



## Beloved Draft Fragments

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This is a sample of work done on this machines

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Now is the time for all mento come to the aid of their country

The Quick Red Fox Jumped Over The Lazy Brown Sleeping Dog..

Where has everything

Now is the time for all men to come to the aid of their country

This is a sample of work done on this machines

The quick red fox jumped over the lazy brown sleepi



BELOVED

A NOVEL BY TONI MORRISON

Denise  
taken dish  
ghost "man  
her part  
before  
schind

Saves  
Eyes

83 days  
of trembling

Earrings  
as proof

1873

1848

25

3  
c  
Insert:

None of the ribs came back. The cook had a way with them and Sawyers' Restaurant never had leftovers. If Sethe wanted any, she put them aside soon as they were ready.. But there was fried liver some passalbe stew. Problem was, all her pies were sold too. Only rice pudding left and half a pan of gingerbread that didn't come out right. Had she been paying attention instead of daydreaming all morning, she would<sup>nt</sup> be picking around looking for her dinner like a crab. She shouldn't read clock time very well, but she knew when the hands were closed in prayer at the top of the face, she was through for the day. She got a metal top jar, filled it with stew and ~~wax~~ wrapped the gingerbread in butcher paper. These she dropped in her outer skirt pockets and began washing up. None of it was anything like what the cook and the two waiters walked off with.. Mr. Sawyer included mid-day dinner in the terms of the job--along with \$3.00 a week, and she made him understand from the beginning she would take her dinner home. But matches, sometimes a bit of kerosene, a little<sup>f</sup> salt, butter too--these things she took also, once in a while, and felt ashamed because she could afford to buy them; she just didn't want the embarrassment of waiting out back of the tk general store with the others till every white in Ohio was served before the keeper turned to the cluster of Negro faces looking through a hole in his back door. She was ashamed too, because it was stealing and Sixo's comment on the subject amused her, but didn't change the way she felt

nothing but cry and I couldn't do a thing for her but wipe  
her face when I told her what they done to me. Somebody had  
~~her know. was somebody at school. He was being taken to the last.~~

When the music entered 124, Sethe had her hands in a basin  
of water wringing a cloth to put on Beloved's forehead

Diamonds at the top of the water

"Do you remember when we played together? By the stream?"

" I was by the stream. I was by it."

Diamonds at the top of the water

woman. Crawling out of the woods, crosseyed with hunger and  
and loneliness, he knocked at the first back door he

laying  
to him  
Stretched out the full length - <sup>listening to</sup> ~~watching~~  
Snow flake ~~over~~ <sup>Stream past</sup> the window over  
his feet it was easy to see  
the conscience —, to  
disregard questions I will  
dismiss the doubts that took  
him to Seth's that alley ~~the~~ <sup>father's</sup>  
Seth's Restaurant  
~~the~~ <sup>His</sup> expectations for himself  
were high, too high. What he  
other people called might <sup>called</sup>  
conscience other people called Conscience since

y in over to where Grandpa Baby Suggs was and...

the kind of man who can walk in a house and make the women  
cry.

on over to where Grandma Baby Suggs was and..."

"Who is Grandma

The Pupils and <sup>their</sup> teacher do  
lessons until breakfast.

(Mrs. Garner <sup>restless at night</sup> is sunk in  
Sleep all morning.

~~On Sunday they~~ skip breakfast completely &  
one day <sup>a week</sup> they <sup>go</sup> to Church,  
travel 10 miles.  
expecting a huge dinner  
upon their return.

Schoolteacher writes in his  
note book after supper.  
The pupils clean <sup>and sharpen</sup> ~~or mend~~ tools.

They hope <sup>hear</sup> they get the sign on Saturday  
night

~~Since~~ the Pauls watch him go  
The Corn stretches to their Shoulders - it  
will never be higher. The moon is  
Smiling. They <sup>can hardly</sup> ~~listen~~  
hurry, or chop, or  
clear, or <sup>for listening</sup>

not bird or snake  
rattle. that is

He stayed  
alone to  
sing songs  
of murder and  
watch an aspen  
because their  
was no  
hope of  
escape-  
then.

(3)  
Cont'd.

until it  
rained.

Afterwards  
he predicted  
just to move,  
go, pick up  
one day and  
be somewhere  
else the next.

Song murder and the aspen

~~But he got through that and a  
whole lot more.~~ Resigned

to ~~having~~ to live without  
aunt, cousins, children. Even  
a woman, until Se the.

after the  
Cherokee  
sent him  
running  
toward  
blossoms.

next to her,

the girl who waited

Disremembered and unaccounted for, one of a number  
waiting to serve, , be loved and cry shame. X Where the  
memory of the <sup>knife</sup> ~~stigmata~~ under her chin might have been and was  
not, a latch latched and lichen attached its apple green bloom  
to the metal. What made her think her fingernails could open  
locks the rain rained on?

1. The woman fell into her separate  
parts

who waited  
to serve, cry shame and be loved  
<sup>crumbled</sup>  
~~She fell~~ into her separate parts

Or that there would ever be enough

of anything, ~~to block~~

to say Goodbye Beloved, Hello

to make the gram part for  
your feel

next to hers.

"Sethe," he says, "me and you, we got more yesterday than anybody. I think we need some kind of today."

"What?"

He leans over and takes her hand. With the other he touches her face. "You your best thing, Sethe. You are."

Sethe looks down at his holding fingers holding hers.

"Me/ Me/

Regards,

Toni Morrison

or told stories to keep her occupied when Sethe was at the restaurant.

Dear Tom Bishop was enough to put out the licking fire that seemed always to

burn in her. Not when they  
I am writing to urge you as strongly as I can to give positive  
consideration to Gilbert Moses' application for your Summer  
Seminar in Avant-Garde theater.

He is a certifiable genius and needs support to pursue his theatrical  
and academic interests. He works considerably in TV, film and on  
stage, but there is seldom time or opportunity, under those cir-  
cumstances, to develop art that is special. Mr. Moses would  
benefit enormously from your Seminar and the other participants,  
as well as American theater, would be well served by his presence.

My recommendation is enthusiastic and unlimited.

Regards,

Toni Morrison

The others are taken      I am not taken      I am standing  
in the rain falling      I am falling like the rain is      I  
watch him eat      inside I am crouching to keep from falling  
with the rain      she took my face away      there is no one to  
want me      to say me my name      i am going to be in peices  
^ he puts his finger threre.....I drop the food and break  
into peices

he hurts where I sleep

Then Sethe looked up. The sky was blue and clear. Not one touch of death in the definite green of the leaves. She could hear birds and, faintly, the creek way down into the meadow. \* Suddenly she heard wings. Little humming birds stuck their needle beaks right through her head cloth into her hair and beat their wings. And if she thought anything, it was No. no no. NO no no. She flew. The ice pick was not in her hand; it was her hand.

\* It was when

As she lowered her eyes, she saw him. <sup>to look again at the loving faces before her that</sup> Guiding the mare, coming for her, his black hat, wide-brimmed enough to ~~xxxxx~~ <sup>hide</sup> his face but not his purpose. He was coming in her yard and he was coming for her best thing.

① They forgot her like a bad dream.

③ Down by the creek in back of 124 her footprints come and go, come and go. They are so familiar. A child ~~or~~ an adult could place <sup>their</sup> ~~his or her~~ feet <sup>in</sup> them and they <sup>would</sup> fit. Or lift their feet away, <sup>and</sup> they disappear again as though nobody ever walked there.

④ By and by all trace was gone and what was forgotten was not only the footprints, but the water too and what it is down there.

② Occasionally the rustle of a skirt was heard upon waking; the knuckles brushing ~~xx~~ a cheek in sleep seemed to belong to the sleeper. Sometimes the photograph of a close friend or relative --looked at too long-- ~~would~~ <sup>ed</sup> shift and something more familiar than the dear face itself moved there. They could touch it, if they liked, but didn't because they knew they would never be the same if they did. The rest was weather. Not the breath

⑤ of the disremembered, but September wind in the eaves, or spring Just weather. ice thawing too quickly. Certainly no clamor for the join.

end?

It sprinkled. A teasing August rain so light, it raised expectations it could not fill. He should have sung something loud and rolling to go with Sixo's tune. The words put him off--he didn't understand the words. It shouldn't have mattered; he understood the sound of hatred so loose it was juba. The warm sprinkle came and went, came and went. The sobbing he heard seemed to come from Mrs. Garner's window, but it could have been anything, anyone, even a she cat making her yearning known. Tired of holding his head up, he let his chin rest on the iron collar. If he could hobble to the grate he'd boil a little water and throw in a handful of meal. That's what he was doing when Sethe came in rain-wet and

shall I do?"

On his dinner break he leaves the field. He has to. He has to tell Sethe about the change in leaving time and that he has heard the sign. For two successive nights she has been with Mrs. Garner and doesn't know about the change-- that she and her family will not leave at daybreak, but

→ win bits, smiling austerly, lurching dead men

Choke

Cherry trees better

Cameo pins

no pins,

(fossil feet,

Summer

happy laughter

ghost white stains,

Sugar breath,

throat

Reveries

hissing  
gran,

on the lawn of a

on the lawn

this red red heart

rain,  
apple blossoms,  
nectar,  
leaving,  
pink

Summer

July in the

laughter hours,

hale in the

butter

Flesh

This conversation  
showed he  
was definite

(In the cold room)

No footfall announced her, but there she was,  
standing where before there was nobody when Denver looked,  
~~"Why are you crying?"~~ asked Beloved. ~~"There is no~~  
circle around your neck." ~~she said~~ **she said**

Denver grabbed the hem of Beloved's skirts "I thought  
you left me I thought you went back."

~~"I can't go back I can only go as far as the bridge,~~  
and stay there. This is the other place I can be.

[TK ~~to Denver~~ <sup>because of the cracks of</sup>  
<sup>Sunlight above</sup> ~~because of the cracks of~~

<sup>I'm down there like this</sup> "I <sup>am</sup> was crouching <sup>now am</sup> [in a boat] and then I was standing in the  
rain with others. The others <sup>are going with the men</sup> were taken. I sat down because  
no one took me, <sup>is taking</sup> Then someone did. I <sup>Now</sup> was in a house. I dropped  
things <sup>can't watch</sup> because I could not watch him eat. I dropped all of  
his things He <sup>comes</sup> came where I <sup>sleep</sup> slept at night and hurt me when  
I dropped food and bowls in the day. I <sup>am</sup> grew old in his house. <sup>this</sup>  
He <sup>Now he is soft</sup> weakened and stays in his bed I <sup>go</sup> went out of the house.  
I walked this way and that way I <sup>come</sup> came to the bridge and stayed  
there."

"How come you could leave the bridge?"  
~~Because I drop things, he hurts me~~  
"I couldn't go back to the house where I dropped things.  
If I go back and he is strong again he will hurt me  
Maybe he was strong again?"

<sup>don't</sup> "Why didn't you just cross it? Go the other way?"

~~can't~~ "I was watching the water underneath. I couldn't leave

light-  
almost  
sing  
at the  
end of  
Part 2  
"124 was  
loud"

She sits down

and the his back

the newspaper

crackles under her

Above the cuts of sun

She is dreamy, and moaning,

What you thinking about, ask  
Denver.

I can  
see it, says Denver

See what?

"It's back. I can see it,"

"Tell me."

Beloved covers her face, concentrating.

the water."

~~"But you did leave it. You came here."~~

<sup>after</sup>  
"I got in it. I got in the water and saw her face. She told me to come here. This <sup>the place</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>can</sup> where I am to be. ~~Where there are~~ no men without skin." *Her face is in the water."*

"Whose face? Whose face in the water?"

"Sethe's"

"You saw Ma'am's face in the water?"

"Yes. She ~~is~~ the hot thing."

[~~"Is he the one name you 'Beloved'?"~~

7  
"At night he calls me Beloved. Truly Beloved. In the dasy he calls me Black Bitch." ]

you came back because of me?

yes

Tell me the truth. Aren't you my Beloved?

Yes.

Didn't you come [back to me] from the other side?

Yes. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~. I was on the other side.

~~Don't~~ you remember me?

Yes. I remember you.

You never forgot me?

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~. Your face is mine.

Do you <sup>Will you stay?</sup> ~~XXXXXX~~ Forgive me? ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~. You are safe here.

Where are the men without skin?

Out there.

Can they come here?

NO. They will never come in here. They tried once, but

I stopped them. They <sup>won't ever</sup> will never come back.

Where are your earrings?

~~I lost them; in jail.~~ They took them from me. In jail (lover)

I would have helped you but the clouds were in the way.

The clouds are in the sky now; There are ~~no~~ clouds here.

I won't let them put the iron circle around your neck. I

will make you a round basket.

You're back. You're back.

Will we smile at me?

Can't you see I'm smiling?

I love your face

that with their paper and ink

Mr. Charles Park Newman

Tell me the truth.  
Didn't you come back to me from the other side?  
Yes. I was on the other side.  
You remember me?  
Yes. I remember you.  
You never forgot me?

← (The men without skin took them?)  
Yes

Do you will you stay?  
Where are the men without skin?  
ut there.  
Can they come here?  
No. They will never come in here. They tried once, but  
I stopped them. They will never come back.  
Where are your earrings?  
I would have helped you but the clouds were in the way.  
The clouds are here now; there are clouds here.  
I won't let them put the iron circle around your neck. I  
will make you a round basket.  
You're back. You're back.  
Will we smile at me?  
Can't you see I'm smiling?  
I love your face

we played by the creek

I ~~xxxx~~ saw her in the water.

In the quiet time, we played

The clouds were noisy and in the way

Whenever I needed you you came to be with me

~~I needed you~~ I needed her to smile at me

I could only hear breathing

The breathing is gone; only the teeth are left.

She said you wouldn't hurt me

She hurt me

I will protect you

I want her face

Don't love her too much

I am loving her too much

Watch out for her; she can give you dreams at night

She chews and swallows

Don't <sup>fall</sup> sleep when she braids your hair

She is the laughter; I am the laugh

I watch the house; I watch the yard

She left me

Daddy is coming

A hot thing.

*you came back to  
you left me  
I waited for you  
more  
more  
306 314  
307 308*

D You are my sister  
 S You are my daughter  
 B You are my face; ~~you are me~~  
 S I have found you again; you have come back to me.  
 D You are my Beloved  
 S You are mine.  
 D You are mine  
 B You are mine.  
 S I have your milk  
 B I have your smile  
 D I will take care of you  
 B I am your face; I am you. Why did you leave me? Me  
 who am you  
 S I will never leave you again  
 B Don't ever leave me again  
 D You will never leave me again  
 B You <sup>went</sup> jumped into the sea  
 D I drank your blood  
 S I brought your milk  
 B You didn't smile; you hurt me  
 S I loved you  
 B You hurt me

You came back <sup>to</sup> me  
 You left me

I waited for you

mine

mine

mine

287 306 314  
 307 308

feel it over here he is fighting hard to leave his body  
which is trembling like a small bird there is no room to  
tremble so he is unable to die my own dead man is pulled  
away from my face I miss his pretty white points

We are not crouching now we are standing but my legs are  
like my dead man's eyes I cannot fall down because there  
is no room to the men without skin are making loud noises  
I am not dead the bread is sea-colored I am too hungry to  
eat it the sun closes my eyes those able to die are in a  
hill I cannot find my man the one whose teeth I have loved  
a hot thing the little hill of dead people a hot thing the  
men without skin push them through with poles the woman is  
there with the face I want the face that is mine they fall  
into the sea which is the color of the bread she has no  
earrings in her ears<sup>x</sup> now there is room to crouch and to  
watch the crouching others it is the crouching that is now  
always now inside the woman with my face is in the sea a  
hot thing

In the beginning I could see here the woman I could not  
help her because the clouds were in the way in the begin-  
ing I could see here she does not like the circle around her  
neck I know this I look hard at her so she will know  
that the clouds were in the way

night day  
night day

I wait on the bridge because she is under it I wait  
a long time there is night and there is day again

again I am waiting in the day diamonds are in the  
water where she is and turtles <sup>in the night</sup> I hear chewing/  
laughter it belongs to me and it is hers too she is

the laugh I am the laughter I see her face which is  
mine this is the face that was going to smile at me in

the place where we crouched now she is going to her  
<sup>face</sup> smile comes through the water a hot thing her <sup>face</sup> smile

is mine she is not <sup>smiling</sup> singing she is chewing and <sup>swallowing</sup> laughing

<sup>I have to have my face</sup>

I have to have her face it is mine I go in the  
grass opens she opens it she is coming there is no  
round basket she goes up where the diamonds are I  
follow her we are in the diamonds which are her ear-  
rings now my face is coming I have to have it I am

looking for the join no iron circle is around my neck

no boats go on this water nothing floats here <sup>NO MEN without skin # my dead man is not floating here</sup> they are

down in <sup>there</sup> it where the blue is and the grass <sup>#</sup> so is the face

I want the face that is going to smile at me it is

going too I am loving my face so much I have to have it

my dark face is coming to me <sup>want to</sup> I join <sup>the bottoms of</sup> I see my feet ~~swim~~

~~away from me~~

She whispers to me ~~my face~~ She ~~whispers~~  
I reach for her <sup>now</sup> but she is gone ~~my me~~  
<sup>(over)</sup> is gone ~~my face is going away from me~~

She touches me

She is chewing and swallowing

~~I am waiting (looking) for the~~

~~join.~~ ("smile")

She knows I want to join

She chews and swallows me

I am gone

Now I am her face

My <sup>own</sup> face has left me I see

me swim away A hot thing

I am lonely  
TK How can I be myself and her  
I want to be the two of us I want  
the join.

<sup>I need to find a place to be</sup>  
I come out of blue water to this house after the join  
and after the bottoms of my feet swim away from me I come

up ↓ the diamonds are gone but the house is there the

sun closes my eyes when I open them I see the face I

<sup>lost</sup> want Sethe's is the face I have to have Sethe sees me

see her and I see the smile <sup>her face is smiling</sup> this is the one her face is

<sup>for me</sup> it is the place I want to be <sup>She is my</sup> I am her face smiling at me doing

it at last a hot thing

Now we can join a hot thing

Her face is the face I lost

<sup>this</sup> there is the house <sup>this</sup> there is what

She whispered to me I am at where

the place she told me to be

I am not dead.

I sit

\* the air is heavy I am not dead  
I am not.

~~my breath is gone~~

see the face I lost

124 was loud. Stamp Paid could hear the <sup>it</sup> voices even from the road. He walked toward the house holding his head as high as possible so nobody looking could call him a sneak, although his worried mind made him feel like one. Ever since he showed that newspaper clipping to Paul D and learned that he'd moved out of 124 that very day, Stamp felt uneasy. Having wrestled with the question of whether or not to tell him about <sup>her</sup> Sethe, and having convinced himself that he should, he then began to worry about Sethe. Had he stopped the one shot she had of the happiness a good man could bring her? Was she vexed by the loss? ~~Angered~~ by the free and unasked for revival of gossip by the man who had helped her cross the river and <sup>who</sup> was her friend as well as Baby Suggs'?

"I'm too old," he thought, "for clear thinking. I'm too old and I seen too much." Besides, sneaking was his job--his life; but always for a clear and holy purpose: ~~he sneaked~~ <sup>underneath his</sup> run a ways into hidden places; ~~he ferried~~ <sup>legal</sup> vegetables and ~~contraband~~ <sup>were the</sup> humans <sup>that he ferried</sup> across the river. Even the pigs he worked in the spring for white people served his purposes. Whole families lived on the bones and guts he distributed to them. He wrote their letters and read to them

\* before the War all he did was sneak

the ones they received. He knew who had dropsy and who needed fire-wood; which children had a gift which needed correction. He knew the secrets of the Licking River and its banks; empty houses and full; the best dancers, the worst speakers, those with beautiful voices and those who could not carry a tune. There was nothing between his legs but he remembered when there had been--when that drive drove the driven, and that was why he considered long and hard before opening his wooden box <sup>and</sup> searching for the clipping to show Paul D.

Afterward--not before--he considered Sethe's feelings in the matter. And it was the lateness of this consideration that made him feel so bad. Maybe he should have left it alone; maybe Sethe would have gotten around to telling him herself; maybe he was not the high-minded Soldier of Christ he thought she was--but ~~a~~ an ordinary plain meddler who had interrupted something going along just fine for the sake of "truth" and "forewarning", things he set much store by. Now 124 was back like it was before Paul D came to town -- <sup>worrying</sup> with Sethe and Denver <sup>with a</sup> and their pack of haunts. Even if Sethe could deal with the return, <sup>of the spirits</sup> ~~God knows her daughter needed something~~ <sup>body</sup> normal in her life. <sup>(over)</sup> But deeper and more painful than <sup>his belated concern for</sup> ~~all of that~~ <sup>Denver,</sup>, scorching his soul like a silver dollar in a fool's pocket, was the memory of Baby Suggs <sup>the</sup> mountain to his sky. It was the memory of her and the honor that was her due that made him walk stright-necked toward the yard of 124, although he heard <sup>its</sup> ~~the~~ voices from the road.

He had stepped foot in this house <sup>only</sup> once, after the misery (which is what he called Sethe's rough response to the Fugitive Slave Act) <sup>low</sup> and that was to carry Baby Suggs, <sup>low</sup> holy out of it. When he picked her

\* Stamp didn't believe her daughter could <sup>low</sup> Denver

By luck

(He had been there almost at her birth—  
before she knew she was alive—and  
it made him partial to her. It was  
seeing her, still <sup>looking</sup> alive and healthy,  
4 weeks later, that pleased him so (much)  
he gathered all he could carry  
of the best black berries in the  
County and ~~del~~ presented ~~the~~ harvest  
to Balm Sugar.)

(~~He~~ <sup>Some</sup> ~~gave~~ ~~them~~ to her before  
To this day he believed his berries,  
(~~which caused the~~  
~~the first feast that followed,~~ & the  
wood Chopping that followed) were  
the reason Denver was still alive.  
Had he not been there Chopping  
firewood Sethe would have spread  
her brains on the plank. Maybe  
he should have thought of her, if not  
Sethe, before he gave Paul D the  
news that ran him off.

up she looked to him like a girl and he took the pleasure she must have knowing she didn't have to grind her hip bone anymore--that at last somebody carried her. The woman Sethe and her daughter were dry-eyed on that occasion. Sethe had no instructions except "Take her to the Clearing" which they tried to do, but were prevented by some <sup>rule</sup> ~~law~~ the whites had invented about where the dead should rest. Baby Suggs went next to the <sup>baby</sup> ~~bay~~ with its throat cut <sup>--a neighborliness</sup> which Stamp wasn't sure had Baby Suggs' approval

on over to where Grandma Baby Suggs was and...

"Who is Grand Baba?" Beloved interrupted her.

"MY grandmother.

"Go 'head."

"That's where the others was. The three others she sent on before to wait for her at Grandma Baby's. So she had to put up with everything to get there. And this here girl Amy helped..." and Denver stopped <sup>both loved and</sup> ~~a~~ sighed. She <sup>part of the</sup> ~~always~~ hated this story. It made ~~he~~ her feel like <sup>\*</sup> a bill was owing somewhere and she, Denver, had to pay it. But who she owed or what to pay it with eluded her. Now, watching Beloved's alert and hungry face, how she took in every word, asking questions about the color of things and their size, her down~~right~~ craving to know, Denver began to see what she was saying and not just hear it: there was this nineteen year old slave girl-- a year older than herself--walking through the dark woods to get to her children who are far away. She is tired, scared maybe, and maybe even lost. Most of all she is <sup>by</sup> ~~be~~ herself and inside her is another baby she <sup>has</sup> ~~has~~ to think about too. Behind her dogs, perhaps, guns probably and certainly mossy teeth. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ She is not so afraid at night because she is the color of it, but in the day <sup>quiet</sup> ~~soft~~ every sound is a shot or a tracker's <sup>quiet</sup> ~~soft~~ step.

