

Discussion Questions for *Siesta Lane* by Amy Minato (Skyhorse Press, 2009)

The author opens her book with a poem about Endangered Species. Discuss how this provides a background for the book. Does Minato feel that she is somehow endangered?

In *Siesta Lane* we travel from a big city - Chicago, to a smaller city - Eugene, then out to a rural community. How does this external travel affect her internal journey?

Nature quest stories typically involve a male protagonist going out into the woods alone to survive isolation and the elements. Why does Minato reject the bear cabin in favor of *Siesta Lane*? Would a year in the “bear cabin” have been more challenging and thus more rewarding?

Minato’s move to *Siesta Lane* is a quest for a simpler, more sustainable life. In what ways does she find this to be true and in what ways false? Is living in the country necessarily simpler and more sustainable?

In several sections of the book the author praises doing less, slowing down, being present but also admits that this is a luxury available to her as a young single woman. Is it desirable and possible for those of us who live busy city lives to live by these values?

Minato reflects on what she has experienced in other cultures and in nature when she examines our modern U.S. culture. What are some differences that she finds? With globalization, do you feel that the lifestyles of other cultures will someday mirror ours?

The author holds the book *Walden* on her lap during her airplane flight west. How does Thoreau’s legacy play into her sojourn?

What are the challenges and gifts that the author experiences during her stay at *Siesta Lane*? How does she change?

Which characters draw your interest most? Why? Does their inclusion enhance or detract from the story? Which relationships interest you most?

Minato mentions several non-profit groups in her book. Does the author find another kind of community with these groups? Do you think that her experience at *Siesta Lane* has inspired her to become more active in environmental protection?