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# What We Ask of Flesh

## By Remica Bingham

A Study Guide for Students

### Author Bio

Remica L. Bingham, a native of Phoenix Arizona, is an alumna of Old Dominion University, Bennington College, and is a Cave Canem fellow. Her first book, *Conversion* (Lotus Press, 2007), won the Naomi Long Madgett Poetry Award and was shortlisted for the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award. She resides with her husband and children in Norfolk, VA, where she currently serves as the Writing Competency Coordinator at Norfolk State University.

Do these poems sound confessional or do you think the narrator is a fictional persona?

The poems often include quotes, explain how these quotes inform the theme.

“Hands” are mentioned repeatedly throughout the book. Discuss the potential literal and figurative meaning of the word, according to its context within its respective poem.

What do you think about the title, *What We Ask of Flesh*? How do you think the poems presented in this book reflect that theme?

### Study Questions

The first poem in the collection, *The Body Speaks*, uses a number of different forms within the same poem. Discuss the possible uses of traditional and nontraditional stanzas, as you identify them within the poem.

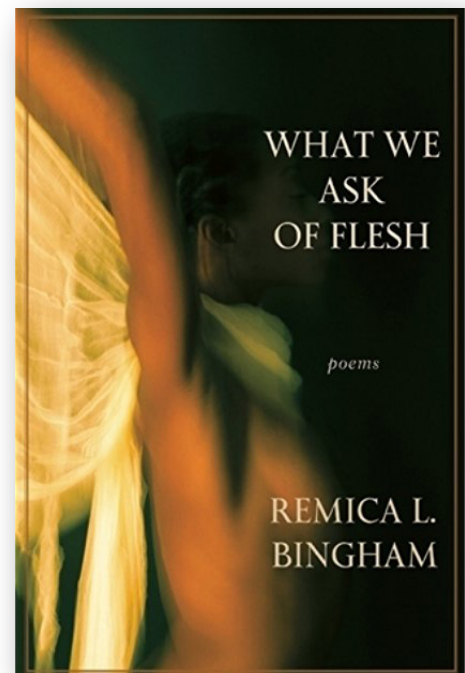
The poems are divided into three sections. Why do you think the author made this decision? What is different about each section thematically?

Do you think structure influences the theme of each poem or vice versa?

Who is the narrator in each of the poems? What is the gender of the person speaking?

What assumptions can we make about the narrator and how he or she views the world?

What is the tone of each of the poems? Does the narrator sound righteous, angry, indignant, elated, etc.?



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