Dear Fellow Writer,

I look forward to discussing “Stray Dandelions” with you. I hope you’ll come prepared for a lively discussion and contribute your voice, insights, and questions.

This document contains questions and topics it might make sense to talk about. Depending on the direction the discussion takes, we may cover some or all of these questions (or others), and we may cover them in a different order. I’ll do my best to accommodate the interests of the group, while focusing on writing craft.

It can be overwhelming to prepare for a discussion like this. My suggestion is to read the essay as many times as it takes for you to start to see how it is working, then focus your preparation on a few questions that interest you. If everyone thinks deeply about a few topics, we’re all likely to learn some things that can help us in our writing.

Paula

Here are some directions our discussion might take us.

1. Let’s talk about the feedback from *Carve*. Do you agree with the editorial comments? What can we learn from the information in “Decline/Accept?”
2. In the interview with the author, Kashani says he made the “risky move of leaving the ending with lots of unanswered questions.” What kinds of unanswered questions does the author ask? Where are they asked? Do you agree with the decision? How else might the story have ended, and how would that have changed the reader’s experience of the story?
3. In “Decline/Accept,” we see the first few paragraphs that were submitted to *Carve*, along with the version that was published by *The New Quarterly*. Do you agree with these edits? How would you characterize them? Is the resulting text better or just different? Do the edits change the “voice” of the story?
4. What is the significance of the title? What does it accomplish for the story? Does it add to our understanding of the story? Can you think of a stronger title?
5. What is the story’s inciting incident? Its climax?
6. What POV has the author chosen? What are the pros and cons of this choice? Would you have made a different choice? How would that have changed the story?
7. For those of us who are familiar with *Carve*, do you think this story is a good fit for the journal? If you were the author, what would you have considered in developing a list of publications to which you would submit this story?