



Themes for discussion after listening to the songs of The SIBL Project – Chapter One

"Evil Night Together" was inspired by *Low Life* by Luc Sante.

Topics for Discussion: History of 19th century New York, New York in popular culture, urban decay, psychology of crime. From the song: use of metaphor, the dark side.

"Tell Your Story Walking" was inspired by *Motherless Brooklyn*, by Jonathan Lethem.

Topics for Discussion: Tourette's Syndrome, coping with/masking disabilities, mentorship, petty crime, mystery genre, loss and mourning, the figure of the outsider.

"Ghost World" was inspired by *Ghost World* by Daniel Clowes.

Topics for Discussion: Post-high school decisions, adolescence, multi-generational relationships, journaling, letters of advice.

"Tolstoy" was inspired by *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy.

Topics for Discussion: Russian History (1805-1814), Napoleonic Wars, class struggle, psychological analysis of family life, juxtaposition of country and family, similarities between 1823 and the present.

"Einstein's Brain" was inspired by *Driving Mr. Albert* by Michael Paterniti.

Topics for Discussion: scientific discovery, genius, theory of relativity, travelogue, metonymy, oracles, road songs.

"Rejoyce" was inspired by *Ulysses* by James Joyce.

Topics for Discussion: modernism, psychological realism, Dublin in 1906, in-depth character study, exile, disintegration of society, Homer's *Odyssey*.

"The Last Temptation of Odysseus" was inspired by *The Odyssey* by Homer.

Topics for Discussion: Trojan War, fidelity, homecoming, overcoming hardship through persistence and ingenuity, coming of age, nautical journey.

"Still Crying" was inspired by the poem "*Work Song*" by Mark Levine.

Topics for Discussion: capitalism and greed, anti-Semitism, apocalypse, human appetite for destruction, redemption. The song: paradox, divorce, family and home.

"Calypso" was inspired by *The Odyssey* by Homer.

Topics for Discussion: Trojan War, fidelity, homecoming, overcoming hardship through persistence and ingenuity, coming of age, nautical adventure, Greek mythology.

"7th Step" was inspired by *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt.

Topics for Discussion: Ireland's underclass, father-son dynamics, Catholicism, resiliency of youth, memoir, emigration, alcoholism.

"Bucking Bronco" was inspired by the poem "*Bucking Bronco*" in *A Light in the Attic* by Shel Silverstein.

Topics for Discussion: supernatural phenomena, unfettered imagination, humor, youth, anxiety, coming of age.

"He Can't Come Today" was inspired by *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett.

Topics for Discussion: determinism vs. freewill, coping with loneliness and despair, human condition, existentialism, enlightenment through self-analysis.

"Twas Her Hunger Brought Me Down" was inspired by *Sister Carrie* by Theodore Dreiser.

Topics for Discussion: woman's issues, vagaries of turn-of-the-century urban life, perils of blind ambition, nature of artistic achievement, idea of fate vs. social determinism, changes in social mores.

"Dark and Deep" was inspired by the poem "*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*" by Robert Frost.

Topics for Discussion: nature reflecting human emotion, coping with longing for death/tranquility, the responsibility to endure hardship, conservation of nature.

"The Legend of Enoch Arden" was inspired by the poem "*The Legend of Enoch Arden*" by Alfred Lord Tennyson.

Topics for Discussion: coping with domestic tragedy, interpretation of dreams, Victorian-era mores, madness, nostalgia for stories heard in childhood, familial or cultural legends.

"Ghost of Tom Joad" was inspired by *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck.

Topics for Discussion: History of the Depression/dustbowl, migrant labor issues, forced migration, poverty, family unity, biblical allegory, social protest songs such as Woody Guthrie's "Tom Joad", internet research (Library of Congress photos and accounts).