Denver was seeing it now and feeling it--through Beloved. Feeling how it <sup>l</sup> must have felt to her mother. Seeing how it must have looked. And the more <sup>l</sup> fine-points she made, the more <sup>l</sup> detail she provided, the more Beloved liked it. So she anticipated the questions by giving blood to the <sup>scraps</sup> ~~pieces~~ her mother and grandmother ~~had~~ told her, and a heart beat. The monologue <sup>became</sup> ~~in~~ fact a duet as they lay <sup>l</sup> ~~down~~ together, Denver nursing Beloved's interest like a lover whose

loved it because it was  
all about herself - hated  
it because

pleasure was to overfeed the <sup>loved.</sup> beloved. ~~A <sup>two</sup> ~~ten~~~~ top the dark quilt with <sup>was</sup> three orange patches, smelling <sup>ed</sup> like grass and feeling <sup>t</sup> like hands--the ~~unresting~~, unrested hands of busy women: dry, warm, prickly. Denver spoke it, Beloved took it and the two

~~made it life.~~ did the best they could. to recreate what really

[ Sethe's p.v. ] happened - how it really was - ~~so~~ Something only Sethe knew because ~~only~~ she alone had the mind for it - and the time afterward to shape it.

"You aint got no business walking round these hills, Miss." (over)

"Looky here who's talking. I got more business here'n you got. They catch you they cut your head off. Ain't nobody after me but I know somebody after you. <sup>"Any pressed her fingers into the soles,</sup> Whose baby that?"

Sethe did not answer.

"You don't even know. Come here Jesus, " Amy sighed and shook her head. "Hurt?"

"A touch."

"It's good for you. More it hurt more better it is. Can't  
nothing heal without pain you know. What you wrigglin' for?"

Sethey raised up on her elbows, Lying on her back so long  
had raised a ruckus between her shoulder blades. The fire in her feet  
and the fire on her back made her sweat.

"My back hurts me," she said.

"Your back? Gal, you a mess. Turn over here and let me see."

In an effort so great it made her sick to her stomach, Sethe turned on to her right side. Amy unfastened <sup>the back of</sup> her dress and said "Come here Jesus," when she saw. Sethe guessed it must be bad because after that call to Jesus, Amy didn't speak for a while.

~~And whatever she saw did what~~ <sup>for the 1st time</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>speechless</sup>

→ TK: move into the story as  
possessed by Sethe.

1. Amy's voice - her breath like  
burning wood.

2. The quick change ~~into~~ weather  
up in those hills - cool at night  
hot in the day - sudden <sup>fog</sup> mists -  
etc.

3. The abandon (?) in her  
~~relationship~~ attitude toward Amy  
born of her desperate situa-  
tion and Amy's eccentricity.

How ~~abandoned~~ <sup>reckless</sup> she felt behaved  
with this white <sup>girl</sup> - a ~~recklessness~~ <sup>encouraged by</sup>  
born of desperation and Amy's  
fugitive eyes. ↑

*she stood, left the lean to and walked off a little ways, to lean against a tree.*  
fore going a little ways off, to relieve herself. When she came  
back the sun was in the valley <sup>below</sup> and they were in blue Kentucky light. <sup>way above it</sup>

*Sister*  
"You ain't dead yet?"

"Not yet."

"Make you a bet. You make it through the night, you make it  
all the way." Amy rearranged the leaves for ~~their~~ <sup>again</sup> comfort and knelt down <sup>to</sup>  
massaged the swollen feet. "Give these one more real good rub,"  
she said, <sup>sucked</sup> "and when Sethe ~~whimpered~~ <sup>through her teeth</sup> and gobbled air, she said "Shut  
up, you got too keep your mouth shut." <sup>bit down on her lips</sup> Sethe ~~stopped~~ <sup>stopped</sup> moaning and let  
the good hands go to work to the tune of "Son bees, sing soft and  
bees, sing low." Afterwards she <sup>Moved to the other side of the lean-to, where</sup> ~~braided~~ <sup>Seated</sup> her hair saying "Don't up  
and die on me in the night you hear? I don't want to see your  
ugly black face hankering over me. If you do die, just go on off  
somewhere where I can't see you. You hear me?"

"I hear you," said Sethe. "I'll do what I can."

~~By and by the two slept at opposite sides of the lean-to.~~

Sethe never expected to see another thing in this world so when she felt  
toes prodding her hip it took a while to come out of a sleep she  
thought was death. She sat up, stiff and shivery while Amy looked in  
on her juicy back.

"Looks like the devil," said Amy, "But you made it through,  
~~Sister~~ Come down here, Jesus, Sister made it through. That's  
because of me. I'm good at sick things. Can you walk, you think?"

"I have to let my water <sup>Some kind of way.</sup>"

"Let's see you walk on em."

It was not good, but it was possible, so Sethe limped, holding on  
first to Amy, then to a sapling.

*Seated she lowered her head toward her shoulder and*

"Was me did it. I'm good at sick things aint I?"

"Yeah," said Sethe, "You good"

"We got to get off this here<sup>h</sup> hill. Come on. I'll take you down to the rive. That <sup>ought</sup> ~~out~~ to suit you. Me, I'm going to the Pike<sup>o</sup> Take me straight to Boston<sup>o</sup> What's that all over your dress?"

"Milk."

"You one mess."

TR <sup>looked down at</sup> Sethe <sup>and touched it.</sup> ~~touched~~ her ~~stomach~~. The baby was dead. She had not died in the <sup>night</sup> ~~night~~, but the baby had. If that was the case, then there was no stopping now. She would get <sup>that</sup> ~~her~~ milk to her baby girl if she had to swim.

"~~You~~ hungry, aint you?" Amy asked her.

"I ain't nothing but in a hurry."

Whoa. Slow down.

"Want some shoes?"

"What?"

"I figured how." <sup>Said Amy</sup> And so she had. <sup>She</sup> ~~two~~ <sup>from</sup> ~~two~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~pieces~~ <sup>of</sup> Sethe's shawl, filled <sup>them</sup> ~~it~~ with leaves and tied <sup>them</sup> ~~over~~ her feet, <sup>bleeding</sup> ~~chattering~~ all the while<sup>o</sup>

"How old are you, Sister? I <sup>been</sup> ~~having~~ <sup>months</sup> ~~months~~ for four years but I ain't having <sup>no</sup> ~~no~~ body's baby. Won't catch me sweating milk cause...

"I know," said Sethe. "You going to Boston."

get some thing more respectful?

As Sethe beat her way out of a closed past in order to shut herself up in a timeless present, Stamp Paid fought fatigue and the habit of a lifetime <sup>to</sup> ~~to~~ find her. Baby Suggs refused to go to the Clearing because she believed they had won; he refused to acknowledge any such victory. Baby had no back door; so he tried to knock on the one she did have. He clutched the red ribbon in his pocket for strength <sup>to</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>changed</sup> the habit of a lifetime. Softly at first, then harder. At the last he banged furiously--disbelieving it could happen. That the door of a lit house with people in it did not fly open in his presence. He went to the window and wanted to cry. Sure enough, there they were, not a one of them heading for the door. Worrying his scrap of ribbon to shreds, the old man turned and went down the steps.. Now curiosity joined his shame and his debt. There were three backs turned to him as he looked in the window. Two he recognized and the one he did not troubled him. He didn't know her and didn't know anybody it could be. Nobody, but nobody visited that house.

He went to see Ella and Hohn to find out what they knew.

"Oh, I been out."

"Out where? Not by here."

"Just come back from Baby Suggs' place."

Stamp Paid 3--fifth section

Perhaps there he could find out if, after all these years of clarity, whether or not he had misnamed himself, and there was yet <sup>another</sup> a debt he owed. Born Joshua he renamed himself when he handed over his wife to his master's son. Handed her over in the sense that he did not kill anybody, including himself, because his wife demanded he stay alive. Otherwise, she reasoned, where and to whom could she return when the boy was through? With that present, he decided that he didn't owe anybody anything: whatever his obligations were, that act paid them off. He thought it would make him rambunctious, renegade--a drunkard even, the debtlessness, and in a way it did. But there was nothing to do with it. work well, work poorly, work not at all; make sense, make none; sleep, wake up; like somebody, dislike others. It didn't seem much of a way to live and it brought him no satisfaction. So he extended this debtlessness to other people by ~~paying~~ helping them pay out and off whatever they owed in misery. Beaten runaways? he ferried them and rendered them paid for--gave to them their own bill of sale so to speak. "You paid it; now life owes you." And the receipt, as it were, was a welcome door that he never had to knock on. like John and Ella's in front of which he stood and said "Ha!" only once and she was pulling on the hinge.

"Where you been keeping yourself? <sup>I told John</sup> Must be cold if Stamp stay inside."

"Oh, I been out."

"Out where? Not by here."

"Just come back from Baby Suggs' place."

Stamp Paid 3--fifth section

(3) Now curiosity joined his shame and his debt. Stamp ~~Paid headed once more for 124.~~ The new girl troubled him. He didn't know her and didn't know anybody it could be. Nobody, but nobody visited that house. First he went to see Ella and John to find out what they knew.

"What you want in there" asked Ella. "Somebody invite you in?"

"That's Baby's kin. I don't need no invite to look after her people."

"Sth." Ella was unmoved. She had been Baby Suggs' friend and Sethe's too till the rough time. Except for a nod at the carnival, she hadn't given Sethe the time of day.

"Aint no new Negroes in ~~this town~~ I don't know about," she said. "What she look like? You sure that wasn't Denver?"

"I know Denver. This girl's narrow."

"You sure?"

"I know what I see."

"Might see ~~anythin~~ anything at all at 124."

"True."

"Better ask Paul D." she said.

"Can't locate him." said Stamp, although his efforts to do so were ~~unconvincing~~ <sup>feeble</sup>--he wasn't ready to confront the man whose life he had altered with his graveyard information.

"He's sleeping in the church," said Ella.

Stamp Paid 3-- Fifth section

Now curiosity joined his name and his debt. ~~Paul headed some money~~ The new girl troubled him. He didn't know her and didn't know anybody it could be. Nobody, but nobody visited that house. First he went to see Ella and John to

"Somebody new in there. A woman  
Thought you might know who ~~is~~ she."

"That's a baby's kin. I don't need no invite to look after her  
people."

"She was unmoved. She had been Baby Suggs' friend and  
Seth's too till the rough time. Except for a nod at the carnival,  
she hadn't given Seth the time of day."

"Ain't no new Negroes in this town I don't know about," she  
said. "What she look like? You sure that wasn't Denver?"

"I know Denver. This girl's a narrow."  
"You sure?"

"I know what I see."  
"Might see anything at all at 124."

"Better ask Paul D." she said.

"Can't locate him," said Stamp, "although his address book so  
were unimpaired--he wasn't ready to go on the road and leave his  
no had altered with his graveyard information's on hand."

"He's sleeping in the church," said Ella.

"The church!" Stamp was shocked and a little hurt.

"Yeh. Asked Reverend Pike if he could stay in the cellar."

"It's cold as charity in there!"

"I expect he knows that."

"What he do that for?"

"He's a touch proud, seem like."

"He don't have to do that! Any number'll take him in."

Ella turned around to look at Stamp <sup>Pard</sup> ~~Rad TK~~  
*all he have to do is ask somebody, "*  
*to ask, don't he?"*

*Can't nobody read minds long distance.*  
<sup>^</sup> ~~"He have~~

"Why? Why he have to ask? Can't nobody offer? What's going on? Since when a black man come to town have to sleep in a cellar like a dog?"

"Unrile yourself, STamp."

"Not me. I'm going stay riled till somebody gets some sense <sup>leastway</sup> and act like a Christian."

"It's only a few days he been there."

"Shouldn't be no days! ~~xxxxxxx~~ You know all about it and don't give him a hand? That don't sound like you, Ella. Me and you been pulling colored folk out the water over twenty years Now you tell me you can't offer a man a bed? A working man, too! A man what can pay his own way?"

"He ask, I give him anything."

"Why <sup>is</sup> that necessary all of a sudden?"

"I don't know him all that well."

"You know he's Colored!"

"Stamp, don't tear me up this evening. I don't feel like it."

"It's her, aint it?" *ed herself.*

"Her who?"

"Sethe. He took up with her and stayed in there and you don't want..."

"Hold on. Don't jump if you can't see bottom!"

"Girl, give it up. We been friends too long *to act* like this."

*Well*  
the "It's ~~just~~ who can tell what all went on in there? *Look here* listen, I don't know who Sethe is or none of her people."

"What?!" *his off? Tell me that.*

"All I know is she married Baby Suggs' boy and I ain't sure I know that. Where is he? Huh? Baby never laid eyes on her till Hohn carried her to the door with a baby I strapped on her chest."

"I strapped that baby! And you way off the track with that wagon. Her children *knew who* she was even if you didn't."

that "So what? I ain't saying she wasn't their mama, but whose to say they was Baby Suggs' grandchildren? How she get on board and her husband didn't? And, I ask you, how she have that baby in the woods by herself? Said a white woman come out the tress and helped her. You believe that? A white woman? Well, I know what kind of white that was."

"Aw, no, Ella." *now what she thought.*

"Anything white floating around in the woods--if it ain't got a shot gun, it's something I don't want no part of!"

"You all was friends."

"Yeah, till she showed herself."

"Ella."

"I aint got no friends take a hacksaw to their own children."

"You in deep water, girl."

"Uh uh. I'm on dry land and I'm going to stay there. YOU the one wet."

"What's any of what you talking got to do with Paul D.?"

"What run him off?" Tell me that."

"I run him off."

"You?"

"I told him about--I showed him the newspaper, about what Sethe did. Read it to him. He left that very day."

"You didn't tell me that. I thought he knew."

"He didn't know nothing. Except <sup>Y</sup> her from when they <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ at that place Baby Suggs was at."

"He knew BABY Suggs?"

"Sure he knew her, Halle too."

"And left when he found out?"

"Look like <sup>Y</sup> he might have a place to stay after all."

"What you say casts a different light. I thought--

But STamp Paid knew what she thought.

"You didn't come here asking about him. <sup>Ella said</sup> YOU came about <sup>some</sup> ~~a~~ new girl."

"That's so."

"Well, she must know who she is, Paul D. Or what  
she is. "

"Your mind is loaded with spirits. Everywhere you look you see  
one."

"You know as well as I do that people who die bad don't stay  
in the ground."

He couldn't deny it; Jesus Christ Himself didn't, so Stamp  
ate a piece of Ella's head cheese to show there were no bad feelings  
and set out to find Paul D. He found him in front of tk  
holding <sup>ing</sup> his <sup>wrists</sup> ~~wrists~~ between his knees, looking red-eyed.

*Yesterday*  
"This morning," said Sethe wiping sweat from under her chin. "I hope she makes it."

Ella looked at the tiny, dirty face poking out of the wool blanket and shook her head. "Hard to say," she said. "If anybody was to ask me I'd say 'Don't love nothing.'" *And then, as if to take the edge off her pronouncement, she smiled at Sethe.*

"You had that baby by yourself?"

"No. White girl helped."

"Then we better make tracks."

*222#*  
Baby Suggs kissed her on the mouth and refused to let her see the children. They were <sup>asleep</sup> she said and Sethe was too ugly looking to wake them in the night. She took the newborn and handed it to a young woman in a bonnet.

"Has it cried yet?" asked Baby.

"No ma'am."

"Time enough. Let's get the mother well."

She led Sethe to the keeping room and bathed her in sections, <sup>starting with</sup> first her face. Then, <sup>while</sup> waiting for another pan of heated water, she sat next to her and stitched grey cotton. Sethe dozed and woke to the washing of her hands and arms. After each bathing, Baby covered her with a quilt and put another pan on in the kitchen. Tearing sheets, stitching the gray cotton, and supervising the lady in the bonnet who was cooking and tending the baby. When Sethe's legs were done, Baby looked at her feet and wiped them lightly. She cleaned between Sethe's legs with two separate pans of hot water then tied her stomach and vagina with sheets. Finally she attacked the unrecognizable *feet.*

"You feel this?"

"Feel what?" asked Sethe.

"Nothing. Heave up." She helped Sethe to a rocker and lowered her feet into a bucket of salt water and juniper. All night Sethe sat ~~that way~~ soaking. The crust from her nipples Baby softened with <sup>lard</sup> ~~oil~~, then washed. <sup>away</sup> By dawn the silent baby woke and took her mother's milk.

"Pray God it aint turned bad," said Baby. <sup>And</sup> "When you through call me." <sup>(over)</sup>

It was not real yet. Not yet. But when her sleepy boys and crawling ~~xxxxxx~~ <sup>already?</sup> girl were brought in it didn't matter whether it was real or not. Sethe lay in bed under, <sup>little</sup> around, over, among but especially with them all. The ~~baby~~ girl dribbled clear spit into her face and Sethe's laugh of delight was so loud the crawling <sup>already?</sup> baby blinked. Buglar and Howard played with her ugly feet, after daring each other to be the first to touch them. She kept kissing them. She kissed the backs of their necks, the tops of their heads and the center of their palms, and it was the boys who decided enough was enough when she lifted their shirts to kiss their tight round bellies. She ~~only~~ <sup>and because</sup> stopped when they said "Pappie comin?" <sup>^</sup>

She didn't cry. She said "Soon" and smiled so they would think the brightness in her eyes was love alone. It was some time before she let Baby Suggs shoo the boys away so Sethe could put on the grey cotton dress her mother-in-law had started stitching together the night before. <sup>(over)</sup> Finally she lay back and cradled the crawling <sup>already?</sup> girl in her arms. She enclosed her left nipple with two fingers of her right hand and the child opened her mouth. They hit home together.

As she turned to go Baby Suggs  
Caught a glimpse of something  
dark on the <sup>bed</sup> sheet, ~~and~~ She frowned,  
and looked at her daughter-in-law  
bending toward the baby. ~~On the~~ Roses  
of blood blossomed in the ~~blanket~~ <sup>covering</sup> ~~Seth's~~ <sup>Baby</sup> shoulders.

Suggs hid her mouth with her  
hand. When the nursing was

~~over, and the newborn~~ <sup>was asleep</sup> ~~stept~~ - its  
~~tongue~~ <sup>dream-</sup> ~~sucking~~, ~~eyes~~ half open its

Wordlessly ~~she~~ <sup>the</sup> older woman  
gripped her back & pinned a  
double thickness of cloth  
to the inside of the newly stitched  
dress.

The flouncing

Baby Suggs came in and gathered up the ball of rags that had been Sethe's clothes.

"Nothing worth saving in here," she said.

Sethe lifted her eyes "Wait," she called. "Look and see if there's something still knotted up in the petticoat."

Baby Suggs inched the soiled fabric through her fingers and came upon what felt like pebbles. She held them out toward Sethe. "Going away present?"

"Wedding present."

"Be nice if there was a groom to go with it." She gazed into her hand. "What you think happened to him"

"I don't know," said Sethe. "He wasn't where he said to meet him at. I had to get out. Had to." Sethe watched the drowsy eyes of the sucking girl for a moment, then looked at Baby Suggs' face. "He'll make it. If I made, <sup>it</sup> Halle sure can."

"Well, put these on. Maybe they'll light his way." She handed the stones to Sethe.

"I need holes in my ears."

"I'll do it," said Baby Suggs. "Soon's you up to it."

Sethe jiggled the earrings for the pleasure of the crawling already? girl who reached for them over and over and over again.

In the Clearing <sup>Sethe</sup> she found Baby's old sitting <sup>rock</sup> stump and remembered the smell of leaves simmering in the sun, thunderous feet and the shouts that ripped pods off the limbs of <sup>TLC</sup> . With Baby Suggs heart in charge the people let go.

fx She had had ~~a whole~~ <sup>days - the travel of one whole moon</sup> twenty-eight of unslaved life. From the ~~first~~ pure clear stream of spit that the little girl dribbled into her face to her oily blood was twenty-eight days. Days of healing, ease and <sup>talk</sup> ~~laughter~~. Days of company: of knowing the names of forty, fifty other Negroes, their views, habits; where they had been and what done; of feeling their fun and sorrow along with her own which made it better. One taught her the alphabet; another a stitch. All taught her how it felt to wake up at dawn and decide what to do with it. <sup>the day</sup> That's how she got through the waiting for Halle. Bit by bit, ~~on~~ 124 and in the Clearing, along with the others she ~~had~~ claimed herself. Freeing yourself was one thing; claiming ownership of that freed self was quite another.

Now she sat <sup>rock</sup> On Baby Suggs' old stump, Denver and Beloved in the trees watching her.

Just the fingers, she thought. <sup>just let me feel your i</sup> fingers again on the back of my neck and I will <sup>lay it all down.</sup> make a way out of <sup>this</sup> no way. <sup>Sure enough</sup> Sethe bowed her head and <sup>they</sup> were there. Lighter now, no more than the strokes of bird feathers, but unmistakably caressing fingers.

Dances

7x  
re: the fingers

She had to relax a bit to let them do their work, so light was the touch, childlike almost, more finger kiss than kneading. Still she was grateful for the effort; BabySuggs' long distance love was equal to any skin-close love she had known. The desire, let alone the gesture, to meet her need was good enough to lift her spirits to the place where she could take the next step: ask for some clarifying word; some advice about how to keep on with a brain greedy for news nobody could live with in a world happy to provide it.

She knew Paul d was adding something to her life--something she wanted to count on but was scared to. Now he had added more: new pictures and old memories that broke her heart. Into the empty space of not knowing about Halle--a space sometimes colored with righteous resentment at what could have been his cowardice, or stupidity or bad luck--that empty place of no definite news was filled now with a brand new sorrow and who could tell how many more on the way. Ten years ago--when 124 was alive, she had women friends, men friends from all around to share grief with. Now there was no one, for they would not visit her <sup>while</sup> while the baby ghost filled the house, And she returned their disapproval with the potent pride of the mistreated[FX] But now there was someone to share it and he had beat it away the very day he entered her house and no sign of it since. A blessing, but in its place, he brought another kind of haunting: Halle's face smeared with butter and the clabber too; his own mouth jammed full of iron and Lord knows what else

Ma'ammie

he could tell her if he wanted to.

TK TK TK

The fingers touching the back of her neck were stronger now-- the stroked bolder as though Baby Suggs were gathering strength Putting her thumbs at <sup>the</sup> en nape, while the fingers pressed the sides Harder, harder, the fingers moved slowly around toward her windpipe, making little circles on the way. Sethe was actually more surprised than frightened to find tha she was being strangled, or so it seemed. In any case Baby Suggs fingers had a grip on <sup>her</sup> har that would not let her breathe. Tumbling forward from her seat on the <sup>rock</sup> stump, she clawed at the hands that were not there. Her feet were thrashing by the time Denver got to her and then Beloved.

Ma'am! Ma'am! Ma'amie!  
"Ma'am! Mam!" Denver shouted. "Mammie!" and turned her mother over on her back.

The fingers left off and Sethe had to swallow huge draughts of air before she recognized her daughter's face next to her own and Beloved's hovering above.

