



Miles Franklin Literary Award 2009 Longlist

Breath
Tim Winton
Penguin

Reading Group Notes

The Questions

1. Like many of Tim Winton's other books, *Breath* is set in a small town on the south west coast of Western Australia. How important is the setting of this book and how does Winton's depiction of landscape influence the atmosphere of the novel? How does it come to embody the novel's ideas?
2. *Breath* has been described as a coming-of-age novel. Do you think this is the essence of the novel or are there other ways of thinking about it?
3. What are the philosophical implications of Sando's pursuit of danger? Why are Pikelet and Loonie attracted to his ideas?
4. The story of Bruce Pike's childhood is framed by his adult experiences. What effect does the present-day frame – the first and last scenes – have on the rest of the novel? In particular, how does the opening scene set up the rest of the story?
5. How would you characterise the relationships in the novel? Pikelet says Sando has 'the stink of chalk on him'. What do you think motivates Sando in his relationship with the boys? What motivates Eva to get involved with Pikelet? Think about the relationships between Pikelet and his families; Loonie and Pikelet; the two boys and Sando; Sando and Eva; Pikelet and Eva.
6. In the last line of the novel, Pikelet describes surfing as something "pointless and beautiful". Why does he come to see this as important?
7. What are the implications of the title?