Identifying with Fun Home

✦ How do you think your relationship with your parents will or has already changed in college? What effect might these changes have on your individual growth?
✦ How is Charleston different from where you grew up? In what ways do you think this will affect you in your transition to college?
✦ People have always felt compelled to tell their stories, though these stories have most often unfolded in the more private realm of the letter or diary. With the rise of social media, however, we are all prolific autobiographers. What story does your Facebook page or your Twitter feed tell about you?
✦ Fun Home takes place in the 1970s when cultural norms shaped how certain issues—such as gender roles and sexual identity—were approached. How has today’s society and its shifting cultural norms shaped who you are as a young adult?

Engaging Fun Home

✦ Over the past few decades, the graphic novel has become a genre frequently taught in high schools and colleges. How do you read a graphic novel differently than you would a regular piece of prose? And how does Bechdel work with different levels of word and image to create meaning?
✦ Coming-of-age stories are often told chronologically: a series of plot elements unfold through cause and effect, leading from the rising action to the climax. Does Fun Home share this organizational principle? If not, how is it organized and why do you think Bechdel chose to organize it as such?
✦ As the glossary indicates, Fun Home frequently refers other texts, from personal diaries and letters, to excerpts from Fitzgerald and Greek myth. Bechdel, like her father, often frames her identity through other texts. What purpose do these texts serve in Bechdel’s coming-of-age story?
✦ What Bechdel calls “erotic truth” is crucial to her identity, moving away from home—in the context of her very uncommon life. How does culture shape identity? Bechdel invites us to explore these questions through the finely orchestrated images and words of her story and in the shape our own lives—our own stories—take.

About the author

For much of Alison Bechdel’s thirty-year career she has skulked on the cultural margins, writing, drawing, and self-syndicating the comic strip Dykes to Watch Out For. That generational chronicle ran in over fifty LGBTQ publications. Bechdel gained wider recognition for her groundbreaking graphic memoir Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic. Fun Home was a National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist, and was named Best Book of 2006 by Time, which called the tightly architected investigation into her closeted bisexual father’s suicide “a masterpiece about two people who live in the same house but different worlds, and their mysterious debts to each other.” Bechdel recently released a second memoir, Are You My Mother: A Comic Drama (2012). [Bio adapted from dykestowatchoutfor.com/about]