



## **Tomb Song by Julián Herbert** **Graywolf Press Reading Group Guide**



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1. The narrator's complicated relationship to his mother is at the center of *TOMB SONG*. What were some surprising revelations about this mother-son relationship?
2. The narrator shares the author's name, but *Tomb Song* is classified as a novel. How does the book's blurring of fiction and nonfiction change the way you read the novel?
3. How does the narrator's anxiety about writing and art making relate to the drama with his dying mother? In what way does his family's topsy-turvy narrative express the complexity of storytelling generally?
4. The narrative jumps around from past to present and through both history and personal memory. What does this creative approach to chronology add to the novel, and why do you think the author deployed it?
5. Julián Herbert got his start in poetry. In which passages or sections do you notice this poetic influence in *Tomb Song*?
6. What is the role of literature within the novel? In what ways is *Tomb Song* a novel of books and allusions? What were some allusions that stood out to you?
7. How do the historical and political digressions about Mexico relate to the more personal narrative of *Tomb Song*?
8. What is the role of drugs in *Tomb Song*? How do they relate to the larger story of the novel?
9. Given the voice driven and riffing nature of this novel, what do you think the translation process was like?
10. What is the importance of music in *Tomb Song*? How do you think it relates to the title?