

### Version 1

You and a friend of yours belong to a book club which holds monthly readings and discussions on literature. You are reading a novel by a Canadian author, which features this short passage.

Discuss and exchange your impressions of the text. You can use the following points or others that you may consider relevant:

- The topic or ideas in the passage.
- How the characters feel.
- Reactions, impressions or feelings the passage inspires.
- Underlying symbolism or message.

The phone rings. It's her. I tell her a thought I have had. I tell her how strange it is that we're trapped inside our bodies for seventy-odd years and never once in all that time can we, say, park our bodies in a cave for even a five-minute break and float free from the bonds of Earth. I then tell her about the fears I had years ago. I tell her that I thought that intimacy with another soul was the closest I could ever come to leaving my body.

She says to me, but were we ever intimate? How intimate were we really? Sure, there were the ordinary familiarity-type things – or bodies, our bodily discharges and stains and seepages, an encyclopedic knowledge of each other's family grudges, knowledge of each other's early school yard slights, our dietary peccadilloes, our TV remote control channel changing styles. And yet...

And yet?

And yet in the end did we ever really give each other completely to the other? Do either of us even know how to really share ourselves? Imagine the house is on fire and I reach to save that one thing – what is it? Do you know? Imagine that I am drowning and I reach within myself to save that one memory which is me – what is it? Do you know? What things would either of us reach for? Neither of us know. After all these years we just wouldn't know.

**Douglas COPELAND**, *Life After God*, 1994

Your conversation is expected to last **between 5 and 7 minutes**.

**Version 1**

You and a friend of yours belong to a book club which holds monthly readings and discussions on literature. You are reading a novel by a Canadian author, which features this short passage.

Discuss and exchange your impressions of the text. You can use the following points or others that you may consider relevant:

- The topic or ideas in the passage.
- How the characters feel.
- Reactions, impressions or feelings the passage inspires.
- Underlying symbolism or message.

The phone rings. It's her. I tell her a thought I have had. I tell her how strange it is that we're trapped inside our bodies for seventy-odd years and never once in all that time can we, say, park our bodies in a cave for even a five-minute break and float free from the bonds of Earth. I then tell her about the fears I had years ago. I tell her that I thought that intimacy with another soul was the closest I could ever come to leaving my body.

She says to me, but were we ever intimate? How intimate were we really? Sure, there were the ordinary familiarity-type things – or bodies, our bodily discharges and stains and seepages, an encyclopedic knowledge of each other's family grudges, knowledge of each other's early school yard slights, our dietary peccadilloes, our TV remote control channel changing styles. And yet...

And yet?

And yet in the end did we ever really give each other completely to the other? Do either of us even know how to really share ourselves? Imagine the house is on fire and I reach to save that one thing – what is it? Do you know? Imagine that I am drowning and I reach within myself to save that one memory which is me – what is it? Do you know? What things would either of us reach for? Neither of us know. After all these years we just wouldn't know.

**Douglas COPELAND**, *Life After God*, 1994

Your conversation is expected to last **between 5 and 7 minutes**.