"You all right?"

"Something <sup>body</sup> choked me," said Sethe.

"Whc?"

Sethe rubbed her neck and struggled to a sitting position. "Grandma Baby, I reckon. I just asked her to rub my neck, like she used to and she was doing fine and then just got crazy with it I guess."

"She wouldn't do that to you, Mam. Grandma Baby? Uh uh."

"Help me up from here."

"Look," Beloved was pointing at Sethe's neck.

"What is it? What you see?" asked Sethe.

"Bruises," said Denver.

"On my neck?"

"Here," said Beloved. "Here and over here, too." She

touched the splotches, gathering color on Sethe's throat and her fingers were mighty cool.

"If I rub them, maybe they'll go away."

"That don't help nothing," Denver said., but Beloved <sup>as</sup> leaning in, her two hands stroking the damp skin that felt like chamois and looked like taffeta.

Sethe moaned. The girl's fingers were so cool and knowing. Sethe's knotted, private, walk-on-water life gave in a bit, softened and it seemed that the glimpse of happiness she caught <sup>in</sup> on the shadows swinging hands on the road to the carnival was a likelihood--if she could <sup>just</sup> just manage the news Paul D brought and the news he kept to himself. Just manage it. NOT break, fall or cry each time a hateful picture drifted in front of her face. Like Baby Suggs' friend whose food was full of tears. Like who could not, would not sleep in a bed. Like who only slept under it.

All she wanted was to go on, my Jesus, just lemme go on.

<sup>As</sup> And she had. Alone with her daughter in a haunted house she managed every damn thing. Why now, with Paul D instead of the ghost, was she breaking up? getting scared? needing Baby?

The worst was over, wasn't it? She had already got through, hadn't she? With the ghost in 124 she could bear, do, solve anything. Now a hint of what had happened to Halle and she cut out like a rabbit (looking for its mother)

Beloved's fingers were heavenly. Under them and breathing evenly again the anguish rolled away (down). The peace Sethe had come there to find crept into her. "We must look a sight," she thought and closed her eyes. The three women in the middle of the Clearing, at the base of the <sup>rock</sup>~~stump~~ where Baby Suggs, holy, had loved. One seated yeilding up her throat to the kind hands of one of the two kneeling before her.

Denver watched the faces of the other two. Beloved watched the work her thumbs were doing and must have loved it (what she saw) because she leaned (further in) down and kissed the tenderness under Sethe's chin.

They stayed that way for a while because neither Denver nor Sethe knew how not to; how to stop and not love the look and feel of the lips that kept on kissing. Then Sethe, grabbing Beloved's hair and blinking rapidly, separated herself. She later believed that it was because she girl's breath was exactly like new milk that she said to her, stern and frowning, "You too old for that."

She looked at Denver and seeing panic about to become something more, stood up quickly breaking the tableau apart.

"Come on. Up! Up!" Sethe waved the girls to <sup>their</sup>~~en~~ feet. As they left the Clearing the looked pretty much the same as they had when they had come; Sethe in the lead, the girls a way<sup>s</sup> back.

Insert  
A

All silent as before but with a difference. Sethe was bothered not because of the kiss but because, just before it, when she was feeling so fine, letting Beloved massage away the pain, the fingers she was loving ~~and~~ and the ones that had soothed her before they strangled her reminded her of something. ~~A~~ <sup>It was only</sup> A tiny disturbance <sup>anyway</sup> -- not strong enough to divert her from the ambition ~~sweeling~~ <sup>Now</sup> in her: she wanted Paul D. No matter what he told and knew, she wanted him in her life. That's what she came to the Clearing to figure out and now it was figured. Trust and rememory, yes, the way she believed it could be ~~was~~ when he cradled her before the cooking stove. The weight and angle of him; the true-to-life beard hair on him; arched back, educated hands. His awful human power. The mind of him that knew her own. Her story was bearable because it was his as well--to tell, to refine and tell again. The things <sup>shaped words for?</sup> neither knew about the other--the things neither had word-shapes for. Well it would come in time: where they led him off to sucking iron; the perfect death of her crawling already? baby. It would come in time.

She wanted to get back--fast. Set these idle girls to some work that would fill their wandering heads. Rushing through the green corridor cooler (~~hotter?~~) now because the sun had moved. it occurred to her ~~t~~ that the two were alike as sisters. Their obedience AND ABSOLute reliability shot through with surprise. Sethe understood Denver. Solitude had made her secretive-self-manipulated. Years of haunting had dulled her in ways you wouldn't believe and sharpened her in ways you wouldn't believe either. (a stunted growth her size belied) The consequence was a timid

but hard-headed daughter Sethe would kill to protect. The other, Beloved, she knew less, nothing, about--except that there was nothing she wouldn't do for Sethe and that Denver and she liked each other's company. Now she thought she knew why: they spent up or held on to their feelings in harmonious ways. What one had to give the other was thrilled to take. And no idea of what was too much or too little. They hung back in the trees that ringed the clearing then rushed into it with screams and kisses when Sethe choked--Anyhow that's how she explained it to herself for she noticed neither competition between <sup>the two</sup> ~~them~~ nor domination by <sup>one</sup> ~~them~~. On her mind was the supper she wanted to fix for Paul D--something difficult to do, something she would do just so--to launch her newer, stronger life ~~life~~ with a tender man. <sup>insert (B)</sup>

There was no question but that she could do it. Just like the day she arrived at 124--sure enough, she had milk enough for all. <sup>#C</sup>

TK

with a  
good fr.  
put  
Baby's party here. ?

(A) [One thing for sue, Baby Suggs had not choked her as first she thought. Sethe knew the touch of those fingers better than her own. They had bathed her in sections, wrapped her womb, combed her hair, oiled her nipples, stitched her clothes, cleaned her feet, <sup>greased her back</sup> and dropped just about anything <sup>they were</sup> ~~she was~~ doing to massage Sethe's nape when, especially in the early days, her spirits fell down under the weight of the things she remembered and those she did not: school teacher writing in ink she herself had made while his nephews played on her; the face of the woman in a felt hat as she rose to stretch in the field. If she stood among all the hands in the world she would know Baby Suggs' as she did the good hands of the white girl looking for velvet. But for 18 years she had lived in a house full of touches from the other side. And the thumbs that pressed her nape were the same. Maybe that was where it had gone to. After Paul D beat it out of 124, <sup>maybe</sup> it collected itself in the Clearing. Reasonable, she thought.

Why she had taken Denver and Beloved with her didn't puzzle her now--at the time it seemed impulse, with a vague wish for protection. And the girls had saved her, Beloved so agitated she behaved like a two year old.

Like a faint smell of burning that disappears when the fire is cut off or the window opened for a breeze, the suspicion that the girl's touch was also exactly like the baby ghost's dissipated.] as she concentrated on the menu she was planning for Paul D bless him. [Those litty, bitty potatoes browned on all sides, heavy on the pepper; snap beans seasoned with rind; tomato slices sprinkled with vinegar and sugar. Maybe corn cut from the cob and fried with green onions and butter. Raised bread even.

(B)  
↓

here -  
Walking in <sup>the</sup> dappled light

Clearer - headed now -  
away from the enchantment  
of the Clearing, ~~she~~ <sup>remembered</sup>  
~~she could~~

3 cont'd

Her mind, searching the kitchen before she got to it, was so full of her offering she did not see right away in the space under the white stairs, the wooden tub and Paul D sitting in it. She smiled at him and he smiled back.

"Must be summer."

"Come on in here."

"Uh uh. Girls right behind me."

"I don't hear nobody. "

"I have to cook."

"Me too."

He stood up and made her stay there while he held her in his arms. Her dress soaked up the water from his body. His chin<sup>jaw</sup> was near her ear. Her chin touched his shoulder.

"What you gonna cook."

"I thought some snap beans."

Oh, yeah."

"Fry up a little corn."

"Yeah." ]

C # here →

Beloved came through the door and they ought to have heard her shoes but they didn't.

Start Chap 9?

Breathing and murmuring, breathing and murmuring. Beloved heard them as soon as the screen banged shut behind her. She jumped at the slam and swiveled her head toward the whispers coming from behind the white stairs. She took a step and felt like crying. She had been so close, then closer. And it was so much better than the anger that ruled when Sethe did or thought anything that excluded herself. She could bear the hours--nine or ten of them

each day but one, when Sethe was gone. Bear, even, the nights when she was close but out of sight, behind walls and doors lying next to him. But now--even the daylight time that Beloved had counted on, disciplined herself to be content with , was being reduced, divided by Sethe's willingness to pay attention to other things. Him mostly. Him who said something to her that made her rush out into the woods and sit quivering and crying on a stump/ Him who kept her hidden at night behind doors. And him who had hold of her now whispering behind the stairs when Beloved was ready to put her hand in that woman's own.

Make it all right. Mam. Mamee. Mam, make it all right.

Not further. Now now. Because the look on Sethe's face as she rose from the stump was bad.

Beloved turned around and left. Denver had not arrived, or else she was somewhere outside. Beloved went to look, pausing to watch a cardinal hop from limb to branch. She followed the blood spot shifting in the leaves until she lost it and even then she walked on, backwards, still hungry for another glimpse.

You did it, I saw you.

What yuo talking about? I was right next to you.

I saw your face.

Hush up.

YOU made her choke.

Why wuold I do that?

I don't know. You told me you loved her.

I fixed it, didn't I? Didn't I fix her neck?

After. AFTER you choked her neck.

Why don't you stop? I kissed her neck. I didn'tchoke it.

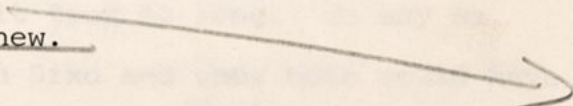
I saw you.

~~Hurry up. She's way up there.~~

Denver grabbed Beloved's arm

"Look out, girl!" said Beloved and, snatching her arm away, ran ahead as fast as she could so as not to lose sight of Sethe.

Denver stood there alone, wondering if, indeed, she had been wrong. She and Beloved standing in the trees whispering while Sethe sat on the stump. Denver knew what the Clearing used to be where Baby Suggs preached, but that was when she was a baby. She had never been there herself. ~~Her world was 112 and the field behind it, that was all she knew.~~



*TK Turtles*

*to the  
Clearing*

It was a tiny church no bigger than a rich man's parlor. The <sup>pews</sup>~~benches~~ had no backs and since the congregation was also the choir it didn't need a stall. <sup>(over ①)</sup> Before it was a church, it was a dry goods shop <sup>that had</sup> ~~so there was~~ no need for side windows, just ~~large~~ front ones for display. <sup>(over ②)</sup> In the summer the doors were left open for ventilation. In winter an iron stove in the middle of the aisle did what it could. <sup>(over ③)</sup> ~~Steps led up to its porch and~~ on a sunny and windless day in January it was actually warmer there than inside, if the iron stove was cold. The cellar was fairly warm, but there was no light lighting the pallet or the wash basin or the nail from which a man's clothes could be hung. So Paul D sat on the <sup>porch</sup> steps and got additional warmth from a bottle of TK jammed in his coat pocket. Warmth and red eyes.

He held his wrist between his knees, not to keep his hands still, but because he had nothing else to hold on to. His tabacco tin, blown open, had spilled its contents and nothing beating took its place in his chest.

He couldn't figure out why it took so long. He may as well have jumped in the fire with Sixo and they both could have had a good laugh. Why not? Surrender <sup>came</sup> ~~would come soon~~ anyway, why not <sup>do it</sup> with a laugh shouting "Seven-o!" Why not? Why the delay? He had already seen his brother wave goodbye from the back of a dray, fried chicken in his pocket tears in his eyes. Mother. Father. Didn't <sup>remember</sup> ~~know~~ the one. Never saw the other. He was the baby of the three boys sold to Garner and kept there, forbidden

③ It had a ~~nice~~ sturdy porch ~~with~~ <sup>had</sup> a  
sturdy railing where customers  
used to sit, and small children  
got their heads stuck between  
the railings

① Some of the members had been  
assigned the building of a small  
platform <sup>to raise</sup> the preacher above  
his congregation, but it was a  
less than urgent task, since  
the major elevation, ~~that~~  
of a <sup>white</sup> oak cross, had already  
taken place.

② These were papered white members  
considered whether to paint or curtain  
them - how to have privacy ~~without~~ <sup>without</sup>  
losing ~~the~~ the little light available.

to leave his farm for twenty years. <sup>once</sup> In ~~Baltimore~~ Maryland  
~~New York~~ he met four families of slaves who had all  
been together for a hundred years: great-grands, grands,  
mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, cousins, children, Half-white;  
part white, all black, mixed with Indian. He watched them  
with awe and envy and each time he discovered those families of  
black people, he made them indentify over and over who each was--  
what <sup>relation</sup> ~~relation~~, who was the father, the mother; who, in fact,  
belonged to who. "That there's my auntie. This here's her boy.  
Yonder is my pappy's cousin. <sup>My</sup> Ma'am was married twice--  
this my half sister and these her two children. <sup>Now</sup> My wife--"  
Nothing like that had ever been his and growing up at Sweet Home  
he didn't miss it. He had his brothers, <sup>two friends</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~, Baby Suggs in  
the kitchen, a boss who showed them how to shoot and listened  
to what they had to say. A mistress who made their soap and never  
raised her voice. For twenty years they had all lived in that  
cradle, until Baby left, Sethe came and Halle took her, ~~for a~~  
~~family~~. He made a family with her and Sixo was hell bent to  
make one with the 30-mile woman. When Paul D waved goodbye to  
his oldest brother, the boss <sup>SS</sup> was dead, the mistress weak and  
the cradle already split. Sixo said the doctor was making Mrs.  
Garner sick. Said he was giving her to drink what stallions  
got when they broke a leg and no gunpowder could be spared. And  
had it not been for schoolteacher's new rules he would have told  
her so. <sup>They</sup> ~~Thye~~ laughed at him. Sixo had a knowing tale about  
everything. Including Mr. Garner's stroke which he said was  
a shot in his ear put there by a jealous neighbor.

"Where the blood?" they asked him.

"There was no blood. Mr. Garner came home bent over his mare's neck, sweating and blue-white. Not a drop of blood. Sixo grunted, but he was sorry to see him go. They all were, and mighty sorry later.

"Why'd she call on him?" he asked. "Why she need the schooteacher."

"She need somebody can figure" said Halle

"You can do figures,"

"Not like that."

"No, man," said Sixo. "She need another white on the place."

"What for?"

"What you think? What you think?"

Well, that's the way it was. NObody counted on Garner dying. Nobody thought he could. How bout that? Everything rested on Garner being alive. Without his life, none of theirs was worth a thing. NOW ain't that slavery or what is it? At the peak of his strength, taller than tall men, and stronger than most, they clipped him. First his gun, then his thoughts. For schoolteacher didn't take advice from Negroes. *the information* ~~He treated them~~ *they offered* like children for offering what he called back talk. —7 (over)

Once Paul D thought that, more than the punishments, was what made them all know they had to run. They could stand ~~xxxxxxx~~ over work, but not humiliation. NOW he wondered how much difference there really was between before schoolteacher

and ~~had~~ <sup>developed a variety of</sup> ~~interesting~~ corrections  
(which he recorded in his notebook)  
to re-educate(?) his workers.

~~First of all~~ the ~~believed~~ <sup>told them</sup> they  
ate too much, rested too much,  
talked too much, which was  
certainly true because he <sup>himself</sup> ate little  
<sup>spoke less and rested not at all.</sup>  
Once he saw them playing - a  
pitching game - and ~~his~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~face~~ <sup>look</sup>  
of deeply felt hurt  
on his face was enough to  
make Paul D. want <sup>smile.</sup> to

And he was as hard on his  
pupils as he was on the  
S. H. men. - except, of course,  
for the corrections

For years Paul D. believes scheme  
teacher broke ~~them~~ into children  
what Garner had raised into men.  
And it was that that made them run off.

And then she moved him. Just when he believed he had answered all the questions, had willed himself into being, she moved him. From room to room like a rag doll.

and after. Garner called ~~them~~ and let them be men <sup>M</sup> ~~But~~ only on Sweet Home (beyond it was Alfred, Georgia, the Northern Bank and Railway, Delaware and a whole race of school-teachers), and ~~only~~ by his leave. <sup>Garner</sup> Suppose he woke up one morning and changed his mind? And if he did, would they have run? And if he didn't would they have stayed? [And what would be the difference between a broke-life free and a no life slave?] The problem, was the problem of Alfred, Georgia: ~~how~~ <sup>loving</sup> much he ~~loved~~ the look of this world that was not his. The things he ~~would~~ <sup>had</sup> endure, put up with just to ~~be~~ <sup>stay alive</sup> a in place where a moon he had no right to nevertheless was there. ←

Sitting on the front porch of a dry-goods church, a little bit drunk and nothing much to do, he could have these thoughts. Slow what-if thoughts, <sup>that cut</sup> deep but ~~xxxxxxxx~~ <sup>so he held his wrist.</sup> struck nothing solid a man could hold on to. Passing by that woman's life, getting in it and ~~xxxxxx~~ letting it get in him had set him up for such thoughts, such questions. And it would have been all right, except for that no good girl Sethe took in. Loving a woman was brand new and losing the feeling of it made him want to cry and think deep thoughts ~~that~~ <sup>was</sup> struck nothing solid. When he <sup>ing</sup> drifted, thinking only about the next meal and nights sleep, when everything was packed tight in his tobacco tin, he had no sense of failure, of things not working out. Now he wondered about what all went wrong, and, starting with the Plan, everything had. It was a good plan, too. Worked out in detail with every possibility of error eliminated.

When  
~~Garner called and accused them men.~~  
was he identifying what he saw  
or creating what he didn't? That  
was the thing about Sixo (and  
ever Halle) - it was <sup>always</sup> clear <sup>to Paul & that</sup> they  
were men whether Garner said  
so or not. It troubled Paul  
& that he couldn't satisfy himself  
on that point concerning his own  
manhood. Oh he did ~~manly~~  
things, but was that Garner's  
gift or his <sup>own</sup> ~~TLK~~? What  
would he have been anyway -  
before Sweet Home - without  
Garner? Slavery made <sup>an</sup> ~~the~~  
answer impossible.

(over) ①

What would he have been anyway--before Sweet Home--without Garner?

~~How would he ever know?~~ Suppose Garner woke up one morning and changed his mind? Took the word away. Would they have run then? And if he didn't, would <sup>the Pauls</sup> they have stayed there all their lives?

Never knowing the problem of Alfred, Georgia: being <sup>so</sup> in love with the look of a world ~~that was not his~~; putting up with anything and everything, just to stay alive in a place where a moon he had no right to was nevertheless there.

tk

And then she moved him. Just when doubt, regret and every single unasked question was packed away; long after he believed he had willed himself into being, ~~and headed himself for rooming~~ she moved him. From room to room, like a rag doll.

Sitting on the porch of a dry-goods church, a little bit drunk and nothing much to do, he could have these thoughts. Slow, what-if thoughts that cut deep but struck nothing solid a man could hold on to. So he held his wrists. Passing by that woman's life, getting in it and letting it get in him had set him up for a fall. <sup>Wanting to live out his life with</sup> ~~loving~~ a whole woman was new and losing the feeling of it made him want to cry and think <sup>deep</sup> ~~deep~~ thoughts that struck nothing solid. When he was drifting, thinking only about the next meal and night's sleep, when everything was packed tight in his chest, [he had no sense of failure, of things not working out.] NOW he wondered about what all went wrong, and starting with the Plan, everything had. It was a good plan too. Worked out in detail with every possibility of error eliminated.

At the very time and place  
he wanted to  
take root, <sup>and</sup>  
plant.

① ~~What would he have been in~~  
Sixo's country, or his mother's. Ah,  
God help him, on the boat > <sup>Did a</sup> white  
man saying it made it so?

② <sup>wonderful</sup> <sup>Dismissing Halle's</sup>  
<sup>and Baby Susie's</sup>  
Isolated in a lie? Ignorant of and  
amused by Sixo's dark stories,  
Protected and convinced  
They were spectral?

③ <sup>little lone</sup>  
Loving small and in secret. His, <sup>(causing)</sup>  
was a tree. <sup>But</sup> Not like Brother - old,  
wide and hickorying. In Alfredo Georgia  
there was an ~~spindly~~ aspen ~~tree~~  
too young to call sapling. Just a shoot  
no taller than his waist. The kind of  
thing a man would cut to whip  
his horse.

! cont'd.

Life before Sweet Home on back porch.

Sixo tells Halle about what his 30-mile woman told him.

That Sixo, hitching up the horses, tells Halle what his 30-mile woman told him. That seven Negroes on her place were joining two others going North. That the two others had done it before and knew the way. That one of the two, a woman, would wait for them in the corn when it was high--one night and half of the next day she would wait, and if they came she would take them to the caravan. That she would rattle, and that would be the sign

~~the two men needed time to think about it before they could  
time to figure out whether they should cut out alone or  
put in with some of the large groups. Time to think whether they  
should go earlier or later or in a different direction. It  
took them the evening's conversation to decide.~~

Now all they had to do was wait through the spring, till the corn was as high as it ever got. And plan. Was it better to leave in the dark to get a better start or go in the morning to be able to see the way better? Night gave them sure him and the protection of color. Sixo suggested some day to go to the corn, burying mistakes and two knives on the way. There is no food to put by, but Sister says she will get a jug of cane syrup or molasses, and some bread, now the time to go. She only wants to be sure the blankets are where they should be for they will need them to keep the children and to cover their feet. They are in clothes rather than what they wear. All of sudden, no more. The

Time to wonder  
where they would find  
and what would they  
do there. What with only what  
take them in looking for food  
and the  
man as  
fact as

Time to wonder  
where they would land  
and ~~what~~ would they  
live there. What work would they  
take them in looking at Paul F.  
could they get to Paul F.  
Paul F.

Sixo tells Halle about what his 30-mile woman told him. That ~~seventeen~~ Negroes on her place were joining two others going North, That the two others had done it before and knew the way. That one of the two, a woman, would wait for them in the corn when it was high --one ~~whole~~ night and one half of the next day she would wait and if they came she would take them to the caravan.. That she would rattle like the snake and that would be the sign. Sixo was going; his woman was going, and Halle was taking his whole family. The two Pauls needed time to think about it before they agreed. Time to figure out whether they should cut out alone, or put in with such a large group. Time to think whether they should go earlier or later or in a different direction. It took them one evening's conversation. to decide

Now all they had to do was wait through the spring, till the corn was as high as it ever got. And plan. Was it better to leave in the dark to get a better start or go in the morning to be able to see the way better? Night gave them more time and the protection of color. Sixo manages some dry runs to the corn, burying ~~blankets~~ blankets and two knives on the way. There is no food to put by, but Sethe says she will get a jug of cane syrup or molasses, and some bread near the time to go. She only wants to be sure the blankets are where they should be for they will need them to tie the children and to cover them. There are no clothes other than what they wear. And of course, no shoes. The

What would the rattle  
sound like? A snake

knives will help them eat, but they <sup>bury</sup> take rope and a pot as well. A good plan.

