



Homeward

a novel

Angela Jackson-Brown

A Captivating Story of One Woman's Transformation Amidst a Changing World

**BOOK
CLUB KIT**

Book clubs are about reading good books, socializing and making connections, considering different perspective, and maybe even trying something new. This kit is perfect for reading *Homeward* as part of a book club."

Dear Reader,

There is no time in history that we need to revisit and learn about the past more than now. When I started writing *Homeward*, I wasn't doing the math that my novel would come out around the 60th anniversary of so many historical events like the assassination of Medgar Evers; the March on Washington; the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church; and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Because I am a lover of history, but especially 20th century American history, those historical events live in my mind constantly.

But I realized, from the interactions I was having with my students as a college professor, that the historical details I wrote about in this book and other books, are fading from the collective memory, especially because so many in this country want us to pretend like US history is pristine and free of all things contentious.

I am happy that this book will remind some and enlighten others about this time in our not-so-distant past. I am happy that people will get to read about people they know of like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and John Lewis, but that they will also encounter people they might not know. I am grateful that this book will bring some of these historical figures back to the forefront of the minds of those who pick up *Homeward*.

I hope this book sparks dialogue on this 60th anniversary of so many amazing, historical events. My one hope is that sixty years from this date we will have become the people Dr. King and others dreamed about.

Best wishes,

Angela Jackson Brown



Reviews & Praise

“This is a harrowing novel about the push and pull of fidelity, family, and faith under the crush of history. Angela Jackson-Brown has written a deeply emotional novel that feels timeless while also speaking to the particularly troubled times in which we live.”

—**Wiley Cash,**

New York Times bestselling author of *When Ghosts Come Home*

“With a strong sense of place and well-developed characters . . . a compelling story about racism, love, community, and the strength it takes to reject a false sense of peace and move toward a better future. As Rose’s family reckons with their choices, she wages a personal battle of discovering her own worth and her purpose in her life.”

—*Booklist*

“An emotionally captivating historical fiction novel . . .”

— *SheReads*






Discussion Questions

These discussion questions can also be found on pages 388 and 389 of the book.

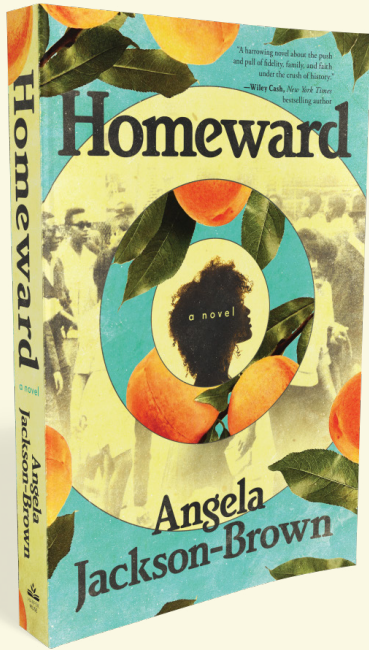
1. *Homeward* begins with controversy. In what ways does the initial news Rose has to share with her family affect your opinion of her?
2. Discuss the mourning practices illustrated in *Homeward*. Do they feel familiar or different from the ways you or people from your community mourn death?
3. In James Baldwin's 1963 book, *The Fire Next Time*, he addresses what he views as "the detriment of Christianity to the Black community." In comparison, how would you describe this author's depiction of the Black church in *Homeward*?
4. Depictions of the Civil Rights Movement are often misleading, such as the level of support from members of the Black community. Evidence shows that many members of the Black community were hesitant to support Dr. King and members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). When you saw that Rose's family was hesitant to get involved, what were your thoughts and how did their hesitancy measure up with what you knew or didn't know about that time in history?
5. Opal and Cedric were teenagers in *When Stars Rain Down*. How has their love evolved over time, and how has that love affected the relationships their children have with their spouses, specifically Rose?



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6. Often, the women of the Civil Rights Movement are omitted or downplayed. In what ways did the author highlight those women in *Homeward*?
7. Discuss how historical events like the assassination of Medgar Evers affected the civil rights efforts taking place in Parsons, Georgia.
8. Rose finds herself falling in love with a nice Jewish boy. Although their relationship is not explored fully in this book, what are your thoughts about their relationship? Do you think they will still be together twenty years into the future?
9. HBCUs were integral to the Civil Rights Movement. What are your thoughts about the depiction of these young movers and shakers? Were you surprised by their involvement, or did this novel confirm what you already knew?
10. The Vietnam War was still in its infancy in this novel. What did this story reveal to you about the role poverty played in the enlistment of men in the military both then and even now?



Angela Jackson-Brown is an award-winning writer, poet, and playwright who is an Associate Professor in Creative Writing at Indiana University in Bloomington, IN and a member of the graduate faculty of the Naslund-Mann Graduate School of Writing at Spalding University in Louisville, KY.

Angela is a graduate of Troy University, Auburn University, and the Spalding low-residency MFA program in creative writing. She has published her short fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry in journals like the Louisville Courier Journal and Appalachian Review. She is the author of *Drinking from a Bitter Cup*, *House Repairs*, *When Stars Rain Down*, and *The Light Always Breaks*.

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