

*Reading Guide*  
**Anthem of a Reluctant Prophet**  
by Joanne Proulx

1. Luke's death premonitions add an element of the supernatural in an otherwise realistic setting. How does the author make these premonitions feel real?
2. Despite not having a premonition about Astelle Jordon, the missing girl, Luke is certain she is dead. Why might he be pre-disposed to this "certainty"? Why do you think he refuses to touch Astelle's sweatshirt when Mrs. Jordan comes to him for help?
3. Do you think Luke has a good relationship with his parents? Are their efforts at helping Luke effective or not?
4. Throughout the novel, music plays a major role, culminating in Luke's belief in "the distilled hum of a hundred million other souls that plays somewhere just beyond our reach." Discuss the way music connects Luke to the people around him and offers him a medium to both interpret and express the premonitions and their aftershocks.
5. Readers have expressed dismay with the fact that Luke has sex a second time with Astelle Jordan. When you consider this event in the context of the events proceeding Luke's visit to Astelle's, who do you think Luke is referencing at the end of chapter twenty-four, when he says, "I knew exactly what I was doing, and who I was doing it to"?
6. When Luke and Fang finally discuss the Gandy's Rock climb, each claims to have been saved by the other. What was going on out at the rock? Who was in control of the moment? Why did Fang climb the rock? Were the boys' actions heroic or simply reckless?
7. After the trip to Gandy's Rock, Luke quite literally pins Faith in her car. "I kept my head on her leg and my fingers wrapped around her ankle. She started crying, man was she crying, and I could tell it wasn't just about the frogs. And instead of feeling sorry, I felt a flicker of amazement that someone like me had been able to touch a girl like that. To hurt her. To make her weep." Why does Faith's crying amaze Luke? What is implied by the phrases "someone like me" and "a girl like that"?
8. After Luke's encounter with the fundamentalists, he finally goes looking for Fang. The author has said that while writing this section, she was surprised by the unexpected appearance of Mrs. Delaney. Were you surprised by Mrs. Delaney's sudden appearance? Was she what you expected? Why do you think she showed up at this point in the book?
9. Toward the end of the novel, when pondering Pastor Ted's salvation efforts, Luke claims he was baptized in Fang's shower. Why does he consider what happened to him in the shower a form of baptism?

10. When Luke finally makes it to Stan's grave, he admits it took him a long time to understand that what he'd really lost when he lost Stan "was nothing more or nothing less than my holiest friend." Initially, what did Luke think he'd lost when Stan died? What changed his opinion of his loss? Why does he refer to Stan as his "holiest" friend?