They watch and memorize the comings and goings of schoolteacher and his pupils: what is wanted when and where; how long it takes. Sethe's work is the most irregular because she is on call for Mrs. Garner anytime, including <sup>time</sup> the night when the pain or the weakness or the <sup>downright</sup> plain loneliness is too much for her. So: <sup>Sixo, and the Pauls</sup> Paul D and G will go after supper and wait in the <sup>riverbed</sup> ditch for ~~Sixo~~ and the 30-mile woman. Halle will bring Sethe and the three children <sup>before</sup> at dawn--before the sun, <sup>before</sup> the chickens and the milking cow need attention, so by the time the smoke should be coming from the cooking stove they will be <sup>in or</sup> near the <sup>river bed</sup> ditch with the others. That way, if Mrs. Garner needs Sethe in the night and calls her, Sethe will be there ~~still~~ to answer. They only have to wait through the spring. ¶ But, Sethe was pregnant in the spring and by August was so heavy with child she <sup>may</sup> will not be able to keep up with the men, who can carry the children but not her.

¶ But, Sixo, after the conversation about the shoat is tied at night and locks are put on bins, <sup>pens</sup> doors, <sup>barn door</sup> tool sheds, tack rooms. There is no place to dart into or congregate. ¶ But, neighbors discouraged by Mr. Garner, now feel free to visit Sweet Home

¶ But, Sethe's children cannot play in the kitchen anymore, so she is darting back and forth between house and quarters--fidgety and frustrated trying to watch over them. They are too young for men's work, <sup>and</sup> the baby girl is six months old. Without Mrs. Garner's help, <sup>her</sup> the work ~~for her~~ increases as <sup>do</sup> does schoolteacher's demands.

Sethe, who has been  
stealing away fragments,

and might appear  
in the right place after the wrong time,

④ But, Halle is confined to working his extra on Sweet Home

and has no call to be anywhere other than where schoolteacher  
tells him. <sup>And</sup> Only Sixo, who has been stealing away, f

It was a good plan. But they had to alter it -- just a

little. First of all, they split the leaving. Paul

D and G will leave as planned right after sundown. Sixo, needing

time to untie himself, <sup>break</sup>unbolt the door and not disturb the

horses will leave later, joining <sup>the</sup> them in the ditch with

the 30-mile woman. All ~~the~~ four will go straight to the

~~conn~~ Second, Halle will bring Sethe and the children

at night, not wait till dawn. They will ~~all~~ go straight to

the corn, and not assemble in the ditch.

Xmxdaxxbefokexkneyxrykxaklxknekkxrkanixnqxinkoxekfket

[illegible]

Two days before they were to leave they made the changes, and everybody knew about them except Sethe who had spent <sup>two</sup> ~~the~~ successive whole nights with Mrs. Garner. Halle ~~likes~~ has to go to the gate

to tell Sethe they they will not wait for dawn. He comes up

from the feilds on his dinner break to tell her, but it is

schoolteacher's dinner break too, and he looks out of the window

~~xxx~~ surprised to see the most cooperative of the slaves hovering where he was expressly told not to.

Schoolteacher walks down the path, shot gun in hand,  
to meet him .

Nobody knew what happened ~~then~~. Except for the churn, that was the last anybody ever saw of Halle. What Paul D knew was that Halle disappeared, never told Sethe about the change in plans, and was next seen squatting in butter. Maybe

when he asked to see Sethe, schoolteacher heard a tint  
of anxiety in his voice--the voice pressure that would make  
him pick up his everyready shotgun. Maybe Halle made the  
mistake of saying "my wife" ~~in~~ some way that would puta  
light in schoolteacher's eye. Sethe says, now that she <sup>thought she</sup>  
heard shots, but did not look out of the window of Mrs. Garner's  
bedroom. But Halle was not killed or wounded <sup>that day</sup> because Paul  
D saw him later, after she <sup>had run off</sup> ~~and gone~~ with no one's help;  
after Sixo laughed and his brother did not. Saw him greased  
and flat-eyed as a fish. Maybe schoolteacher shot after him,  
shot at his feet, to remind him of the trespass. Maybe  
Halle ran into the barn to hide and got locked in with the  
rest of the cattle. Maybe anything. He disappeared and  
everybody was on his own, in disarray, ad hoc.  
Paul D goes to the ditch on time <sup>left for riverbed</sup> ~~in spite of the~~ <sup>believings, hoping</sup> ~~fact that now Paul G has disappeared too. (For a while...)~~ <sup>Paul G. went on ahead.</sup>  
He waits there with the 30-mile woman for Sixo and Paul G.  
Only Sixo shows up, his wrists bleeding his tongue ~~licking~~  
licking his lips like a flame.  
"You see Paul G?"  
"No."  
"Halle?"  
"No."  
"No sign of them?"  
"No sign. Nobody in ~~the~~ quarters." but the children."  
"Sethe?"  
"Her children sleep, she must be there,"

Paul G. ~~was~~ moving timber in the  
uncleared —, was to meet  
Paul D. and together they'd  
walk to the quarters for supper.  
He never showed up.

without

"I can't leave Paul G."

"I can't help you."

"Should I go back and look for them?"

"I can't help you?"

"What do you think?"

"I think they would go straight to the corn."

*Caterpillars*  
~~He~~ <sup>Six</sup> turns then to the woman, and the clutch and whisper while Sixo catches his breath. She is lit now with some glowing, some shining that comes from inside her. Before when she knelt in the gravel with Paul D she was nothing, a shape in the dark breathing lightly.

After a few minutes, the three of them climb out of the ditch and schoolteacher, his pupils and four other white men move toward them. With lamps. Sixo pushes the 30-mile woman and she runs further on in the <sup>river bed</sup> ditch; Paul D and Sixo run the other way towards the woods. Both are surrounded and tied.

The air got sweet then. Perfumed by the things honey bees love. Tied like a donkey, Paul D felt how dewy and inviting the grass was. ;He was thinking about that, when Sixo turned and grabbed the mouth of the <sup>nearest pointing</sup> rifle ~~the nearest~~ to himself. and begin to sing. Two ~~xxx~~ others grab Paul D and tie him to a tree. Schoolteacher is saying "Alive. Alive. I want him alive." Sixo <sup>with bound hands</sup> cracks the ribs of the farmer but cannot get the weapon in position to use it in any other way. All the white men have to do is wait. for his song, perhaps, to end? Six guns <sup>are</sup> trained on him, while they listen to his song. Paul D cannot see them

when they step away from the lamp. Finally one of them hits Sixo in the head and when he comes to, a ~~huge~~ fire is in front of him, <sup>and he is tied at the waist to a</sup> Schoolteacher has changed his mind:

"This one will never be suitable for work. The song must have convinced him."

~~Looked to his mother Paul D's~~ Sixo searches for Paul D eyes, shouting Seven-O! ~~Seven-O! so the 30-mile woman was pregnant. Then he laughed.~~ Outlaughing the fire which died first and had to be rekindled a number of times. <sup>Smolley, stubborn fire.</sup> They shot him just to shut him up. <sup>Had to.</sup>

Caterpillars Shackled, walking through the ~~things~~ perfumed things honey bees loved, Paul D is taken back to Sweet Home. He hears the men talking around him and for the first time learned his <sup>worth</sup> ~~value~~. He had always know<sup>n</sup>, or believed he did, he his value, ~~Now he learned his worth~~ Not as ~~a man~~ a worker a laborer who could make profit on a farm, but <sup>now he discovered</sup> ~~his bulk~~ which is to say he learned worth, ~~the price of~~ his price. The dollar value of his weight, his strength, his heart, his brain, his penis, and his future.

As soon as the white men got to where they had tied their horses, and mounted them, they were calmer, talking among themselves about the difficulty they faced. The problems. Voices warned schoolteacher about the spoiling these particular ones had had at Garner's hands. Schoolteacher sighed, and said didn't he know? He had come to put the place <sup>a right</sup> back into profit. NOW it faced greater ruin than what Garner left for it because of the loss of ~~three~~ two niggers, ~~two~~ at the least and maybe three because he was not sure they would find Halle. The

By ~~firelight he sees~~ the light of a chimney fire  
Sixo straightens. He is through with his  
song.

The fire keeps ~~failing~~ <sup>on the dew and</sup>  
<sup>pat out with each other</sup>  
<sup>at themselves</sup>

The white men are  
not being prepared for this  
emergency. What they can  
manage is <sup>only</sup> enough for <sup>cooling</sup> ~~themselves~~.

~~not enough for living flesh (a  
bone & flesh)~~

The ~~day~~ <sup>flights</sup> they find ~~available~~

are few scarce; and the grass  
is <sup>steeped</sup> ~~warm~~ in dew.

+ TK

He laughs. A rippling  
sound like Seth's sons make  
when they tumble in hay or  
splash in rainwater. His feet  
are cooling, but the cloth of his trousers  
smoke. Something is funny.

Paul & ~~Guerra~~ what it is  
when Sixo interrupts  
his language to ~~call~~  
Seven-o!

sister-in-law was too weak to help out and dog gone if  
now there wasn't a full scale stampede on ~~xxx~~ his hands.

He would have to trade Paul D, the tall one for \$  
if he could get it, and set out to <sup>secure</sup> ~~secure~~ the breeding one,  
her foal and the other ~~xxxxx~~ one. With the money from Paul D  
he could get two young ones, <sup>twelve or</sup> ~~almost~~ fifteen years old.

And maybe with the breeding one, her two boys, the baby girl  
and whatever the foal might be, he and his nephews would have  
seven niggers and Sweet Home would be back like it <sup>used to be</sup> ~~was~~ in  
a few years.

They put a three spoked collar on him so he can't lie down and  
chained his ankles together. <sup>1</sup> That's the way he was for the  
next day and the next evening when Sethe came in rain-wet and  
big bellied saying she was going to cut. She had already taken  
her <sup>the</sup> ~~three~~ children to the corn. She couldn't find Halle. Had  
he seen him. Who <sup>did</sup> ~~was~~ caught? Did Sixo get away? Paul G?  
He told her what he knew: Sixo was dead; the woman ran, and he  
didn't know what happened to Paul G or Halle. Sethe's dress  
steamed <sup>ed</sup> before the little fire over which he ~~cooks~~ boils water.  
It is hard to <sup>move</sup> ~~jump about~~ with shackled ankles, and the neck  
jewelry embarrasses him. <sup>s</sup> ~~Seldom does he~~ <sup>mostly avoids</sup> look into her eyes ~~seldom~~  
<sup>but</sup> and when he does he sees only black--no whites. She says she  
is going, and he ~~looks at her and~~ thinks she will never make  
it to the gate, ~~xxxxxx~~ and even if she does, she  
will die giving birth in the woods. He knows he will never see  
her again. <sup>HP</sup> ~~And was almost right.~~ The pupils ~~xxx~~ must have taken

and right then and there <sup>this heart cracked</sup> ~~fell in two.~~

Lucky, Lucky. Nobody was  
about.

Two? Two niggers lost? Paul &

thinks his heart is jumping.

They are looking for Halle, so they  
must have found Paul G.

her to the barn for sport right afterwards, and when she told Mrs. ~~Garn~~  
Garner, they ~~wasn't~~ took down the cowhide. Who in hell or on  
this earth would have thought that she would cut anyway? When  
what with her belly and her back that she wasn't  
they must have believed ~~big black and black back and~~  
~~wasn't~~ going anywhere. He wasn't surprised to learn  
that ~~they~~ had tracked her down in Cincinnati, ~~and if~~ <sup>because when</sup> he  
thought about it, her price was greater than his: property  
that reproduced itself <sup>without cost</sup> ad infinitum.

<sup>Thinking now of</sup>  
When she left him, it was not long before he ~~wasn't~~  
<sup>that schoolteacher got for him</sup>  
~~wasn't~~ his own price, down to the cent, It accounted for the  
real <sup>sorrow</sup> ~~scorow~~ in schoolteacher's voice when he pronounced Sixo  
<sup>a loss</sup>  
~~unsuitable.~~ Who could be fooled into buying a singing nigger  
<sup>Shouting</sup> with a gun? Seven-0. Seven-0 <sup>because</sup> And he laughed because  
30-mile blossoming -  
his ~~wasn't~~ woman got away with his seed. ~~wasn't~~  
<sup>what</sup> ~~wasn't~~ with a laugh that put out the fire.  
<sup>Six's laughter that was</sup>  
And it was ~~the fire~~ on his mind; not the bit, when they  
hitched him to the buckboard. Then he saw Halle, then the  
rooster, smiling as if to say YOU aint seen nothing yet.

<sup>How could a rooster</sup>  
~~What he~~ know about Alfred, Georgia?

he wondered what Sethe's would have been. What  
had Baby Suggs' been? How much did Halle owe?  
Still besides his labor?  
What did Mrs. Garner  
get for Paul?  
More than T/k? How  
much more. Ten  
dollars? Twenty?  
Schoolteacher would  
know. He knew the  
worth of every thing.

2 (1)

Luckily  
for Denver,  
Looking

To go back to the hunger was impossible. <sup>^</sup> ~~To look at her was~~ beyond appetite; it was food enough to last, but to be looked at in turn was like breaking through her own skin to a place where <sup>hunger</sup> appetite hadn't been discovered yet. It didn't have to happen often, ~~thank you~~, because Beloved seldom looked right at her, or when she did <sup>Denver</sup> ~~you~~ could tell <sup>her face</sup> Denver was just the place those eyes stopped at while <sup>the</sup> ~~her~~ mind walked <sup>behind it on</sup> ~~elsewhere~~. But sometimes--<sup>at moments</sup> ~~for no reason~~ Denver could <sup>neither anticipate or create</sup> ~~think of or plan~~--Beloved <sup>t</sup> ~~resed~~ her cheek on <sup>g</sup> ~~her~~ knuckles and looked at Denver with attention.

It was lovely. Not <sup>to be</sup> ~~stared at~~, Not seen, but being pulled into view by the interested, uncritical eyes of the other. Having her hair examined as a part of her self, not as material or a style. Having her lips, nose, chin as caressed as they might be if she were a tea rose <sup>a gardener</sup> ~~someone~~ paused to admire. Denver's skin dissolved under that gaze and became soft and bright like the lisle dress that had its arm around her mother's waist. She floated near <sup>body</sup> ~~but outside~~ her own ~~flesh~~, feeling vague and intense at the same

time. Needing nothing. Being what there was.

At such <sup>times</sup> moments it seemed to be Beloved who needed something-- wanted something. Deep down in her wide black eyes, back behind the expressionlessness was a palm held out for a penny. Which Denver

would gladly give her if only she knew how, <sup>or</sup> knew enough about her.

*A knowledge not to be had by*

~~Not~~ answers to the questions Sethe occasionally put to her: "You

disremember everything? I ~~didn't~~ <sup>Never knew</sup> know my mother <sup>either</sup>, but I

saw her <sup>a couple times</sup> ~~once~~; did you never see <sup>yourn</sup> yours? What kind of whites was

<sup>they?</sup> there? You <sup>don't</sup> remember any of <sup>none?</sup> em?" Beloved, scratching <sup>the backs of</sup> her hands, would

say she did remember her mother but was taken from her early; that

<sup>all she remembered was</sup> ~~she knew only~~ being in her mother's arms and then being snatched

away. After that she was lost. And she didn't know a single white.

Sethe found that remarkable and more evidence to support her private

conclusions. "Where'd you get the dress, them shoes?" Beloved said

<sup>"Who from?"</sup> she stole them. "From ~~who?~~" Silence. Faster scratching of hands. <sup>She</sup> didn't know; she saw them & took them.

Sethe had confided to Denver that she believed Beloved had been

locked up by some <sup>man</sup> man for his own purposes and never let out the door.

That the "lost place" was all that went on in there, <sup>over</sup> which would <sup>Sethe thought it</sup> explained ~~account for~~ Beloved's behavior around Paul D. whom she clearly

hated. Denver neither believed nor commented on Sethe's speculations, certain as she was that Beloved was the white dress that had knelt with her mother in the keeping room--the full, sweet realization of the baby that had kept her company all her life. And to be looked at by her, however briefly, kept her grateful for the rest of the

time when she was merely the looker. Besides, she had <sup>her</sup> own

<sup>had nothing to do with</sup> ~~only~~ set of questions which ~~were not about~~ the past. <sup>alone</sup> The present

interested Denver <sup>but</sup> and she <sup>was</sup> ~~had to be~~ careful to appear uninquisitive about the things she was ~~daying~~ to ask Beloved. ~~But she had to be~~

~~careful~~, for if she pressed too hard she might lose the penny

the held-out <sup>palm</sup> ~~hand~~ wanted and <sup>lose</sup> therefore the place beyond appetite. It

was better to feast; to <sup>have</sup> permission to be the looker because the

old hunger--the before-Beloved hunger--<sup>was</sup> was out of the question.

So she did not ask her about the earrings, the night walks

to the cold room or the tip of the thing she saw when Beloved lay

So  
Loving  
kept it  
at bay

Something ~~very~~ like that had happened to Ella,  
except it was two men - a father and sons,  
And for almost a year they kept her  
locked in a room for themselves. "You  
couldn't think up," <sup>Ella</sup> she said, "what ~~that~~ was  
done to me."

down or came undone in her sleep. The look, when it came, came when Denver had been careful. Had explained things, or participated in things, or told stories to keep her occupied when Sethe was at the restaurant. No given chore was enough to put out the licking fire that seemed always to burn in her. <sup>Not when</sup> They twisted ~~the~~ <sup>wring</sup> sheets <sup>so tight</sup> together while ~~the~~ rinse water ran back up their arms. <sup>Not when</sup> They shoveled snow from the path to the outhouse. <sup>OR</sup> Broke three inches of ice from the rain barrel, scoured and boiled last summer's canning jars, packed mud in the cracks of the hen house and warmed the chicks with their skirts. All the while Denver <sup>was obliged to talk about</sup> ~~talked about~~ what they were doing--the how and why of it--about

<sup>and</sup> ~~Talked also~~ about people Denver once <sup>know</sup> ~~know~~ or had seen, giving them more life than life had.

Beloved is holding her arms steady while Denver unclaps <sup>S</sup> ~~unclaps~~ frozen underwear and towels from the line. One by one she lays them in Beloved's arms until the pile, like a huge deck of cards, reaches

her chin. The rest, aprons and brown stockings, she carries  
herself. <sup>Made giddy by the</sup> ~~Shaking~~ with cold they return to the common room. The

clothes will thaw slowly to a dampness perfect for the pressing  
<sup>which will make them</sup> iron ~~and~~ smell like hot rain. Dancing around the room with Sethe's  
apron, Beloved wants to know if there are flowers in the dark.

Denver adds sticks to the stove fire and assures her there are.

<sup>Twirling,</sup> ~~Still swirling~~ <sup>her face framed by the neck band,</sup> ~~in the apron's embrace,~~ <sup>her waist</sup> she says she is thirsty.

Denver suggests warming up some cider, <sup>strings' while</sup> her mind racing <sup>es</sup> to something

she might do or say to interest and entertain the dancer. Denver is

a strategist now and has to keep Beloved by her side from the minute Sethe

leaves for work until the hour of her return when Beloved begins to

hover at the window then work her way out the door, down the steps

and along the road. <sup>Plotting</sup> All this has changed Denver markedly. Where she

was once indolent, <sup>T Y</sup> resentful of every task, now she is spry. Ex-

ecuting <sup>even</sup> and extending the assignments Sethe leaves for them, ~~and~~

even thinking up new ones. All to be able to say "We got to..."

"Ma'am said for us to..." Otherwise Beloved gets private and dreamy

or "under which they will"

4

o

or quiet and sullen, and ~~the~~ <sup>Denver's</sup> chances of being looked at by her

go down to nothing. <sup>She</sup> Denver has no control over the evenings;  
when <sup>her mother</sup> ~~Sethe~~ is anywhere around, Beloved has eyes only for <sup>Sethe</sup> ~~her~~. At

night in bed, anything might happen. She might want to be told  
a story in the dark where neither can see the other; or she might  
get up and go into the cold room where Paul D had begun to sleep.

Or she might cry silently. She might even sleep like a brick, her  
breath sugary from fingerfuls of molasses or sand cookie crumbs.

Denver will turn toward her then, and if Beloved faces her, she will  
inhale deeply the sweet air from <sup>her</sup> Beloved's mouth. If not, she will  
have to lean up and over her, every once in a while, to catch a sniff.

For anything is better than the original hunger--the years when there  
was no sound coming through, after four months of the wonderful little

i, ~~and the~~ <sup>ing</sup> sentences rolled out like pie dough, <sup>and</sup> in the company of other

children. <sup>Anything is</sup> Better than the silence when she answered to hands gesturing,  
fingers pointing and was indifferent to the movement of ~~their~~ lips;

when she saw every little <sup>thing</sup> ~~things~~ and colors leaped smoldering into

view. Looking kept ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> at bay that hunger that nothing relieved,

that drove her into boxwood and cologne for just a taste of

life, to feel it bumpy and not flat. And even though she longed

for She would forego the most violent of sunsets, stars as fat

as dinner plates and all the blood of autumn and settle for the palest

yellow if it came from her Beloved.

*cross-eyed?*

woman. Crawling out of the woods, cockeyed with hunger and loneliness, he knocked at the first<sup>s</sup> back door he came to in the colored section of Wilmington. He told the woman who opened it that he'd appreciate doing her woodpile, if she could spare him ~~a~~ <sup>something</sup> ~~bite~~ to eat. She looked him up and down. "A little later," she said and pushed ~~to~~ <sup>the</sup> door wider. She fed him pork sausage, the worst thing in the world for a starving man, but neither he nor his stomach knew it. <sup>Later,</sup> When he saw white cotton sheets and two pillows in her bedroom, he had to wipe his eyes quickly, quickly so she would not see the thankful tears of a man's first time. Soil, grass, mud, shucking, leaves, hay, cobs, seashells--all that he'd slept on. White cotton had never crossed his mind. He fell in with a groan and the woman helped <sup>P</sup> him pretend he was making love to her and not her bed linen. He vowed that night, full of <sup>up</sup> ~~po~~, deep in luxury, that he would never leave her. She would have to kill him to get him out of that bed. Eighteen months later (after she tried it--to keep him there) <sup>when</sup> ~~and~~ he had been purchased by Northpoint Bank and Railroad Company, he was still thankful for that introduction to sheets.

Now he was grateful a second time. He felt as though he had been plucked from the face of a cliff and put down on sure ground. In Sethe's bed he knew he could put up with two crazy girls--as long as Sethe made her wishes known.

*mean*

Below them, all around 124 the snow went on and on and on. Piling itself, burying itself. Higher. Deeper.

Denver finished washing the dishes and sat down at the table. Beloved, who had not moved since Sethe and Paul D left the room, sat

It frightened her. <sup>had</sup> She laughed and took his hand. <sup>always</sup> She  
~~laughed and thought~~ <sup>thinking</sup> how good the sex would be now, if that is what ~~h~~  
 he wanted. But mostly it scared her, the thought of having a  
 baby once more. Needing to be good enough, alert enough, strong  
 enough, that caring--again. Having to stay alive just that much  
 longer. Oooo, Lord. <sup>she thought</sup> Deliver me, ~~from that kind of love~~, unless ~~it~~  
<sup>that kind of love</sup> ~~was~~ carefree, ~~it~~ was murder.

No. ~~His request was odd; not her reaction to it.~~ What for?  
What did he want her pregnant for? To hold on to her? have a sign  
that he passed this way? He probably had children everywhere anyway  
Twenty-five years of roaming, he <sup>o</sup>wuld have to have dropped a few.  
No. He resented the children she had, that's what. Child, she  
corrected herself. Child plus Beloved whom she thought of as  
her own, and that is what he resented. Sharing her with the  
girls. Hearing them laughing at something he wasn't in on.  
The code they used among themselves that he could not break  
TK

Maybe even the time spent on their needs and not his.

