Norte, Claudia and her sisters meet their stepfather Amado for the first time. How do these two experiences—new land, new father—parallel or contrast with one another? How does *Knitting the Fog* explore the complexity of fatherhood, motherhood, and familial relationships?
8. This memoir frequently switches literary medium between poetry and prose. How does this dual structure connect with the experiences it describe? How does it help express the emotional struggles of moving and adapting?
9. *Knitting the Fog* describes the struggles of undocumented people and the lives they live before immigrating to the US—topics often left out of mainstream conversations. What does the book achieve by representing these struggles? How does it highlight intersecting forms of oppression prevalent in the contemporary US? What problems and solutions does it suggest?
10. What does the title *Knitting the Fog* mean in the context of this memoir? What images, experiences, or feelings does it conjure for you? Look back at the title poem (74–77). What story is being told through the language of soil, fog, trees, and other natural phenomena?

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