



### Summary

Readable, relatable, timely, and often raw, *Already Toast* – with its clear call for paying and supporting family caregivers – is a crucial intervention in that conversation, bringing together personal experience with research to give voice to those tasked with the overlooked, vital work of caring for the seriously ill.

### Questions

1. When describing the hospital discharge process, the author says, “That nurse in this case spent about half an hour training me how to keep my husband alive and left me nervous and unsure about my ability to do so.” The author references an AARP report criticizing the widespread practice of foisting nursing tasks onto family caregivers. Do you think there is an underlying assumption in the healthcare industry that all patients have care help standing by at home? If so, why do you think this is?
2. The author says that isolation is part of illness. What does she mean? What are some examples from her book?
3. What does the author do to soothe her anxiety? What, in your opinion, should be done about caregiver burnout so it doesn’t lead to depression? Do you think that going to therapy while simultaneously serving as a caregiver would be too much of a challenge? Why do you think some wait until later to seek help, if at all?
4. What do you think of, in Laura Esquivel’s novel *Like Water for Chocolate*, the traditional Mexican expectation that a youngest daughter will remain unmarried and childless so she can care for her parents in old age? Do you agree that what the author did—delegating, at relatively low wages, the care of a loved one to women of color—is part of a problematic pattern?
5. The author thinks caregivers are invisible in our culture. What are some examples of this? How do we make caregiving an issue that people will care about?
6. The author admits, “I was among the most privileged of caregivers: I was well off and financially stable thanks to an inheritance from my mother, so Brad’s health crisis was not also a financial crisis for us.” If the author hadn’t had those advantages, how, do you think, would her experience have been different?
7. Do you agree that caregiving fuels generational poverty? Do you agree that people who are household caregivers should get paid? Do you think a universal basic income would help?