Can you stitch this up for me, baby?

Um Hm. Soon's I finish this petticoat. She aint got but the one she came here in and everybody needs a change.

Any pie left?

I think Denver got the 1st of it.

And not complaining, not even minding that he slept all over and around the house now, and entered her bed for anything but sleep.

*That's how  
Beloved and  
Sugars*

Sethe sighed through her nostrils. She knew she was building a case against him in order to build a case against getting pregnant : she had all the children she needed; If her boys came back home, and Denver and Beloved stayed on--well, it would be the way it was supposed to be, no? ¶ Right after she saw the shadows holding hands at the side of the road, the picture altered--and the minute she saw the dress and shoes sitting in the front yard she didn't have to see the face because it had been dreamed already. [By Baby Suggs, by herself and especially Denver.]

were all there fixing the supper table. But when he was so pronounced he wondered why Denver and Sethe didn't see it. Or maybe they did. Certainly women could tell, as men could, when one of their number was spraying. Paul D. looked carefully at Beloved to see if she was aware of it, but she paid him no attention at all. Not even when he asked a direct question put to her. She would just look and not open her mouth. Three weeks she had been with them, and they didn't know any more about her than they did when they found her slumped on the stump.

"Do you have any brothers or sisters?" he asked her.

"I don't have nobody," she said.

"What was you looking for when you came here?"

"A place I could stay in."

"How did you come? Who brought you?"

She looked steadily at him but did not answer.

He decided to force it. "I said who brought you here?"

Chapter 6

90 80

Beloved was shining and Paul D. didn't like it. Women did what strawberry <sup>plants</sup> leaves did before they shot out thier thing vines. The quality of the green changed. Then the vine threads, <sup>came</sup> then the buds. By the time the white petals had died and the mint-colored berry poked out, the leaf-shine was gilded tight and waxy. <sup>Paul D.</sup> He took to having sex with Sethe on awaking so that later, when he went down the white stairs where she made bread under Beloved's gaze, his head was clear.

That's how Beloved looked gilded and shining.

In the evening when he came home and the three of them were all there fixing the supper table, her shine was so pronounced he wondered why Denver and Sethe didn't see it. Or maybe they did. Certainly women could tell, as men could, when one of their number was spraying. Paul D. looked carefully at Beloved to see if she was aware of it, <sup>herself</sup> but she paid him no attention at all - <sup>frequently</sup> not even answering a direct question put to her. She would just look and not open her mouth. Three weeks she had been with them, and they didn't know any more about her than they did when they found her asleep on the stump.

"Do you have <sup>any</sup> brothers or sisters?" he asked her.

"I don't have nobody," she said.

"What was you looking for when you came here?"

"A place I could stay in."

"How did you come? Who brought you?"

She looked steadily at him but did not answer.

He decided to force it. "I said who brought you here?"

They were seated at the ~~mended~~ table  
Paul D had broken the ~~first~~ day  
he arrived at 124. The mended  
legs were stronger than before.

~~All~~ The Cabbage was <sup>all</sup> gone & <sup>the</sup> shiny ~~smoked~~  
ankle bones of smoked pork were pushed  
in a heap on their plates. Sethe was  
dishing up bread pudding, murmuring  
her hopes for it, apologizing in advance  
the way naturally good cooks always  
do.

Something in Beloved's face  
as she looked at Sethe, some ~~doggy~~ <sup>pet-like</sup>  
adoration that took hold of her, made  
Paul D speak

8

ful

whites she also threw away. without names, she threw them. you she gave the name of the black man. She put her arms around him. the others she did not put her arms around. Never. Never. telling you. I am telling you, small girl Sethe."

As small girl Sethe, she was unimpressed. As grown up woman Sethe she was angry, but not certain of what. A mighty wish for Baby Suggs broke over her like surr. In the quiet following it splash, Sethe looked at two girls sitting by the stove: her sickly, shallow minded boarder, her irritable, lonely daughter. Both on the other side of the cliff of time looking back at her with cold moon eyes she could not reach.

"Paul D be here in a minute," she said.

Denver sighed with relief, happy the storytelling was over. For a minute there, while her mother stood folding the wash lost in thought, she clamped her teeth and prayed it would stop. Denver hated the stories her mother told that did not concern herself, which is why Amy was all she ever asked about. The rest was a gleaming, powerful world made more so by Denver's absence from it. Not being in it, she hated it and wanted Beloved to hate it too, although there was no chance of that at all. Beloved took every opportunity to ask some funny question and get Sethe going. Denver noticed how greedy she was to hear Sethe talk. Now she noticed something more. The questions Beloved asked.

themselves were thinking, and hadn't said anything at all. So, in the end, they forgot her too. Remembering that part of the story, she thought, "Where your diamonds? Your woman never fix up hair? And most perplexing: "Tell me your earrings."

How did she know? She needed like that.

It was not a story to pass on. Like a bothersome dream during a troubling sleep, they forgot her.

Occasionally, however, the rustle of a skirt hushes when they wake, and the knuckles brushing a cheek in sleep seem to belong to the sleeper. Sometimes the photograph of a close friend or relative--looked at too long--shifts and something more familiar than the dear face itself moves there. They can turn it, if they like, but don't because they know things will never be the same if they do.

Down by the stream in back of 124 her footprints come and go. They are so familiar. Should a child, or a lost piece their feet in them, they will fit. Take them and they disappear again as though nobody ever walked there.

So and so all trace is gone and what is forgotten is not only the footprints, but the water too and what it is down there. The rest is weather. Not the breath of the wind, the sea-counted fur but wind is the paves, or spring ice thawing too quickly. Just weather. Certainly no answer for the join.

themselves were thinking, she hadn't said anything at all. So, in the end, they forgot her too. Remembering that part of themselves seemed unwise so the latch latched. They never knew how she got the smile under her chin. Where or why she crouched, or whose was the underwater face she needed like that.

It was not a story to pass on.

Like a bothersome dream during a troubling sleep, they forgot her.

Occasionally, however, the rustle of a skirt hushes when they wake, and the knuckles brushing a cheek in sleep seem to belong to the sleeper. Sometimes the photograph of a close friend or relative--looked at too long--shifts and something more familiar than the dear face itself moves there. They can touch it, if they like, but don't because they know things will never be the same if they do.

Down by the stream in back of 124 her footprints come and go, come and go. They are so familiar. Should a ~~child~~ child, an adult place their feet in them, they will fit. Take them out and they disappear again as though nobody ever walked there.

By and by all trace is gone and what is forgotten is not only the footprints, but the water too and what it is down there. The rest is weather. Not the breath of the disremembered, the unaccounted for but wind in the eaves, or spring ice thawing too quickly. Just weather. Certainly no clamor for the join.

Beloved.

A hot thing.

THE END

"Why did you come here?"

"Diamonds," said Beloved. "I want to ~~know~~ diamonds.

And sweet things."

"We have sweet things but we don't have no diamonds."

*She has them.*  
~~"There must be some somewhere."~~

"Why you want diamonds?"

*touched them I was near.*  
~~"To touch. I almost did once."~~

~~"What stopped you?"~~ *(over)*

~~"I don't know. I got lost. I was lost a long time."~~

~~"Where's your people?"~~

Beloved turned her head and fastened black empty eyes  
on Denver. *IS MY* ~~"You and Sethe the only people I know."~~ I don't  
*have*  
~~remember~~ nobody else."

"Something real bad must have happened to you if you  
forgot everybody but us."

~~"Real bad. Yes. It was real bad."~~

~~"Do you remember it?"~~

~~"I remember it. But nothing before. Except diamonds. I  
was almost touching diamonds."~~

"If you touch them will you leave us?"

"No. Never. I'm never ~~going to~~ leave this place. This is  
*have to be,*  
where I've always been."

Denver was sitting cross-legged. Suddenly she lurched forward and grabbed Beloved's wrist. "Don't tell her. Don't let

→ She went away. She left me in the water.

~~Who?~~  
~~Setha.~~

Denver's heart stood up, <sup>as</sup> and her eyes watered.

~~Your father left~~

~~Your Ma'amie left you?~~ By yourself?

Beloved Nodded.

Don't you ~~have~~ <sup>know</sup> no other people?

→ "Where did you come from?  
What kind of place was it? ~~where~~  
~~you lived (was) before?~~

"It was a bridge. I stayed on a bridge.

"All the time?"

"Yes. All the time.

"Your whole life?"

"I can't remember every thing. I remember the bridge."

① "How you get the name ~~you~~ Beloved?"  
(next page over)

distance from its big house, where a slave might be making rope or heating potatoes at the grate. What they found was a camp of sick Cherokee for whom a rose was named.

-> I K

9 The prisoners sat down in semi-circle near the encampment. No one came and still they sat. Hours passed and the rain turned soft. Finally a woman stuck her head of out / of her house.

-> I K

The flood rains had turned everything to steam and blossoms.

"that way," he said, pointing. "Follow the tree flowers," he said. "Only the tree flowers. As they go, you go. You will be where you want to be when they are gone."

So he raced from dogwood to blossoming peach. When they thinned out he headed for the cherry blossoms, then magnolia, chinaberry, pecan, walnut and prickly pear. At last he reached a field of apple trees whose flowers were just becoming tiny knots of fruit. Spring sauntered North, but he had to run like hell to keep it as his traveling companion. From February to July he was on the lookout for blossoms. When he lost them, and found himself without so much as a petal to guide him, he paused, climbed a tree on a hillock and scanned the horizon for a flash of pink or white in the leaf world that surrounded him. He did not touch them or stop to small. He merely followed in their wake, a dark ragged figure guided by the blossoming plums...

Smell /

Before (A)

To go back to the original hunger was impossible. Luckily for Denver, looking was food enough to last, but to be looked at in turn was beyond appetite; it was like breaking through her own skin to a place where hunger hadn't been discovered. It didn't have to happen often, because Beloved seldom looked right at her, or when she did Denver could tell her face was just the place those eyes stopped while the mind behind it walked on. But sometimes-- at moments Denver could neither anticipate or create, Beloved rested cheek on knuckles and looked at Denver with attention.

It was lovely. Not to be stared at, not seen, but being pulled into view by the interested, uncritical eyes of the other. Having her hair examined as a part of her self, not as material or a style. Having her lips, nose, chin caressed as they might be if she were a tea rose a gardener paused to admire. Denver's skin dissolved under that gaze and became soft and bright like the lisle dress that had its arm around her mother's waist. She floated near but outside her own body, feeling vague and intense and the same time. Needing nothing. Being what there was.

At such times it seemed to be Beloved who needed something-- wanted something. Deep down in her wide black eyes, back behind the expressionlessness was a palm held out for a penny which Denver

would gladly give her if only she knew <sup>how</sup> or or knew enough about her,  
A knowledge not to be had by the answers to the questions Sethe  
occasionally put to her: "You disremember everything? I never  
knew my mother neither, but I saw her a couple times. Did you never  
see yourn? What kind of whites was they? YOU don't member none?"

Beloved, scratching the back of her hanbds, would say she did  
remember <sup>a woman's basket</sup> ~~her mother's arms~~ and then being snatched away. ~~After~~  
~~that was~~ Other than that, the clearest memory was the bridge;  
standing on the bridge looking down. And she <sup>knew one</sup> ~~didn't know a single~~  
white <sup>A man.</sup> Sethe found that remarkable <sup>(1)</sup> and more evidence to support her  
conclusions which she confided to Denver.

"Where'd you get the dress, them shoes?"

Beloved said she <sup>took</sup> ~~steal~~ them.

"Who from?"

Silence and a faster scratching of hands. She didn't  
know; she saw them and just took them.

"Uh huh," said Sehte, and confided to Denver that she believed  
Beloved had been locked up by some man for his own purposes and never  
let out the door. That she must have escaped to a bridge or some-  
place and rinsed the rest out of her mind. Something like that  
had happened to Ella except it was <sup>two</sup> ~~two~~ men--a father and son--and  
Ella remembered every bit of it. For almost a year, they kept her

locked in a room for themselves. "You couldn't think up," Ella <sup>had</sup> said, "what <sup>them two</sup> ~~was~~ done to me " Sethe thought it explained Beloved's behavior around Paul D whom she hated so.

Denver neither believed nor commented on Sehte's speculations, <sup>d</sup> certain as she was that Beloved was the white dress that had knelt with her mother in the keeping room, the true-to-life presence of the baby that had kept her company all her life. And to be looked at by her, however briefly, kept her grateful for the rest of the time when she was merely the looker. Besides, she had her own set of question <sup>s</sup> which had nothing to do with the past. The present alone interested Denver but she was careful to appear uninquisitive about the things she was dying to ask Beloved, for if she pressed too hard she might lose <sup>e</sup> the penny the held-out palm wanted and lose, therefore, the place beyond appetite. It was better to feast; to have permission to be the looker because the old hunger--the before-Beloved hunger that drove her into boxwood and cologne for just a taste of a life, to feel it bumpy and not flat, was out of the question. Looking kept it at bay.

So she did not ask her about the earrings, the night walks to the cold room or the tip of the thing she saw when Beloved lay down or came undone in her sleep. The look, when it came, came when Denver had been careful. Had explained things, or participated in things,

or told stories to keep her occupied when Sethe was at the restaurant. No given chore was enough to put out the licking fire that seemed always to burn in her. Not when they wrung sheets so tight the rinse water ran back up their arms. Not when they shoveled snow from the path to the outhouse. Or broke three inches of ice from the rain barrel, ; scoured and boiled last summer's canning jars, packed mud in the cracks of the hen house and warmed the chicks with their skirts. All the while Denver was obliged to talk about what they were doing--the how and why of it. About people Denver knew once or had seen, giving them more life than life had. (over)

Tk (the boy in Denver's class)

Beloved is holding her arms steady while Denver unclasps frozen underwear and towels from the line. One by one she lays them in Beloved's arms until the pile, like a huge deck of cards, reaches her chin. The rest, aprons and brown stockings, she carries herself. Made giddy by the cold they return to the house. The clothes will thaw slowly to a dampness perfect for the pressing iron which will make them smell like hot rain. Dancing around the room with Sethe's apron, Beloved wants to know if there are flowers in the dark. Denver adds sticks to the stove fire and assures her there are. Twirling,

Sweet smelling  
The white woman who brought her  
oranges, and Cologne and good wool  
skirts. Lady Jones who taught them  
Songs to Spell and Count by, A beautiful  
As smart as she was. A white  
preacher who prayed for their souls  
while Sethe peeled potatoes, and  
Grandma Baby sucked air. She  
describes them to Beloved slowly,  
to keep her attention.

This day, they are outside. It's cold.  
Amenner has finished singing the  
Counting Song Lady Jones taught.

her face framed by the neck band, her waist in the apron strings' embrace, she says she is thirsty. Denver suggests warming up some cider, while her mind races to something she might do or say to interest and entertain the dancer. Denver is a strategist now and has to keep Beloved by her side from the minute Sethe leaves for work until the hour of her return when Beloved begins to hover at the window then work her way out the door, down the steps and along the road. Plotting has changed Denver markedly. Where she was once indolent, resentful of every task, now she is spry, <sup>o</sup> ~~Executing~~ <sup>extending</sup> even ~~estending~~ the assignments Sethe leaves for them. All to be able to say "We got<sup>to</sup>..." and "Ma'am said for us to..." Otherwise Beloved gets private and dreamy, or quiet and sullen, and Denver's chances of being look<sup>ed</sup> <sup>at</sup> by her go down to nothing. She has no control over the evenings; when her mother is anywhere around, Beloved has eyes only for Sethe. At night in bed, <sup>h</sup> ~~anything~~ might happen. She might want to be told a ~~STORY~~ <sup>STORY</sup> IN the dark when Denver can't see her; or she might get up and go into the cold <sup>house</sup> ~~room~~ where Paul D had begun to sleep. Or she might cry, silently. She might even sleep like a brick, her breath sugary from fingerfuls of molasses or sand cook<sup>ie</sup> crumbs. Denver will turn toward her then, and if Beloved faces her, she will inhale deeply the sweet air from her mouth. If not, she will have to lean up and over her, every once in a while, to catch a sniff. For anything is better than the original

months almost  
a year  
hunger--the years when--after four months of the wonderful little i,  
sentences rolling out like pie dough and the company of other children  
there was no sound coming through. Anything is better than the silence  
when she answered to hands gesturing and was indifferent to the  
movement of lips; when she saw every little thing and colors leaped  
smoldering into view. She would forego the most violent of sunsets,  
stars as fat as dinner plates and all the blood of autumn and settle  
for the palest yellow if it came from her Beloved.

The cider jug is heavy, but it always IS EVEN WHEN EMPTY.  
Denver can carry it easily yet she asks Beloved to help her. It  
is in the cold house room next to the molasses and six pounds of cheddar  
hard as bone. A pallet is in the middle of the floor covered with  
newspaper and three blankets. It has not been slept on for almost a  
month. Even though has come week. Not since snow came and with it serious winter.

It is noon, quite light outside; inside it is not. A few cuts of  
sun break through the roof and walls but once there they are too weak to  
shift for themselves. Darkness is stronger and swallows them like  
minnows.

The door bangs shut. Denver can't tell where Beloved is standing.

"Where are you," shw whispers in a laughing sort of way.

LOGIC  
"Right here," says Beloved.

"Where?"

"Come find me," says Beloved.

Denver stretches out her right arm and takes a step or two. She trips and falls down on to the pallet. Newspaper crackles under her weight. She laughs again "Oh shoot. Beloved?"

No one answers. Denver waves her arms about and squinches her eyes to separate the shadows of potato sacks, <sup>a</sup> lard can and a side of smoked pork from the one that might be human.

"Stop fooling." she says and look up toward the lights to check and make sure this is still the cold <sup>house</sup> room and not something going on in her sleep. The minnows of <sup>h</sup> light still swim there; they can't make it down to where she is.

"You the one thirsty. You want cider or don't you?" Denver's voice is mildly accusatory. Mildly. She doesn't want to offend and she doesn't want to betray the panic that is creeping over her like hairs. There is no sight or sound of Beloved. Denver struggles to her feet amid the cackling of newspaper. Holding her palm out she moves slowly toward the door. There is no latch or knob--just a loop of wire to catch a nail. She pushes the door open. Cold sunlight displaces the dark. The room is just as it was when they entered--except Beloved is not there. There is no point in looking further for everything in the room can be seen at first sight. Denver looks away because the ~~too~~

loss is ungovernable. She steps back into the room, allowing the door to close quickly behind her. Darkness or no, she moved rapidly around, reaching, touching cobwebbing, cheese, slanting shelves and the pallet interlocking with each step. If she stumbles, she is not aware of it because she does not know where her body stops, which part of her is an arm, a foot or a knee. She feels like an ice cake torn away from the solid surface of the ~~creek~~<sup>stream</sup>, floating on darkness, thick and crashing against the edges of things around it. Breakable, meltable and cold. ~~My Supper is gone, Denver.~~ And when she got around to

It is hard to breathe and even if there were light she wouldn't be able to see anything because she is crying. Just as she thought it might happen, it has. Easy as walking into a room. A magical appearance on a stump, the face wiped out by sunlight, and a magical disappearance in a shed, ~~etern~~<sup>eaten</sup> alive by the dark.

"Don't," she is saying between tough swallows. "Don't. Don't go back."

This ~~is~~<sup>is</sup> worse than when Paul D came to 124 and she cried helplessly into the stove. This is worse. Then ~~is~~<sup>it</sup> was for her self. Now she is crying because she has no self. Death is a skipped meal compared to this. She can feel her thickness ~~inning~~<sup>h</sup>, dissolving into nothing. She grabs the hair at her temples to get enough to up-root it which halts the melting

for a while. Teeth clamped shut, Denver brakes her sobs. She doesn't move to open the door because there is no world out there. She decides to stay in the cold <sup>house</sup> room and let the dark swallow her like the minnows of light above. She won't put up with another <sup>✓</sup>leaving, another <sup>^</sup>tick. Waking up to find one brother, then another, not at the bottom of the bed, <sup>†</sup>his foot jabbing her spine. Sitting at table <sup>^</sup>eating turnips and saving the liquor for her grandmother to drink, her mother's hand on the keeping room door and her voice saying "Baby Suggs is gone, Denver." And when she got around to worrying about what would be the case when Sethe died and left her, a dream-come-true comes true just to leave her on a pile of newspaper in the dark.

when she got around to worrying about what would be the case if Sethe died or Paul D took her away, a dream-come-true comes true just to leave her on a pile of newspaper in the dark.

No footfall announced her, but there she <sup>is</sup> was, standing where before there was nobody when Denver looked. And smiling.

~~"Ain't no circle round your neck," she said.~~

Denver grabbed the hem of Beloved's skirt. "I thought you left me! I thought you went back!"

Beloved <sup>smiles,</sup> made a face. "I don't want that place. This ' the place I <sup>am</sup> can be." She <sup>sits</sup> sat down on the pallet and <sup>laughing,</sup> then lay back, <sup>and sits</sup> looking up at the cracklights above.

Surreptitiously, Denver pinches a peice of Beloved's skirt between her fingers and holds on. A good things she does because suddenly Beloved sits up, ~~moaning.~~

"What is it?" asks Denver.

"Look," she points to the sunlit cracks.

"What? I don't see nothing."

*Beloved follows the painting's finger.*  
~~Beloved drops her hand and looks to the floor.~~  
 "I'm [down there] like this," ~~says~~ Beloved. *For a moment*

Denver watches as Beloved bends over, curls up and rocks. <sup>He</sup> Her eyes go ~~back~~ to no place, then <sup>for that very first time</sup> cut sideways and run around her sockets like trapped mice. NOW she is chewing air as she whips her head a around. Her moaning is so mall. *Beloved can hardly hear it.*

"Beloved! What you see?"

*B focuses her*  
 Her eyes are dead when she says, "Over there. <sup>Her</sup> My face."

*When Beloved is thinking - convinced she is dying - they don't sideway*

bridge and stay there. If I go back and he strong, he hurts

when she got around to worrying about what would be the case if Seth and Paul D took her

"I see it," Look

"See what?"

"It's back. I see it."

"Tell me, What you see?"

Beloved covers her eyes, concentrating. "I'm down there like this." <sup>Beloved watches as Beloved</sup> She bends over. "Now I'm standing in the rain with them. They go with the men. I'm sitting now. No one is taking me. Now someone is. I'm in a house. I drop things. I watch him eat. I drop his things. He <sup>is</sup> comes where I sleep at night and hurts me in the day when I drop food. I'm old in this house. I walk this way and that way. I come to the

She points up to the cracks  
what?

sun lit

bridge and stay there. If I go back and he strong, he hurts me."

"Why don't you just cross it? Go on the other way?"

"I watch the water. I can't leave the water."

"Why?"

"I get in it. I get in <sup>the</sup> water and I see her face. She says to come here. This is the place I can be. No men without skin. Her face is in the water."

"Whose face? Whose face is in the water?"

"Sethe."

"YOU see ma'am's face in the water?"

"Yes. She the hot thing."

She had a little. But she had all the children she wanted. If her boys came home, and Denver and Delia stayed on, it would be the way it was supposed to be.

She had been washing the dishes and sat down at one side of the table. She had not moved since Sethe and Paul D left the room, sat

Can you stitch this up for me, baby?

Um hm. Soon's I finish this petticoat. She <sup>just</sup> ~~came~~ got ~~by~~ the one she came here in and everybody needs a change.

