

Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards*



The Hollow Half

Sarah Aziza

2026 AWBA Memoir Winner

BOOK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Sarah Aziza anchors each chapter in *The Hollow Half* with lush meditations on the Arabic language. How do these rich meditations frame and enhance your understanding of the text? Why do you think including these language lessons was important to Aziza? How does translation thematically show up throughout *The Hollow Half*?
2. Aziza resists the traditional memoir structure of moving chronologically through her story of recovery. Instead, she offers up a spiral structure in which she repeatedly crosses space, place, and time to find a way forward. *The Hollow Half* is written as a series of fragments and fault lines. What was your experience reading a recursive memoir? How do you think Aziza went about arranging these fragments to create an arc towards recovery?
3. Dispossession and loss are major themes throughout *The Hollow Half*. How does Aziza balance erasure with the deep hunger to remember her ancestral history? How does this tension complicate Western ideas of recovery and healing?
4. *The Hollow Half* documents three generations of Aziza's family - from Gaza, to the Midwest, to New York City. How does each generation's relationship to home and belonging shape their decisions and choices?
5. Aziza has received numerous grants from the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting and has a background in journalism. In *The Hollow Half*, Aziza weaves in facts, reporting, and traditional journalism via footnotes. In what ways did the reporting presented in this book open and challenge your mind? Why do you think Aziza adds additional context and background to Palestinian history via footnotes? How do the footnotes in this book differ from the endnotes?