

## *From the Tender Stem*

### **BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS:**

1. Discuss Eve Brennerman's emotional state as the novel begins. How does her New Year's resolution impact the personal journey that follows?
2. There are many different examples of love in this novel. Some of them are "romantic" love, others are not. Identify these aspects or 'faces' of love and discuss which had the biggest impact on you? On Eve?
3. Why do you think Eve suddenly decided to revisit her family albums and childhood? How did replaying her past impact her personal growth?
4. Discuss parallels/differences between the way Eve and Anise deal with love as the novel develops. Between Viv and Artie; Matt and Eve?
6. Discuss the importance of George as a character and his relationship to Eve. Talk about the episode of the hate crime in the novel. Why is it so hard for Eve to deal with those events?
7. What is the significance of the title to Eve's story?
8. Winter can frustrate gardeners. Eve begins her quest into the meaning of love while waiting for the "growing season" to begin. Talk about the connections she/you see between growing and gardens.
9. Eve is struck by how holocaust survivor Eli Wiesel defines love and its opposite [is it a question of love vs. hate, or love vs. Indifference?]. How does Eve's view of her community change as she struggles to deal with the 'unloving'?
10. Time is an important element in all of the LIFE IN THE GARDEN novels. How does understanding concepts like circadian clocks and seasonal rhythms help Eve begin to understand her life better and the choices she makes?
11. Discuss Eve's experience with the early civil rights movement and her attitudes toward justice? Evil? Change?
12. With which character can you most identify? Why?
13. Discuss how Matt and Eve are dealing the death of a loved one. How does each of them, as survivors, cope or fail to cope?
14. Discuss examples in the novel of how youth or age impact our attitudes toward or ability to love. As the novel begins, Eve says she believes we are never too old to learn. Discuss how this attitude plays out in the novel in her life and the lives of those around her.