Any pie left?

I think Denver got the last of it.

And not complaining, not even minding ~~that~~ he slept all over and around the house now, and entered her bed for any thing but sleep.

Sethe sighed through her nostrils <sup>and placed her hand on his chest</sup>. She knew she was building a case against him in order to build a case against getting pregnant--and it shamed her a little. But she had all the children she needed; if her boys came back home, and Denver and Beloved stayed on--well, it would be the way it was supposed to be, no?

Right after she saw the shadows holding hands at the side of the road, <sup>hadn't</sup> the picture altered?--and the minute she saw the dress and shoes sitting in the front yard, she broke water. Didn't even have to see the face burning in the sunlight. She had been dreaming it for years. <sup>Paul D's chest</sup>

~~They couldn't hear a sound from upstairs but~~  
Below them, all around 124 the snow went one and one and on. Piling itself, burying itself, Higher. Deeper.

Denver finished washing the dishes and sat down at the table. Beloved, who had not moved since Sethe and Paul D left the room, sat

sucking her forefinger. Denver watched her face a while and then said, "She likes him here."

Beloved went on sucking. *"Make him go away."*

"She might be mad at you if he leaves,"

Beloved stopped sucking and, inserting a thumb in her mouth along with the forefinger, pulled out a <sup>back</sup> ~~side~~ tooth. There was hardly any blood, but ~~it scared~~ <sup>said</sup> Denver enough to say "Oooo, didn't that hurt you?"

"Yes."

"Then why don't you cry?"

"What?"

"If it hurt, why don't you cry?"

And she did. Sitting there holding a small white ~~side~~ tooth in the palm of her smooth smooth hand. Cried the way she wanted to when the turtles came out of the water, one behind the other, right after the blood-red bird disappeared <sup>back into</sup> ~~among~~ the leaves. With the tip of her tongue she touched the salty water that <sup>slid to</sup> ~~hung~~ in the corner of her mouth, ~~and gazed at her tooth.~~

"I try," she said. "I try to remember things. I try. ~~And sometimes~~ I ~~almost~~ get it. <sup>and</sup> But it goes away." ~~It keeps going away.~~ She raised big, wet eyes to Denver. "Somebody held me close. Real <sup>close</sup> tight. I know it. <sup>I was coming</sup> ~~Then it stopped.~~ <sup>I was going to,</sup> I never could get it back."

<sup>I knew lovely too</sup> "I'll help you," said Denver.

"Only she can."

"You want her to hold you? Would that do it? Would that be it, then?"

Beloved wiped her cheek with the heel of her hand. "How do I know til she does?" <sup>it</sup>

<sup>don't</sup> <sup>^</sup> (Insert from previous <sup>2nd</sup> page)

Stamp

All  
re - typed

124 was loud. Stamp Paid could hear it even from the road. He walked toward the house holding his head as high as possible so nobody looking could call him a sneak, although his worried mind made him feel like one. Ever since he showed that newspaper clipping to Paul D and learned that he'd moved out of 124 that very day, Stamp felt uneasy. Having wrestled with the question of whether or not to tell <sup>a man</sup> ~~him~~ about <sup>his woman</sup> ~~her~~, and having convinced himself that he should, he then began to worry about Sethe. Had he stopped the one shot she had of the happiness a good man could bring her? Was she vexed by the loss, the free and unasked-for revival of gossip by the man who had helped her cross the river and who was her friend as well as Baby Suggs'?

"I'm too old," he <sup>thought</sup>, "for clear thinking. I'm too old and I seen too much." <sup>(over)</sup> ~~Besides~~, <sup>But</sup> sneaking was his job--his life; <sup>though</sup> ~~but~~ always for a clear and holy purpose. Before the War all he did was sneak: run a ways into hidden places, secret information to public <sup>places.</sup>

Underneath his legal vegetables were the contraband humans that he ferried across the river. Even the pigs he worked for white people in the spring served his purposes. Whole families lived on the bones and guts he distributed to them. He wrote their letters and read to them the ones they received. He knew who had dropsy and who needed stovewood; which children had a gift and which needed correction.

He had insisted on <sup>during</sup> ~~for the~~  
~~And the privacy he insisted on~~ when  
he renovation at the Slaughter yards -  
Now he wondered  
Who was he protecting? Paul D  
was the only one <sup>in town</sup> who didn't know.  
~~How did~~ the information that had been  
in the newspaper <sup>to be</sup> ~~become~~ a secret  
that needed <sup>to be</sup> ~~whispered~~? A secret from  
whom? Sethe, that's who. He'd gone  
behind her back, like a sneak.

in a pig yard.

He knew the secrets of the Licking River and its banks; empty houses and full; the best dancers, the worst speakers, those with beautiful voices and those who could not carry a tune. There was nothing <sup>interesting</sup> between his legs but he remembered when there had been-- when that drive drove the driven, and that was why he considered long and hard before opening his wooden box and searching for the <sup>18 year old</sup> clipping to show Paul D. <sup>as proof</sup>. <sup>heard its voices from the road</sup> Afterward--not before--he considered Sethe's feelings in the matter. And it was the lateness of this consideration that made him feel so bad. Maybe he should have left it alone; Maybe Sethe would have gotten around to telling him herself; maybe he was not the high-minded Soldier of Christ he thought he was--but an ordinary plain meddler who had interrupted something going along just fine for the sake of "truth" and "forewarning," things he set much store by. Now 124 was back like it was before Paul D came to town-- worrying Sethe and Denver with a pack of haunts. <sup>he could hear from the road</sup> Even if Sethe could deal with the return of the spirits, Stamp didn't believe her daughter could. Denver needed somebody normal in her life. By luck he had been there <sup>very</sup> almost at her birth--before she knew she was alive--and it made him partial to her. It was seeing her, alive, don't you know, and looking healthy four weeks later, that pleased him so much he gathered all he could carry of the best black berries in the county and stuck two in her mouth first, <sup>before he</sup> and then presented the difficult harvest to Baby Suggs. To this day he believed his berries (which sparked the feast and the wood chopping that followed) were the reason Denver was still alive. Had he not been there, chopping firewood, Sethe would have spread her <sup>baby</sup> brains on the planking. Maybe

d  
he should have thought of her, if not Sethe, before he gave Paul D the news that ran him off. <sup>Denver</sup> ~~Denver~~ <sup>She</sup> ~~needed somebody normal in her life~~

the one  
normal  
somebody in the  
girl's life since  
Baby Suggs died. And  
right there was the  
thorn.

But deeper and more painful than his belated concern for Denver, scorching his soul like a silver dollar in a fool's pocket, was the memory of Baby Suggs--the mountain to his sky. It was the memory of her and the honor that was her due that made him walk stright-necked toward the yard of 124, although he heard its voices from the road.

Bill  
He had stopped foot in this house only once after the misery (which is what he called Sethe's rough response to the Fugitive Slave Law) and that was to carry Baby Suggs, holy, out of it. When he picked her up <sup>in his arms</sup> she looked to him like a girl, and he took the pleasure she must have knowing she didn't have to grind her hip bone anymore-- that at last somebody carried her. ~~The woman~~ Sethe and her daughter were dry-eyed on that occasion. Sethe had no instructions except "Take her to the Clearing" which they tried to do, but were prevented by some rule the whites had invented about where the dead should rest. Baby Suggs went <sup>down</sup> next to the baby with its throat cut--a neighborliness which Stamp wasn't sure had Baby Suggs' approval.

The setting-up was held in the yard because nobody besides himself would enter 124--an injury Sethe answered with another: <sup>by</sup> ~~she~~ refused <sup>ing</sup> to attend the service Reverend <sup>TK Pike</sup> presided over. She went instead to the gravesite whose silence she competed with as she stood there not joining in the hymns the others sang with all their hearts. That insult spawned another by the mourners: back in the yard of 124, they ate the food they brought and did not touch Sethe's who didn't touch theirs and forbade Denver to. So Baby Suggs

ho

holy, having devoted her freed life to harmony, ~~cooperation and~~  
~~love~~ was buried amid a regular dance of pride, fear, condemnation  
and spite. Just about everybody in town was dying for Sethe to  
come on difficult times. Her outrageous claims, her self-sufficiency  
seemed to demand it, and Stamp Paid, who had not felt a trickle of  
meanness <sup>his</sup> ~~his~~ whole adult life, wondered if some of the "pride goeth  
before a fall" expectations of the townsfolk had rubbed off on him  
anyhow--which would explain why he had not considered Sethe's feelings  
or Denver's needs when he showed Paul D the clipping.

He hadn't the vaguest notion of what he would do or say when and  
if <sup>she</sup> ~~Sethe~~ <sup>turned her eyes to his,</sup> ~~opened the door.~~ He was willing to offer her help, if she  
wanted any from him, or receive her anger, if she harbored any for  
him. Beyond that, he trusted his instincts to right what he may have  
done wrong to Baby Suggs' kin, and to guide him in and through the  
stepped-up haunting 124 was subject to, as evidenced by the voices  
he heard from the road. Other than that, he would rely on the power  
of Jesus Christ to deal with things older, but not <sup>stranger</sup> ~~better~~, than He  
Himself was. <sup>himself, he lowered his hand and left the porch of 124.</sup>

What he heard, as he <sup>^</sup> moved toward the porch, he didn't understand.  
Out on Bluestone Road he thought he heard a conflagration of hasty  
voices--loud, urgent, ~~but~~ all speaking at once so he could not make  
out <sup>^</sup> ~~what~~ they were talking about, or to whom. The speech wasn't non-  
sensical, exactly, nor was it tongues. But something was wrong with  
the order of the words; <sup>[</sup> its sequence, <sup>]</sup> and he couldn't describe or  
[decipher it to save his life.] Yet he went on, <sup>through</sup> ~~and just as~~ <sup>when</sup> he got  
to the steps <sup>suddenly</sup> the voices drained to less than a whisper. It gave

all he could make out was one word: "Mine."  
244

*The voices had become*  
him pause. {All he could hear was} an occasional mutter--like  
the interior sounds a woman makes when she believes she is alone  
and unobserved <sup>at</sup> her work: a sth when she misses the needle's  
eye; a <sup>soft</sup> tiny moan when she sees another chip in her one good platter;  
the low, friendly argument with which she greets the hens. Nothing  
fierce or startling. Just that eternal, private conversation that  
takes place between women and their tasks.

~~Stamp changed his mind about knocking on the front door and went  
around to the side of the house.~~

He raised his fist to knock on the door he had never knocked  
on (because it was always open to or for him) and could not do it.  
Dispensing with that formality was all the pay he exacted from  
Negroes in his debt: once Stamp Paid brought you a coat, got the  
message to you, saved your life, or fixed the cistern he took the  
liberty of walking in your door as though it were his own. Since all  
his visits were beneficial, his step or holler through a doorway  
got a bright welcome. Rather than forfeit the one privilege he  
claimed for himself, he lowered his hand and left the porch ~~of 124.~~

Over and again he tried it: made up his mind to visit 124;  
broke through the loud hasty voices to the mumbling beyond it,  
and stopped, trying to figure out what to do at the door. Six times  
in as many days he tried to knock. But the coldness in that gesture  
--its sign that he was a stranger at that gate--overwhelmed him.

*abandoned  
his normal  
route and*

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*He  
could not do it to  
save her  
Re-tracing his  
steps in the  
snow he  
sighed  
for*

Seth

making up his mind to visit

While Stamp Paid was [trying regularly to enter] 124 for Baby Suggs' sake, Sethe was trying to take her advice:.. to lay it all down-- sword and shield. Not just to acknowledge the advice, but to actually <sup>take</sup> ~~do~~ it. Four days after Paul D reminded her of how many feet she had, <sup>just before</sup> <sup>began to have</sup> while Stamp hovered at her door, Sethe rummaged among the shoes of strangers to find the ~~other~~ ice skates she was sure were there. Digging in the heap she <sup>despised her self for having been</sup> wondered how she had come to be so trusting, ~~how~~ <sup>so</sup> quickly <sup>to</sup> she had ~~surrendered~~ at the stove while Paul D kissed her back. She should have known that he would behave like everybody else in town once he knew. The thrilling 28 days of having women friends, a mother-in-law, and all her children together; of being part of a neighborhood; of, in fact, having neighbors at all to call her own were long gone and would never come back. No more dancing in the Clearing or happy feeds. No more discussions, stormy or quiet, about the true meaning and consequences of The Fugitive Bill, The Settlement Fee, God's Ways and Negro Pews; Anti-slavery, Manumission, Skin Voting, Republicans, Dred Scott, Book Learning, Dr. Langson, <sup>and</sup> the Colored Ladies of Delaware <sup>Ohio</sup> and all the other weighty issues that held ~~them~~ <sup>9</sup> (all of them) in their chairs scraping the floor boards or pacing them in agony or exhilaration. No anxious wait for the North Star or news of a beat-off. <sup>No sighing at a new betrayal or clapping handclapping at a small victory.</sup> <sup>those busy were</sup> <sup>8</sup> Twenty-eight days, followed by ten years of disapproval and a solitary life. Then one month of the sun-splash life the shadows holding hands on the road promised: tentative greetings from other colored people in Paul D's company; a friend for Denver; a bed-life for herself. <sup>11</sup> Melted like snow and gone for good.


Except for Denver's friend it had all

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Well if that's the way it was--that's the way it was.

She had been on her knees, scrubbing the floor, Denver trailing her with the dry rags when Beloved appeared saying "What do these do?" On her knees, rag in hand, she looked at the girl and the skates she held in her hand. She couldn't skate a lick, but she \* left the bucket where it was, told Denver to <sup>get out the</sup> find some shawls and started searching for the other <sup>skates</sup> pair she was certain was in that heap somewhere. ~~Just like baby said she'd lay it all down~~ Anybody feeling sorry for her, anybody wandering by to peep and see how was getting on (including Paul D) would discover that the woman junkheaped for the <sup>third</sup> time because she loved her children--that woman was sailing <sup>happily</sup> on a frozen creek.

Hurriedly, carelessly she threw the shoes about. ~~But all~~ she found <sup>one</sup> ~~was once~~ blade, a man's. "Well," she said. We'll take turns. Two on one, one <sup>skates</sup> on one and shoe-slide for the other."

\* ~~decided~~ then and there <sup>she decided</sup> to take Baby Sug's advice, and she <sup>to</sup> lay it all down. 

Nobody saw the falling. Exhausted finally they lay down on their backs to recover breath. The sky above them was another country. Winter stars, close enough to lick, had come out before the sun went down. For a moment, Sethe entered the perfect peach they offered. Then Denver stood up and tried for a long glide. The tip of her single skate hit a bump and as she fell the flapping of her arms was so wild and hopeless, all three of them. Beloved

Nobody saw them falling.

Holding hands, ~~taking turns~~, bracing each other, they swirled over the frozen creek. Beloved wore the pair, Denver wore one, step-gliding over the treacherous ice. Sethe thought her two shoes would hold and anchor her. <sup>She</sup> ~~Sethe~~ was wrong. Two paces onto the creek, she <sup>the girls</sup> lost her balance and landed on her behind. Denver and Beloved, screaming with laughter, <sup>in the snow</sup> joined her. Sethe struggled to stand and discovered not only that she could do a split, but that it hurt. Her bones surfaced in unexpected places and so did laughter. ~~In~~ <sup>M</sup> making a circle or a line, the three of them could not stay upright for one whole minute, but nobody saw them falling. <sup>P</sup> Each seemed to be helping the other two stay upright, yet every tumble doubled their delight.

The live oak and souging pine on the banks enclosed them and absorbed their laughter while they fought <sup>gravity</sup> for ~~balance and~~ each other's hands. Their ~~xxx~~ skirts flew like wings and their skin <sup>turned</sup> ~~looked like~~ pewter in the cold and dying light.

Nobody saw the<sup>m</sup> falling. Exhausted finally they lay down on their backs to recover breath. The sky above them was another country. Winter stars, close enough to lick, had come out before the sun went down. For a moment, Sethe entered the perfect peace they offered. Then Denver stood up and tried for a long <sup>independent</sup> glide. The tip of her single skate hit a bump and as she fell the flapping of her arms was so wild and hopeless, all three, Sethe, Beloved

and Denver herself laughed till they coughed. Slowly, gently, Sethe ~~turned over~~ and rose to her hands and knees, laughter still shaking her chest, making her eyes wet. She stayed that way for a while, on all fours. But when her laughter died, the tears did not and it was some time before Beloved or Denver knew the difference. When they did they touched her lightly on the shoulders.

Walking back through the woods, Sethe put an arm around each girl at her side. Both of them had an arm around her waist. Making their way over hard snow, they stumbled and had to hold on tight, but nobody saw them fall.

Inside the house they found out they were cold. They took off their shoes <sup>and stockings and</sup> and put on ~~xxxxxx~~ dry woolen ones. Denver fed the fire. Sethe warmed a pan of milk and stirred sugar and vanilla into it. Wrapped <sup>in</sup> quilts and blankets before the cooking stove, they drank, wiped their noses and drank again.

Want to make some <sup>leave my side</sup>, Ma'am?" asked Denver.

"Tomorrow," said Sethe. "Time ~~for~~ to sleep."

She poured them each a bit more of the hot sweet milk. The stove fire roared.

"Are you finished with your eyes?" asked Beloved.

Sethe smiled and touched her cheek. "Yes, I'm finished with my eyes. Drink up. Time for bed."

But none of them wanted to leave the warmth of the blankets, the fire and the warm cups for the chill of an unheated bed. They continued to ~~sip~~ sip and <sup>watch</sup> gaze into

the fire.

When the click came Sethe didn't know what it was. Afterwards it was clear as daylight that the click came at the very beginning--a beat, almost, before it started; before she heard three notes; before even the words began. Leaning forward a little, Beloved hummed a while and then sang very softly

High Johnny

Wide Johnny

Sweet William bend down low

Jackweed raise up high

Lambswool over my shoulder

Buttercup and clover fly

High Johnny

Wide Johnny

Don't you leave my side Johnny

It was then Sethe recalled the click--the settling of pieces into places designed and made especially for them. No milk spilled from her cup because her hand was not shaking. She simply turned her head and looked at Beloved's profile: the chin, mouth, nose, forehead, copied

and exaggerated in the huge shadow the fire threw on the wall behind her. Her hair, which Denver had braided into twenty or thirty plaits, curved toward her shoulders like arms. From where she sat Sethe could not examine it, not the hairline, nor the eyebrows, the lips nor...

"All I remember," Baby Suggs had said "is how she loved the burned bottom of bread. Her little hands I wouldn't know em if they slapped me."

--the birthmark, nor the color of the gums, the shape of her ears, nor

"Here. Look here. This is your ma'am. If you can't tell me by my face, look here."

--the fingers, nor their nails, nor even...

But there would be time. The click had clicked; things were where they ought to be or poised and ready to glide in.

"I made that song up," said Sethe. "I ;made it up and sang it to my children. Nobody knows that song but me and my children.

Beloved turned to look at Sethe. "I know it."

Stamp  
Fingering a ribbon and smelling skin, Stamp Paid approached  
The hobnail casket found in the tree should be fondled before  
if is opened. Its lock may have rusted or broken away from the  
clasp. Still you touch the nail heads, and test its weight.  
No smashing ax head before it is decently exhumed from the  
grave that has hidden it all this time. No gasp at a miracle  
that is truly miraculous because the magic lies in the fact  
that you knew it was there for you all along.

Sethe wiped the white satin coat from the inside of the  
pan, brought pillows from the keeping room for the girls' ~~heads~~  
heads. There was no tremor in her voice as she instructed them to  
keep the fire--if not come on upstairs.

With that, she gathered her blanket around her elbows  
and ascended the lily white stairs like a bride.

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The onslaught of her father, like his, was sudden, but here lasted  
for years. After sixty years of losing children to the people who

Stamp

again  
Fingering a ribbon and smelling skin, Stamp Paid approached  
124. TK weather

"My marrow is tired, he thought. I been tired all my days, bone tierd, but now its got in the marrow. Must be what Baby Suggs felt when she lay down and thought about color for the rest of her life. When she told him what her aim was, he thought she was ashamed and too shamed to say so. That her authority in the pulpit, her dance in the Clearing, her powerful Call (she didn't deliver sermons or preach--insisting she was too ignorant for that--she called and the hearing heard)--all that had been macked and rebuked by the bloodspill in her back yard. God puzzled her and she was tyoo ashamed of Him to say so. Instead she told Stamp she was going to bed to think about the colors of things. He tried to dissuade her. Sethe was in jail with her nursing baby. The boys were holding hands in the yard, terrified ~~xx~~ of letting go. Strangers and familiars were stopping by to hear how it went one more time and Baby declared peace. She just up and quit. Before Sethe returned, she had considered blue and was well on her way to yellow. At first he would see her in the yard oocasionally, or delivering food to the jail, or shoes in town. Then less and less. He believed thn that ~~xxxx~~ shame put her to bed. NOW, eight years after her contentious funeral and eighteen years after the Misery, he changed his mind. Her marrow was tired and it was a testimony to the heart that fed it that it took eight years to follow (or meet?) finally the color she was hankering after. The onslaught of her fatigue ~~xxx~~, like his, was sudden, but hers lasted for years. After sixty years of losing children to the people who

chewed up her life and spit it out like a peach pit; after five years of freedom given to her by her last child who bought her future with his, exchanged it, so to speak, so she could have one whether he did or not--to lose him too; to acquire a daughter and grandchildren and see that daughter <sup>free</sup>slay the children (or try to); to belong to a community of other Negroes--to love and be loved by them, to counsel and be counseled, protect and be protected, feed and be fed--and then to have that community step back and hold itself at a distance--well, it could wear out even a Baby Suggs, holy.

"Isten here, girl, " he told her, "you can't quit the Word. It's given to you to speak. You can't quit the Word, I don't care what all happen to you."

They were standing in Street, ankle<sup>g</sup> deep in leaves. Lamps lit the downstairs windows of spacious houses and made the early evening look darker than it was. Quite by chance, as he left TK he <sup>had</sup> glanced across the street and recognized the skipping woman as his old friend. He had not seen her in weeks. Quickly he crossed the street, scuffing red leaves as he went. When he stopped her with a greeting, she returned it with a face knocked clean of interest. She could have been a tree. A carpet bag full of shoes <sup>i</sup>n her hand, she waited for him to begin, lead or shape a conversation. If there had been sadness in her <sup>eyes</sup> eyes he would have understood it; but indifference lodged where sadness should have been.

"I see what you mean," said but she peered instead at the white house.

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"You missed the Clearing two Saturdays running," he told her.

She turned her head away and ~~gazed at~~ <sup>scanned</sup> the houses along the street.

"Folks came," he said.

"Folks come; folks go," she answered.

"Here, let me carry that." He tried to take her bag from her but she <sup>W</sup>ouldn't let him.

"I got a delivery some place long in here," she said. "Name of Tucker."

"Yonder," he said. "Twin chesnuds in the yard. Sick, too."

They walked a bit, his pace slowed to accomadate her skip.

"Well?"

"Well, what?"

"Saturday coming. You going to Call or what?"

"If I <sup>I'm</sup> call them and they come what on earth ~~am I~~ going to say?"

"Say the Word!" He checked his shout. "~~That's too late.~~"

"That's one other thing took away from me," she ~~said~~ said and that was when he exhorted her, pleaded with her not to quit, no matter what, the Word had been given to her and she had to speak it. Had to.

