



THE **BTS**  
CENTER

## ***Future Home of the Living God* by Louise Erdrich**

### **Book Discussion Guide**

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#### **Introduction**

words by Tyler Mark Nelson

The Summer Fiction Book Club is an invitation for participants to become immersed in the creative world of fiction books while daring to explore challenging topics related to climate change and environmental injustice. Each month, participants read a selected book on their own time, and then we gathered virtually to discuss as a group. In addition to small group discussion, a guest conversation partner joined to offer their thoughts on the book and share about its impact in their life.

Simply put, fiction has the potential to reveal present realities and imagine possible futures. Through truth-telling, a good story confronts the current systems of power, the unequal material conditions, or the overwhelming circumstances that prevent all life from flourishing. It gives voice to whomever or whatever has been silenced, forgotten, or ignored — the lives of marginalized humans and exploited nonhumans, the values or perspectives that advocate for collective good, or the complex emotions that humans may experience during planetary polycrisis. Fiction can also be a window through which we envision compelling and creative possibilities, whether social, ecological, political, or economic. Imagining what worlds are possible creates the opportunity for us to build towards a better and more just future.

Reading fiction together is a dynamic way for humans to make sense of the world(s) in which we live. By coming together to discuss these books, we also collectively share the weightiness of the subjects. Readers may find a book club to be a space where they can encounter fictional worlds, exercise their imaginative capacities, and even explore and experience their own emotions through the narrative lens of fiction.

The following discussion questions can be used by any group wishing to engage around the novel *Future Home of the Living God* by Louise Erdrich. A video clip from the discussion of the novel during our Summer Fiction Book Club in July 2024 is offered to provide additional perspective and basis for discussion.

## **Introduction to *Future Home of the Living God***

**From the publisher:** Louise Erdrich, the *New York Times* bestselling, National Book Award-winning author of *LaRose* and *The Round House*, paints a startling portrait of a young woman fighting for her life and her unborn child against oppressive forces that manifest in the wake of a cataclysmic event. A chilling dystopian novel both provocative and prescient, *Future Home of the Living God* is a startlingly original work from one of our most acclaimed writers: a moving meditation on female agency, self-determination, biology, and natural rights that speaks to the troubling changes of our time.

**Guest conversationalist from our July 2024:** Rev. Stephanie Perdeu (with Alison Cornish)

- Link to Session Recording: <https://vimeo.com/989158774>
- Discussion: Minute markers 10:00- 47:00 (37 minutes long)

### **Discussion questions**

1. What does *Future Home of the Living God* say about human rights, indigenous rights, and women's rights in particular, amidst an unraveling social fabric?
2. Where was God or Spirit for you in this story? Where was God or Spirit absent?
3. Amidst the uncertainty of our own times, how near or far does this world feel from our own?
4. How does each character and community respond to collapse? What do you think Louise Erdrich is trying to lift up in noting particular commonalities and disparities of responses?
5. Would you consider this book to be "climate fiction"? How might reading this help someone facing the real-life realities of climate change in our world today?