



CRAPALACHIA

a Biography of a Place

SCOTT McCLANAHAN

Reader Guide: Questions and Topics for Discussion

1. Is there value in treating chapters 1-3 as periphery material to the rest of the book? If so, why?
2. How is the character of Ruby established and developed in chapters 2 and 3?
3. Does the direct statement of the theme, “Tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick,” help or hinder the development of the narrative. What do you think McClanahan is trying to say about the passage of time? What are some other themes explored in the work?
4. What effect do the chapter transitions and titles have on the progression of the novel?
5. In what ways does *Crapalachia* explore the idea of entrapment? Explain.
6. How does *Crapalachia* work as a biography of place versus an artistic memoir of Scott McClanahan’s life?
7. What is the significance of repetition in the novel? For example, Bill’s constant retelling of the story of the Greenbrier Ghost.
8. Is Scott a trustworthy narrator? Why or why not? How does the Appendix and Notes section support or undermine the narrator?
9. Uncle Nathan’s Cerebral Palsy makes it difficult to speak, however Scott gives him a fair amount of dialogue. What does the role of family play in the creation of this speech and to what degree do you believe narrator Scott used his imagination in order to give words to this man?
10. Examine the role of family within the text. How does it function in the setting of *Crapalachia*? Do you think families are just a thing someone is born into, or can they be created?