They had reached to twin chestnuts and the white house that loomed behind them.

"See what I mean?" he said. "Big trees like that, both of em together aint got the leaves of a young birch."

"I see what you mean," <sup>she</sup> said but she peered instead at the white house.

"You got to do it," he said. "You got to. Cana't nobody Call like you. YOu have to be there."

"What I HAVE TO DO IS GET IN MY BED and lay down. I want to fix on something harmless in this world."

"What world you talking about? Aint nothing harmless down here?"

"Yes it is, Blue. That don't hurt nobody. Yellow neither."

"You getting ~~like~~ in the bed to think about yellow?"

"I likes yellow."

"Then what? When you get through with blue and yellow, then what?"

"Can't say. It's something can't be planned."

"You blaming God," he said. "That's what you doing."

"No, Stamp. I ain't."

"You saying the white folks won?" That what you saying?"

[The devil's running it and always will?"]

"I'm saying they came in my yard."

"YOu saying nothing counts?"

"I'm saying they came in my yard."

"Sethe's the one did it."

"And if she hadn't?"

"You saying God give up? Nothing left for us but pour out our own blood?"

"I'm saying they came in my yard."

"You punishing Him, ain't you?"

"Nothing like He punish me."

"You can't do that Baby. It ain't right."

"Was a time I knew what that was."

"You still know."

"What I know is what you see: a nigger woman hauling shoes."

"Aw, Baby." He licked his lips searching with his tongue for the words that would turn her around, lighten her load. "We have to be steady. These things too will pass. What you looking for? A miracle?"

"No," she said. "I'm looking for what I was put here to look for: the back door," *and*

*right* She *skipped* to it, but they didn't let her in. They took the shoes from her as she stood on the steps and she rested her hip on the railing while the white woman *went looking* for the dime.

Stamp Paid rearranged *his* ~~her~~ way; too angry to walk her home and listen to more. He watched her for a moment and *next door* turned to go before the alert white face at the window *for the second time* had come to any conclusion.

Trying to get to 124 *now*, he regretted that conversation: the high tone he took, his refusal to see the effect of ~~weariness~~ *weariness in* ~~ness in the~~ marrow of a woman he believed was a mountain. Now, too late, he understood her. The heart that pumped out love [like

blood]; the mouth that spoke the Word didn't count. They came in her yard anyway and she could not approve nor condemn Sethe's *rough choice.* bloody choice. One or the other might have saved her. But beaten up by

the claims of both, she went to bed. The white folks had tired her out at last.

And him. 1870 and white folks were still on the loose. Whole towns wiped clean of Negroes; eighty-seven lynchings in one ly<sup>ed</sup>ear alone in Kentucky; four schools burned to the ground; grown men whipped like children; children whipped like adults; black women raped by the crew, property taken, necks broken. He smelled skin, skin and hot blood. The skin was one thing, but human blood cooked in a lynch fire was a whole other thing. The stench stank--up off the pages of the NOrth Star, out of the mouths of wtinesses, etched in crooked handwriting in ~~xxx~~ letters sent by hand, it stank. Detailed in documents and petitions full of whereas and presented to any legal body who'd read it, it stank. But none of that had worn out his marrow. None of that. It was the ribbon. Tying his flat bed up on the bank of the Licking River, securing it the best he could, he caught sight of something red on its bottom. Reaching for it, he thought it was a cardinal <sup>feather</sup> ~~dead and~~ stuck to his boat. He tugged and what came loose in his hand was a red ribbon knotted around a curl of wet wooly hair, clinging still ot its bit of scalp. He untied the ribbon and put it in his pocket, dropped the curl ~~in~~ in the weeds. On the way home, he stopped, short of breath and dizzy. He waited until the spell passed before contuining on his way. A moment later, his breath left him again. This time he sat down by a fence. Rested, he got to his feet, but before he took a step he turned to look back down the road he'd traveled and said, to its <sup>frozen mud</sup> ~~dust~~ and the river beyond,

"What are these people? You tell me, Jesus. What are they?"

When he got to his house he was too tired to eat the food his sister and nephews had prepared. ~~xxxxxxx~~ He kept the ribbon; ~~and~~ the skin smell kept him and his weakend marrow made him dwell on Baby Suggs' ~~and~~ wish to consider what in the world was harmless. He hoped she stuck to ~~xxxx~~ blue, yellow, maybe green and never fixed on red.

*and went to his bed only because his sister's arrival, Callie, was getting nervous*

Mistaking her, upbraiding her, owing her, now he needed to let her know he knew and to get right with her and her kin. So he kept on through the voices and tried <sup>one more</sup> to knock at the door of 124. This time, although he couldn't cipher <sup>but one word</sup> the words, he believed he knew who spoke them. All those broken necks, <sup>the people of the</sup> that fire-cooked blood and black girls who had lost their ribbons. What a roaring.

*door, the stockings hung on a nail behind the cooking stove to dry had not.*

*Satne looked at Beloved's face and smiled.*

*Quietly, carefully she stepped around her to wake the fire.*

*First a bit of paper, then a little kindlin--not too much--*

*just a taste until it was strong enough for more. She fed it till its*

*She fed its dance until it was wild and fast. (?) When she went*

*outs ide to collect more wood from the shed, she did not notice the*

*man's footprints frozen in the snow. She crunched around to the*

*back, to the cord piled high with snow, <sup>scraping it</sup> and filled her arms with*

*wood. She even looked dead at the shed, smiling, smiling at the*

*things she would not have to remember now. Thinking "She sint even*

Sethe went to bed smiling, eager to lie down and ~~dwell on~~ <sup>unravel</sup> the proof for the conclusion she had already leaped to. Fondle the day and circumstances of her arrival and the meaning of that kiss in the Clearing. She slept instead and woke, still smiling, to a snow bright morning, <sup>Cold enough to</sup> [so cold she could see] her breath. She lingered a moment to collect the courage to throw off the quilts and hit a chilly floor. For the first time, she was going to be late for work.

Downstairs she saw the girls sleeping where she'd left them, but back to back now, each wrapped tight in blankets, breathing into their pillows. The pair and a half of skates were lying by the front door, the stockings hung on a nail behind the cooking stove to dry had not.

Sethe looked at Beloved's face and smiled.

Quietly, carefully she stepped around her to wake the fire. First a bit of paper, then a little kindlin--not too much--just a taste until it was strong enough for more. ~~She fed it till its~~ She fed its dance until it was wild and fast. (?) When she went outside to collect more wood from the shed, she did not notice the man's footprints frozen in the snow. She crunched around to the back, to the cord piled high with snow, <sup>Scooping it clean she</sup> and filled her arms with wood. She even looked dead at the shed, smiling. smiling at the things she would not have to remember now. Thinking "She aint even

<sup>with</sup>  
mad at me. Not a bit."

Obviously the hand-holding shadows she had seen on the road were not Paul D, Denver and herself--but ~~xxx~~ "us three". The three holding on to each other skating the night before; the three sipping flavored milk. And since that was so--if her daughter could come back home from the timeless place, certainly her sons could, and would, come back from wherever they had gone to.

Sethe covered her front teeth with her tongue against the cold. Hunched forward by the burden in her arms, she walked back around the house to the porch--not once noticing the frozen tracks she <sup>stepped</sup> setpped in.

Inside the girls were still <sup>l</sup>sleppping although they had changed positions while she was gone, both drawn to the fire. Dumping the <sup>stir</sup>aurmload into the woodbox made them <sup>stir</sup>sitr, but not wak. Now Sethe started the cooking stove. Still as quiet as she could be, reluctant to wake the sisters, happy to have them asleep at her feet while she made breakfast. Too bad she would be late for work--too, too bad. Once in sixteen years? That 's just too bad.

She had beaten two eggs into yesterday's hominy, formed it into patties and fried them with some ham pieces before Denver woke completely and groaned.

"Back stiff?"

"Yeah."

"Sleeping on the floor's supposed to be good for you."

"Hurt's like the devil."

"Could be that fall you took,"

Denver smiled. "That was fun." She turned to look down at Beloved, snoring lightly. "Should I wake her?"

"No, let her rest."

"She likes to see you off in the morning."

"I'll make sure she does."

<sup>Be nice</sup>  
But I have to think first, she said to herself, before I talk to her, let her know I knew. Think about what all I aint got to remember no more. Do like Baby said: think on it then lay it down--for good. <sup>Commenced</sup> ~~It was~~ Paul D who made me think there was a world out there and that I could live in it. Should have known better. Did know better. Whatever is going on outside my door aint for me. The world is in this room. That's all there is and all there needs to be.

TK (setting the table and Beloved waking)

They ate like men: ravenous and intent. <sup>Saying</sup> ~~Saying~~ little, content with the company of the other and the opportunity to look in her eyes.

When Sethe wrapped her head and bundled up to go to town it was already 7:00. And when she left the house she neither saw <sup>the</sup> ~~tyhe~~ prints nor heard the voices that ringed 124 like a noose.

<sup>Trudging</sup> ~~Trudging~~ in the ruts left by earlier wheels, Sethe smiled, relieved by the things she no longer had to remember. I don't have to remember nothing. I don't even have to explain. She understands it ~~at~~ all,

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whole thing--all I heard of what Rev. <sup>Collops</sup> Pike said. Dearly

I can forget how Baby Suggs' heart colappsed; hnow we agreed it was consumption without a sign of it in the world. Her eyes when she brought my food, I can forget that and how she ~~xxxx~~ told me that Howard and Bugler were all right but wouldn't let go each other's hands. ~~Rxxxxxx~~ Played that way; stayed that way especially in theri sleep. She handed me things from the basket; things <sup>a</sup> wrapped small enough to get through the bars, whispering news: the Bodwins going to see the judge--in chambers, she kept on saying, in chambers, like I knew what it meant or she did. That the Colored Ladies of Delaware Ohio had drawn up a petition to keep me from being hanged. That two white preachers had come round and wanted to talk to me, pray for me. That a newspaperman came too. She told me the news and I told her I needed something for the rats. She wanted Denver out and slapped her ~~hand~~ palms when I wouldn't let her go. "Shcoolteacher left town," she said. "Filed a claim and rode on off." They going to let you out for the burial, she said, not the funerla, just the burial," and they did. The Sherriff came with me and looked away when I fed Denver in the wagon. Neither HOward nor Buglar would let me near them, not even to touch their heads. I believe a lot of folks were there, but I just saw the box. Revered Pike spoke in a real loud voice, but I didn't catch a word--except the first two and shree months later when Denver was ready for solid food and they let me out for good, I went and got you a gravestone, but I didn't have money enough for the carving so I exchanged (bartered) what I did have and I'm sorry to this day I never thought to ask him for the

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whole thing--all I heard of what Revered Pike said. Dearly  
Beloved, which is what you are to me and I don't have to be sorry  
about getting only one word, and I don't have to remember the  
rest. I can forget that what I did changed Baby Suggs life--  
no Clearing, no company--just laundry and shoes. I can forget  
it all now because as soon as I got the gravestone in place you  
made your presence known in the house and worried us all to dis-  
traction. I didn't understand it then. I thought you were made  
with me. And now I know that if you was, yo<sup>u</sup> aint now because you  
came back here to me and I was right all along: there is no world  
outsid~~ed~~ ~~my~~ door. I only need to know one thing. How bad is the  
scar?

A  
Stamp  
here  
insert

A (new sequence)

Sawyer shouted at her when she entered his kitchen, but she just turned her back and reached for her apron. There was no entry now. No crack or crevice available. She had taken pains to keep them out but knew full well that at any moment they could rock her, rip her from her moorings, send the birds back into her hair. Drain ~~of~~ her of mothers milk, they had already done. Divided her back into plant life--that too. Driven her fat-bellied into the woods--they had done that. All news of them was <sup>doom</sup> ~~ek~~: they butted <sup>re</sup> Halle's face; gave Paul D iron to eat; crisped Sixo, hanged her own mother. She didn't want any more news about white folks, didn't want to know what Ella knew and John and Stamp Paid about the world done up the way white folks loved it. <sup>Amy wish to know</sup> ~~All news~~ of them had stopped with the birds in her hair.

twisting

Once, long ago, she was soft, trusting. She trusted Mrs. Garner and her husband too. She knotted the earrings into her underskirt to take along, not so much to wear but to hold. Earrings that made her believe she could discriminate among them. That for every schoolteacher there would be an Amy; that for every <sup>super</sup> ~~nephew~~ there was a Garner, or Bodwin, or even a Sherriff whose touch at her elbow was gentle. TK

But she had come to believe every ~~word~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~bone~~ of Baby Suggs' last words (include or leave out?) and buried all recollection of them and luck. Paul D. dug it up, gave her back her body, kissed her divided back, stirred her rememory and brought her more news: of <sup>clabber</sup> Halle, of iron, of rooster's smiling, but when he heard her news, he counted her feet and didn't even say good bye.

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"Don't talk to me, Mr. Sawyer. Don't say nothing to me this morning."

"What? What? What? You talking back to me?"

"I'm telling you don't say nothing to me."

"You better get them pies made."

Sethe touched the fruit and picked up the paring knife. <sup>She</sup> ~~quite still.~~ <sup>looked in</sup> <sup>his eyes</sup>

By the time the pie juice hit the bottom of the oven and hissed, Sethe was well into the potato salad. Sawyer came in and said. "Not too sweet. You make it too sweet, they don't eat it."

"Make it the way I always make it."

"Yeah. Too sweet."

"Oh, my land." she said and touched her forehead with the back of her wrist. Suddenly she smiled, thinking : why that's true. It is my land. When I leave here and go home I'll be on my land. Minding my business. And nobody tell me what to do..

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## Chapter 9

In the back of her mind may have been the thought that if Halle made it God do what He would, it would be a cause for celebration. When the children arrived and no Sethe, she was afraid and grateful. Grateful that the part of the family that survived were her own grandchildren--the first and only she would know: two boys and a little girl who was crawling already. But she held her heart still, afraid to form the questions: what that meant about Sethe and Halle; why the delay? Why didn't Sethe get on board too? Nobody could make it alone. Not only because the trappers picked them off like buzzards or netted them like rabbits,

but also because you couldn't run nowhere if you didn't know how to go. You could be lost forever, if there wasn't anybody to show you the way.

So when Sethe arrived--all mashed up and split open, but with another grandchild in her arms--the idea of a whoop moved closer to the front of her brain. But since there was still no sign of Halle and Sethe herself didn't know what had happened to him, she let the whoop lie--not wishing to hurt his chances by thanking God too soon.

It was Stamp Paid who started it. Twenty <sup>-SEVEN</sup> days after Sethe got to 124 he came by and looked at the baby he had tied up in a coat, looked at the mother he had handed a piece of fried fish to and, for some private reason of his own, went off with two buckets to a place near the river's edge that only he knew about where blackberries grew tasting so good and happy that to eat them was like being in church. Just one of the berries and you felt anointed.

He walked six miles to the riverbank; did a slide-run-slide down into a ravine made almost inaccessible by TK. He reached through the brambles lined with blood drawing thorns thick as knives that cut through shirt sleeves and pants legs to get to his skin. All the while

suffering mosquitoes, bees, hornets, wasps and the meanest lady spiders in the state--all in love with his neck. Scratched, raked and bitten he maneuvered through and took hold of each berry with fingertips so gentle not a single one was bruised. Late in the afternoon he got back to 124 and put two full buckets down on the porch. When Baby Suggs saw his shredded clothes, bleeding hands, welted face and neck she sat down laughing out loud.

Buglar, Howard, the woman in the bonnet and Sethe came to look and then laughed along with Baby Suggs at the sight of the sly, steely, old black man: agent, fisherman, boatman, tracker, savior, spy standing in broad daylight whipped finally by two pails of blackberries. Paying them no mind he took a berry and put it in the three-week old Denver's mouth. The woman shrieked.

"She's too little for that, Stamp."

"Bowels be soup."

"Sickify her stomach."

But the baby's thrilled eyes and smacking lips made them follow suit, sampling one at a time, the berries that tasted like church. Finally Baby Suggs slapped the boys' hands away from the bucket and sent Stamp around to the pump to rinse himself. She had decided to do something with the fruit worthy of the man's labor and his love. That's how it began.

She made the pastry dough and thought she ought to tell

Ella and TK to stop on by because three pies, maybe four, were too much to keep for one's own. Sethe thought they may as well back it up with a couple of chickens. Stamp allowed <sup>that</sup> the perch and rainbow were jumping into the boat--didn't even have to drop a line.

From Denver's two thrilled eyes it grew to a feast for ninety people. 124 shook with their voices far into the night. Ninety people who ate so well, and laughed so much it made them angry. They woke up the next morning and remembered the meal fried perch that Stamp Paid handled with a hickory twig, holding his left palm out against the spit and pop of the boiling grease; the corn pudding made with cream; tired, overfed children asleep in the grass, a tiny bone of roasted rabbit still in their hands--and got angry.

Baby Suggs' three (maybe four pies) grew to ten (maybe twelve). Sethe's two hens became five turkeys. The one block of ice brought all the way from Cincinnati over which they poured mashed watermelon mixed with sugar and mint to make a punch--became a wagonload of ice cakes for a washtub full of strawberry shrug. 124, rocking with laughter, good will and food for ninety, made them angry. Too much, they thought. Where does she get it all, Baby Suggs, holy. Why is she and hers always in the center of things?

How come she always knows exactly what to do and when?  
 Giving advice; passing messages; healing the sick, hiding fugitives, loving, cooking, cooking, loving, preaching, singing, dancing and loving everybody like it was her job and hers alone.

Now to take two buckets of blackberries and make ten, maybe twelve, pies; to have turkey enough for the whole town pretty near, new peas in September, fresh cream, but no cow; ice and sugar; batter bread, bread pudding, raised bread, shortbread--it made them mad.

Loaves and fishes were His powers--they did not belong to an ex-slave who had never carried 100 pounds to the scale, or picked okra with a baby on her back. Who probably had never been lashed by a grown white man as God knows they had. Who had not even escaped slavery--had, in fact, been bought out of it by a doting son and driven to the Ohio River in a wagon--free papers folded between her breasts (driven by the very man who had been her master) with enough money from him (somebody named of Garner) to rent a house with two floors and a well from the Bodwins--the white brother and sister who gave Stamp Paid, Ella and John clothes, food and gear for runaways because they hated slavery worse than they hated slaves.

It made them furious. They swallowed baking soda the morning after, to calm the stomach violence caused by the bounty, the reckless generosity on display at 124. Whis-

pered to each other in the yards about fat rats, doom, and uncalled-for pride.

The disaster that struck 124 just twenty-eight days after Sethe arrived--the travel of a single moon-- was terrible but not unanticipated.

The scent of their disapproval lay heavy in the air. Baby Suggs woke to it and wondered what it was as she boiled hominy for her grandchildren. Later, as she stood in the garden, chopping at the tight soil over the roots of the pepper plants, she smelled it again. She lifted her head and looked around. Behind her and some yards to the left Sethe squatted in the pole beans. Her shoulders distorted by the greased flannel under her dress to encourage the healing of her back. Near her, in a bushel basket was the three week old girl. Baby Suggs, holy, looked up. The sky was blue and clear. Not one touch of death in the definite green of the leaves. She could hear birds and faintly, the <sup>Stream</sup> creek way down in the meadow. The puppy, Here Boy, was nursing the last bones from the party of the day before. From somewhere in the house came the voices of Buglar, Howard and the crawling girl. Nothing seemed amiss-- yet the smell of disapproval was sharp. Further off in the meadow--closer to the <sup>Stream</sup> creek, she had planted the corn. Much as they'd picked for the party, there were still ears ripening which she could see from where she stood. Baby Suggs leaned back into the peppers and the tomato vines

with her hoe. The quiet klok klok klok of wood splitting reminded her that Stamp was doing the chore he promised to the night before. She sighed at her work and, a moment later, straightened up to sniff the disapproval once again. Resting on the handle of the hoe she concentrated. She was accustomed to the knowledge that nobody prayed for her--but this free-floating repulsion was new. It wasn't white folks'--that much she could tell. So it must be colored ones. And then she knew. Her friends and neighbors were angry at her because she had over-stepped, given too much, offended them by excess. Baby closed her eyes. Perhaps they were right. Suddenly behind the disapproving odor, way back behind it, she smelled another thing. Dark and coming. Something she couldn't get at because the other odor hid it.

She squeezed her eyes tight to see what it was but all she could make out were high topped shoes she didn't like the look of.

Thwarted yet wondering, she chopped away with the hoe. What could it be? This dark and coming thing. What was left to hurt her now? News of Halle's death? No. She had been prepared for that better than she had for his life. The last of her children whom she barely glanced at when he was born because it wasn't worth the trouble to try to

learn features you would never see change into adulthood anyway. Seven times she had done that: held a little foot; examined the fat fingertips with her own--fingers she never saw become the male or female hands a mother would recognize anywhere. She didn't know to this day what their permanent teeth looked like; or how they held their heads when they walked; did TK lose her lisp? What color did TK's skin finally take? Was that a cleft in TK's chin or just a dimple that would disappear soon's his jaw bone changed? Four girls and the last time she saw them there was no hair under their arms. Does TK still love the burned bottom of bread? All seven were gone or dead. What would be the point of looking too hard at that youngest one. But for some reason they let her keep him. He was with her--everywhere.

When she hurt her hip in Carolina she was a real bargain (costing less than Halle who was ten then) for Mr. Garner who took them both to Kentucky to a farm he called Sweet Home. Because of the hip she jerked like a three-legged dog when she walked. But at Sweet Home there wasn't a rice field or indigo patch in sight, and nobody, but nobody, knocked her down. Not once. Lillian Garner called her Jenny for some reason of her own, but she never pushed, hit or called her mean names. Even when she slipped in cow dung and broke every

egg in her apron, nobody said you-black-bitch-whats-the-matter-with-you and nobody knocked her down.

Sweet Home was tiny compared to the places she had been. Mr. Garner, Mrs. Garner, her<sup>self</sup>, Halle and four boys, over half named Paul, made up the entire population. Mrs. Garner hummed when she worked; Mr. Garner acted like the world was a toy he was supposed to have fun with. Neither wanted her in the fields--Mr. Garner's boys, including Halle, did all of that--which was a blessing since she could not have managed it anyway. What she did was stand beside the humming Lillian Garner while the two of them cooked, preserved, washed, ironed, made candles, clothes, soap and cider; feed chickens, pigs, dogs and geese; milk cows, churn butter, render fat, lay a fire...Nothing to it. And nobody knocked her down.

Her hip hurt every single day--but she never spoke of it. Only Halle, who had watched her movements closely for the last four years, knew that to get in and out of bed she had to life her thigh with both hands, which was why he spoke to Mr. Garner about buying her out of there so she could sit down for a change. Sweet boy. The one person who did something hard for her: gave her his work, his life and now his children, whose voices she could just make out as she stood in the garden wondering what was the

dark and coming thing behind the scent of disapproval. Sweet Home was a marked improvement. No question. And no matter, for sadness was at her center, the desolated center where the self that was no self made its home. Sad as it was that she did not know where her children were buried or what they looked like if alive, fact was she knew more about them than she knew about her self, having never had the map to discover what she was like.

Could she sing? (Was it nice to hear when she did?) Was she pretty? Was she a good friend? Could she have been a loving mother? A faithful wife? If my mother knew me would she like me? Have I got a sister and does she favor me?

