

**One Book One Province 2025****A Study Guide for *Bread + Water* by dee Hobsbawn-Smith****Global Questions**

- How do the themes – *home, place, family, floods, food* – recur throughout the essays?
- Why and how are these important strands?
- Are *home* and *place* the same thing? Why/why not?
- How is belonging related to the ideas of *home* and *place* and *family*? How does the author create a sense of belonging and not belonging?
- How do *floods* affect the author's life in this memoir? What are the negative and positive aspects of floods? How are floods used as metaphor? What surprised you about floods?
- What losses does the author portray? How are these losses made memorable and distinctive?

**Food**

- What role(s) does food play in this memoir? In the author's life?
- How does the author portray food?
- How does she bear witness to the importance of food?
- How and where is food used as metaphor? For what?
- What descriptions of food have stayed with you?
- How does she convey the politicization of food and food issues?
- How does she convey misogyny and discrimination in a culinary context?
- How does the author make use of her experience and knowledge as a chef in this memoir, and to what ends?

**Relationships**

- What risks does the author depict taking in this memoir?
- What is the role of the natural world in this memoir?
- How would you describe the author's relationship with the natural world?
- How does the author use the commonalities of the human experience in this memoir?
- How does the author portray her relationships with various members of her family?
- How is the author influenced by her relationships with MFK Fisher and Madeleine Kamman? How does she utilize and portray these two women in this memoir?

**Language & Form**

- Select some excerpts that used especially effective sensory language and description. What makes them memorable?
- What notable imagery and metaphors does the author use to portray her sons and other members of her family?
- How does the author's role as a poet influence the writing in this memoir? What poetic passages strike you as particularly effective? Or as overly poetic?
- How and where does the author use culinary language in this memoir? How does it influence your understanding?

- How does the author's use of language include the reader?
- What complications and complexities emerge as contradictory in this memoir? Explain. Do they enhance or detract from the essays and the memoir as a whole?
- The author uses braided essays in some places of this memoir. How did this enhance or detract from your experience of reading and comprehension?
- The essays in this memoir are arranged in a non-linear fashion. How does that influence your understanding of the events in the memoir? Does non-linearity enhance or detract from the memoir? How and why?
- How does this memoir compare to other memoirs you have read?

### Personal Questions

- What are your favourite scenes or passages? Why?
- What is your least favourite scene or passage? Why?
- What surprised you in this memoir? How and why?
- What part(s) created wonder? How?
- Did *Bread + Water* inspire you to any kind of action? How and what in particular?
- What parts elicited an emotional or physical response – head-nodding, laughing, crying?
- Did you re-read any passages? Which ones, and why?
- What did you learn? What is new information to you? Did you pursue further information about anything you read in the book? What were they?
- What scenes or events were relatable for you?
- How did this memoir elicit reflections of your own experiences or relationships?
- How did you read this memoir? In a single sitting or in pieces?
- What from this book has stayed with you from what you read?
- What does the author leave unsaid that you wish she might have explored?
- What questions do you have for the author?