In Lillian Garner's house, excepted from the field work that broke her hip and the exhaustion that drugged her mind; in Lillian Garner's house where nobody knocked her down (or up) she listened to the white woman humming at her work; watched her face light up when Mr. Garner came in and thought "it's better here but I'm not."

Baby Suggs talked as little as she could get away with because what was there to say that the roots of her tongue could manage? So the white woman, finding her new slave help an excellent if silent worker, hummed to herself while she worked.

When Mr. Garner agreed to the arrangements with Halle, and when Halle looked like it meant more to him that she go free than anything in the world, she let herself be taken cross the river. Of the two hard things: standing on her feet till she dropped or leaving her last and probably only living son, she chose the hard thing that made him happy, and never put to him the question she put to herself: what for? What does a sixty year old slave woman who walks like a three-legged dog need freedom for? And when she stepped foot on free ground she could not believe that Halle knew what she didn't; that Halle, who had never drawn one free breath knew that there was nothing like it in this world. It scared her. Something's the matter. What's the matter? What's the matter, she asked herself. She had never seen a mirror so she didn't know what she looked like and was not interested. But suddenly she saw her hands and thought with a clarity as simple as it was dazzling "These hands belong to me. These <sup>are</sup> my hands." Next she felt a knocking in her chest and discovered something else new: her own heartbeat. Had it been there all along? This pounding thing? She felt like a fool and began to laugh out loud. Mr. Garner looked over <sup>his</sup> her shoulder at her with wide brown eyes and smiled himself. "What's funny, Jenny?"

She couldn't stop laughing. "My heart's beating," she said.

the fire.

*When* The click came ~~first~~, but Sethe didn't know what it was ~~until~~ afterwards. Leaning forward a little, Beloved hummed *while* a few notes and then sang very softly:

It was then Sethe recalled the clidk--the settling of pieces into places designed and made especially for them. No milk spilled from her cutp because her ~~and~~ hand was not shaking. She simply turned her head and looked at Beloved's profile: *the* chin, mouth, nose, forehead, copied and exaggerated in the huge shadow the fire threw on the wall behind her. *Her* Beloved's *J* hairs, which Denver had braided into twenty or thirty plats, curved toward her shoulders like arms. From where she sat Sethe could not examind it, *not* the hairline, nor *the* ~~her~~ eyebrows, ~~not~~ the lips, nor —

"All I remeber," Baby Suggs had siad "is how she loved the  
burned bottom of bread. Her little hands I wouldn't know em  
if they slapped me."

the birthmark, nor the color of the gums, the shape of  
her ears, nor —

"Here. Look here. This is your' ma'am. If you cannot tell me by my face, look here."

the fingers, nor *their nails, nor even —*

But there would be time. The click <sup>had</sup> and clicked; things

it was clear  
as day light:  
that the clock  
came at the  
very beginning  
A beat, almost,  
before it started  
before she wrote  
notes  
before she  
he wrote  
began

by this:

W

were where they ought to be or poised and ready  
to glide in.

"I made that song up," said Sethe. "I made it up  
and sang it to my children. NObody knows that song but  
me and my children."

Beloved turned to look at Sethe. "I know it."

The old man headed for the porch.

She heard, all right, but there was no sound.

She heard, all right, but there was no sound.

Try this:

As Sethe <sup>claimed</sup> <sup>worked</sup> her way <sup>out of</sup> into a closed past <sup>in order to get rid of the future</sup> Stamp Paid fought fatigue and a lifetime habit to knock on her door

shut herself up in a timeless present

fought fatigue and the habit of a lifetime, ~~to knock on her door.~~

BaBY Suggs refused to go to the Clearing because there was nothing left to hope for--they had won. Stamp, <sup>ared</sup> clutching the ribbon, he refused to acknowledge <sup>that any such</sup> victory. Baby had no back door;

he <sup>tried</sup> refused to knock on ~~any door~~ the one she had: the one that <sup>was suppose to</sup>

~~was~~ opened at his step or holler; the one, like all the doors of black people, was his to enter when he pleased.

He clutched <sup>the</sup> ~~ten~~ ribbon for strength and changed. <sup>he banged</sup> Softly at first, then harder. Furiously at the last--disbelieving it could happen.

<sup>the door of</sup> That a lit house, with people in it did not fly open in his presence. He went to the window, <sup>and wanted to cry.</sup> and looked in. Sure enough there they were, not a one of them heading for the door.

The old man headed for home worrying a scrap of ribbon to shreds.

She heard, all right, but there was no entry now. <sup>She has all</sup> ~~she~~ got the news, <sup>she wanted her own</sup> she thought the good news. <sup>She didn't want any</sup> I don't want ~~no~~ more. <sup>There would be no more.</sup>

<sup>around the house</sup> Some of the clamoring voices were not <sup>eager</sup> anxious to be heard by him; <sup>or cphered</sup>

<sup>They</sup> ~~some~~ belonged to the women of 124. Their unspeakable thoughts, unspoken.

Now he listen to these voices heaved.

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but one word came through: insistent-haity mine

As Sethe beat her way out of a closed past in order to shut herself up in a timeless present, Stamp Paid fought fatigue and the habit of a lifetime. <sup>to find her</sup> Baby Suggs refused to go the the Clearing because she believed they had won; <sup>50</sup> he refused to acknowledge any such victory. Baby had no back door; he tried to knock on the one she had: the one that was supposed to open at his step or holler; the one, like all the doors of black people, <sup>that</sup> was his to enter when he pleased. He clutched the red ribbon in his pocket for strength and changed the habit of a lifetime. Softly at first, then harder. AT the last he ~~gxxx~~ banged furiously--disbelieving it could happen. ~~That~~ the door of a lit house with people in it did not fly open in his presence. He went to the window and wanted to cry. Sure enough ~~they were there~~ there they were, not a one of them heading for the door.

She heard all ~~xx~~ right, but there was no entry <sup>now</sup>. She had all the news she wanted: her own good news. There would be no more.

The old man headed for home worrying <sup>his</sup> a scrap of ribbon to shreds. <sup>Although this time</sup> The voices ~~around him~~ <sup>which he</sup> clamoring around the house could not be ciphered by him, <sup>but</sup> one word <sup>did come to him</sup> came through: insistent and hasty--mine--mine--mine--mine. <sup>Suddenly</sup> Stamp Paid knew <sup>that</sup> ~~now to them~~ these voices ~~belonged~~ <sup>belonged</sup> to the women of 124. Their unspeakable thoughts - spoken.

Not the  
were the shouts of  
did not belong  
to the  
angry dead.  
the belonged

as he walked through the  
un<sup>de</sup>cipherable ~~voices~~ ~~sentences~~ language  
clamoring around the

house one single  
word came through to him

Then he knew there were  
Not at all the ~~voices~~ shouts of the  
Angry dead, ~~the voices~~  
They were the Thoughts &

1  
As Sethe beat her way out of a closed past in order to shut herself up in a timeless present, Stamp Paid fought fatigue and the habit of a lifetime to find her. Baby Suggs refused to go to the Clearing because she believed they had won; he refused to acknowledge any such victory. Baby had no back door; so he tried to knock on the one she did have, the one that was supposed to open at his step or holler. He clutched the red ribbon in his pocket for strength and changed the habit of lifetime. Softly at first, then harder. At the last he banged furiously--disbelieving it could happen. That the door of a lit house with people in it did not fly open in his presence. He went to the window and wanted to cry. ~~SURE~~ Sure enough there they were, not a one of them heading for the door.

← She heard all right, but there was no entry now. She had all the news she wanted: her own good news. There would be no more.

2  
← The old man turned and went down the steps, worrying his scrap of ribbon to shreds. <sup>the last</sup> This time ~~as~~ he walked through the undescipherable language clamoring aound the house, one single word <sup>had come</sup> ~~came~~ through to him, <sup>hasty and insistent.</sup> MINE--mine--mine--mine. <sup>Now</sup> ~~Then~~ he knew these were not at all the shouts of the angry dead. They were the thoughts of the women of 124, Their unspeakable thoughts--<sup>un-</sup>spoken.

re-place  
just before  
3 monologues

TR. <sup>3</sup>  
TO VOICES  
after Ella

The last time he walked through the undesipherable language clamoring around the house, he se

when Stamp <sup>two</sup>  
After he saw the ~~three~~ backs through the window and then walked down the steps and through the undecipherable language clamoring around the house, it seemed to him that one single word had come through to him--insistent and hasty. "Mine--mine--mine--mine." Stamp Paid was ~~convinced~~ <sup>he believed they were</sup> now that those were not at all the shouts of the angry dead. <sup>He was in error</sup> They were the thoughts of the women of 124, their unspeakable thoughts--unspoken.

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Cherry 1279  
insist at top

Seth:

Beloved is my daughter. She <sup>she's mine</sup> ~~has~~ <sup>came</sup> come back to me. ~~I~~ <sup>didn't have time</sup> ~~order~~ for me to explain. I ~~was not able to explain~~ <sup>before</sup> because it had to be done so fast. She had to be safe and I put her where she could be. But my love was strong and now <sup>she's back. I knew she would</sup> ~~it is rewarded. She has come back here to~~ ~~me and to this house where she made her presence felt so~~ long. Paul D ran her away and she had no choice but to ~~exert~~ <sup>come back</sup> a strong effort ~~and return~~ to me in the flesh. <sup>Maybe</sup> ~~Perhaps~~ Baby Suggs, who is there now, on the other side, helped, ~~this thing to happen.~~ <sup>won't</sup> I ~~will~~ never let her go. I ~~will~~ <sup>even though I ain't got to</sup> explain to her <sup>why</sup> why I did it; that if I had ~~not~~ <sup>nt</sup> killed her she would have died and that is ~~something~~ <sup>When I</sup> I could not bear to happen to her. So ~~I will~~ explain it to her ~~and~~ she ~~will~~ <sup>will</sup> understand. I ~~will~~ <sup>will</sup> tend her as no mother ever tended a child, a daughter. No one will ~~have~~, ever <sup>get</sup> ~~have~~ my milk but my own. <sup>any more</sup> ~~I have~~ <sup>children</sup> never had to give my milk to ~~another~~ <sup>anybody else</sup> -the one time I did it was forced from me; they held me down and took it. Took the milk that belonged to Beloved. Nan had to nurse little white babies and me as well because my own mother was in the rice. The little ~~white~~ babies got it first and I got what was left. Or none. There was no nursing milk to call my own. I know what it is to be without the milk that belongs to you; to have to fight and scream for it; and have so little left.

of her own free will  
and I don't have to ex-  
plain a thing.

~~I knew she would~~

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111 *about that*

(Insert) I ~~will~~ tell Beloved ~~this~~ . She is my daughter the one I managed to have milk for and to get it to her even after they stole it; after they handled me as though I was the cow or the goat back behind the stable because it was too nasty to stay in with the horses. She is my daughter, Beloved. She is mine.

the woman with ... m) the face that the word she had paid so high a price for--carved on the gravestone in the Negro cemetery was also this girl's name clung to it. Had not her water broken, so to speak, the minute she laid eyes on her? Hadn't the sun erased her face until the waters broke? And then her face. Her dark lovely face had more than a hint of what her crawling already girl would certainly look like. Didn't the cup after cup of water she drank prove and connect to the fact that she missed the clear spit she had dribbled into her mother's face the very day she got to 124. Most important, wasn't her devotion as devoted as a baby's?

*I would have known that*

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(Insert)

Sethe believed Beloved was her own. She was the age that child would be now if she had lived--if she had not had to find a safe place for her to keep schoolteacher from getting her. Nevermind her given name was Nan (after the woman with half an m) the face that the word she had paid so high a price for--carved on the gravestone in the Negro cemetery was also this girl's name clinched it. Had not her water broken, so to speak, the minute she laid eyes on her? Hadn't the sun erased her face untill the waters broke? And then her face. Her dark lovely face had more than a hint of what her crawling already girl would certainly look like. Didn't the cup after cup of water she drank prove and connect to the fact that she missed the clear spit she had dribbled into her mother's face the very day she got to 124. } Most important, wasn't her devotion as devoted as a baby's? }

*I would have known <sup>right off</sup> but*

*272*

*290*

The plan was a good one, but when it came time, I was big with Denver. So we changed it a little. A little. Just enough to butter Halle's face, so Paul D tells me, and make Sixo laugh at last.

But I got you out, baby. And the boys too. When the signal for the train come, you all was the only ones ready. I couldn't find Halle, Sixo was burned up. Paul D was tied at night. So I sent you all to the wagon with the woman who waited in the corn. Ha ha. No note book for my babies and no measuring string neither. What came later I got through because of you, because only me had your milk and God do what He would, I was going to get it to you. You remember, don't you, that I did?

One more <sup>curve in the road</sup> ~~rising~~ and Sethe <sup>could</sup> ~~would~~ see <sup>her</sup> ~~the~~ chimney; <sup>it was not</sup> ~~not~~ only-looking anymore. The ribbon of smoke ~~coming from it~~ was from a fire that warmed a body returned to her--just like it never went away, never needed a headstone. And the heart that beat inside it had not for a single moment stopped.

She was surprised not to see Beloved coming toward her as she always did. Surprised but not alarmed. And she didn't hear anything unusual as she entered her yard. Simply her tread over harden<sup>e</sup>d snow, her own breathing. ~~Nothing of what Stamp Paid heard.~~ She opened her door, walked in and shut it <sup>right</sup> behind her.

page  
Break If the night <sup>Patta</sup> ~~when~~ Stamp saw the two backs through the window and then walked down the steps <sup>he believed</sup> ~~and through~~ the undecipherable language clamoring around the house, <sup>black and</sup> ~~he believed they were~~ the shouts of the angry dead. He was in error: they were the

Red Gums ready for their sweet white blood. In a way, they were right. The more colored people tried to convince them how gentle they were, how clever and loving, how like <sup>the</sup> whites, the more they spent their strength pursuing an entering persuading whites of some thing they themselves believed could not be questioned (but since it was, they ~~had~~ <sup>deeper, more tangled</sup> ~~had~~ <sup>grown</sup> the jungle grew inside, ~~although~~ <sup>But</sup> it wasn't the

Very few had died in bed like Baby Suggs, and none that he knew of, including Baby, had lived a livable life. Even the educated colored: The <sup>long-school</sup> ~~college~~ people, the doctors, the teachers, <sup>and business men</sup> <sup>In addition</sup> the paper writers <sup>had a hand</sup> <sup>to</sup> row to hoe, ~~spending~~ <sup>instead of</sup> their heads to get ahead. They had the weight of the whole race <sup>sitting</sup> <sup>there</sup> ~~to pull~~ ~~to~~ ~~think~~ ~~about~~, You needed two heads for that.

White people believed that whatever the manners, under every dark skin was a jungle, some <sup>swift</sup> unavigable <sup>waters</sup> <sup>made</sup> <sup>short</sup> <sup>red</sup> swales, gums, <sup>with</sup> human blood.

jungle ~~the~~ blacks brought with them to this place from the other. it was the ~~jungle~~ white folks ~~planted~~ <sup>in them</sup>

(a livable place)

watered and fed in them. ~~And~~ It grew. It spread. ~~(IN)~~ Baby and ~~and~~ after life, it spread.

untill it entangled the whites who had  
made it. Touched them everyone, changed  
and altered them. Made them sly,  
~~and~~ worse than they wanted to be.  
meaner, ~~more~~ <sup>so</sup> scared were they of the  
jungle they ~~had~~ made.

And when that word was over  
and little girls came for their  
ribbons nothing would protect  
them from the (traceters)  
jungle they had made. For the

it was ~~these~~ <sup>their own</sup> red  
were ~~they would~~ <sup>they</sup> ~~sleeping~~  
gums ~~the snakes~~ <sup>the snakes</sup> ~~and~~  
slept in their own ~~snakes~~

~~These they would be changed by their~~

Maintenance, the secret whiteman  
Spread of this new kind of jungle  
except was - hidden - silent - except was

thoughts of the women of 124, their unspeakable thoughts--  
unspoken.

a while when you could hear the mumbling in places like 124

When S. P. abandoned his  
effort, after the pain of knocking  
and not being <sup>gaining</sup> ~~granted~~ entrance,

124 was left to its own  
devices, <sup>When Seth</sup> ~~free, so to speak,~~  
'shut the door <sup>free</sup>

~~to~~ The women inside, happy  
at last, could think what they  
liked, ~~be what they liked.~~

See what <sup>ever</sup> ~~they~~ they saw and  
say whatever was on their  
tall it by ~~its~~ name.

minds. Almost. Among the  
voices surrounding ~~124~~ <sup>the hallway</sup> ~~there~~

~~the three~~ <sup>undecipherable to</sup>

Stamp Paid, were  
the thoughts of the women  
of 124, unrepeatable  
thoughts unspoken.

Wait'll

She'll understand.

I ~~will~~ tell Beloved about that. She's my daughter. The one I managed to have milk for and to get it to her even after they stole it; after they handled me as though I was the cow ~~NO~~ ~~or~~ the goat, back behind the stable because it was too nasty to stay in with the horses.

Here ①

Now

because ~~if~~

She's back ~~now~~ and I can look at things again ~~since~~ ~~she~~ ~~is~~ here to see them too. After the shed, I stopped. Now, in the morning when I light the fire I mean to look out the window to see what the sun is doing to the day. Does it hit the pump handle first or the spicket? ~~Whether~~ <sup>See if</sup> the grass is gray-green or brown or what. Now I know why Baby Suggs pondered color her last years. She never had time to see, let alone enjoy, it before. It took her a long time to finish with blue, then yellow, then green. She was well into pink when she died. I don't believe she wanted to get to red and I understand why because me and Beloved outdid ourselves with it. Matter of fact, that and her pinkish headstone was the last color ~~I~~ I remember. Now I'll be on the lookout. Think what Spring will be for us! I'll plant carrots just so she can see them, and turnips. Have you ever seen one, baby? A prettier thing God never made. White and purple with a tender tail and a hard head. Feels good when you hold it in your hand and smells like the creek when it floods, bitter but happy. We'll smell them together, Beloved. Beloved. Because

you are mine and I have to show you these things, and teach you what a mother should. Here (2)

I would have known at once who you were when my water broke. The minute I saw you sitting on the stump, it broke. I would have known right away when the sun blotted out your face the way it did when I took you to the grape arbor.

And when I did see your face it had more than a hint of what you would look like after all these years. I would have known who you were right away because the cup after cup of water you drank proved and connected to the fact that you dribbled clear spit into my face the day I got to 124. I would have know<sup>n</sup> right off, but Paul D distracted me. Seems to me he wanted you out <sup>from the beginning</sup> ~~right then~~, but I wouldn't let him. What you think? And look how he ran when he found out about me and you in the shed. Too tough for him to listen to. Too thick, he said. My love was too thick. What he know about it? Who<sup>is</sup> in the world he willing to die for? Would he give his sex to a stranger in return for a carving? Some other way, he said. There must have been some other way. Let schoolteacher haul us away, I guess, to measure your behind before he tore it up. I have felt what it felt like and nobody walking or stretched out is going to make you feel it too. Not you, not none of mine, and when I tell you you mine, I also mean I'm yours. I wouldn't draw breath without my children. I told Baby Suggs that and she got down on her knees to beg God's pardon for me. Still, it's so. My plan

Denver:

Beloved is my sister. I <sup>swallowed</sup> have tasted her blood right along with my mother's milk. <sup>took</sup> It was the killing of her that <sup>thing from me but</sup> deprived me of her and deprived me also of every single other thing besides my mother. In my loneliness and solitude I had no friend my size <sup>besides</sup> other than her: Beloved. She haunted <sup>our</sup> this house and me, The first thing I heard after <sup>Not hearing anything</sup> two years of deafness was the sound of her crawling up the stairs. She <sup>was</sup> <sup>girl</sup> <sup>always</sup> has been my company, my friend, my <sup>society</sup> ever since. Until Paul D came and <sup>throw her out</sup> she left me. <sup>Just</sup> Like my mother, <sup>he</sup> he killed her too; <sup>My sister</sup> <sup>is</sup> <sup>she was my friend</sup> killed the ghost that was her <sup>presence</sup> in <sup>this</sup> house. I love my mother but I know she killed one of her <sup>own</sup> daughters and tender as she is with me, I <sup>I'm scared</sup> am afraid of her, <sup>because of it</sup>. Because there is something in her that makes it all right to kill her own. <sup>all the time, always I'm</sup> I am afraid, <sup>all right</sup> that the thing that happened which made it <sup>necessary</sup> for my mother to kill my sister <sup>could</sup> will happen again. I don't know what it is; I don't know who it is, but <sup>maybe</sup> there is something <sup>else</sup> so terrible it <sup>enough to</sup> can make my mother do it again I need to know what that thing is. <sup>whatever it</sup> All I know is <sup>that</sup> it comes from outside this house; outside this yard. so I <sup>will</sup> never leave this house I <sup>will</sup> never leave this yard, and then it cannot happen again and my mother <sup>won't</sup> will not have to kill me too The one time I left this house, with her, my mother and with him Paul D when we came back I thought the house would be

273 271 294

without  
the same: empty ~~of~~ my dead sister my only friend. But no.  
When I came back to this house, there she was. Beloved.  
Waiting for me. Tired from her long journey back. Ready  
to be taken care of, ready for me to take care of and to  
protect <sup>her</sup> from my mother. ~~She is beautiful. Beloved,~~ and I  
have to <sup>Keep</sup> ~~have~~ her. She is mine

I have to protect Beloved

This time  
I have to  
keep my  
mother ~~away~~  
from her.  
That's hard  
but I have to  
~~protect~~  
she's my friend.  
(over)

271/292  
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mam

*my mother*  
I have seen ~~her~~ in a  
dark place, with  
scratching noises.  
~~Something~~ A smell  
coming from her dress

I have been with her  
there. Something little  
watched us from the  
corners of the place.  
And touched. Sometimes  
they touched.

DENVER

Beloved is my sister. I swallowed her blood right along with my mother's milk. Killing her took everything from me but my mother. I had no friend my size besides her, Beloved. She haunted our house and me. The first thing I heard after not hearing anything was the sound of her crawling up the stairs. She was my company, my girl friend, always until Paul D came <sup>he</sup> and threw her out. Just like my mother, he killed her too and she was my friend in this house. I love my mother but I know she killed one of her own daughters and tender as she is with me, I'm scared of her because of it. There's something in her that makes it all right to kill her own. All the time, I'm afraid the thing that happened which made it all right for my mother to kill my sister could happen again. I don't know what it is; I don't know who it is, but maybe there is something else terrible enough to make my mother do it again. I need to know what that thing might be. Whatever it is, it comes from outside this house; outside this yard. So I never leave this house. I never leave this yard, so it can't happen again and my mother won't have to kill me too.

Not since Miss Lady's school have I left 124 by myself. The one time I left this house, with her, my mother and with him, Paul D, <sup>went too and</sup> when we came back I thought the house would be except that once to see Baby Suggs put down next to Beloved. <sup>my sister</sup> She's my sister.

And she helped me wait for my daddy. She waited with me. I waited for.

Ever since I was little she was my company

Never. The only times I didn't leave two times - I was with

~~the same:~~ empty, without my sister my one friend. But no.

When I came back to this house, there she was. Beloved.

Waiting for me. Tired from her long journey back. Ready to be taken care of; ready for me to take care of and to pro-

tect ~~her from my mother~~. This time I have to keep my mother away from her. That's hard, but I have to. It's all on me.

I [have seen] my mother in a dark place, with scratching noises.

A smell coming from her dress. I have been with her where something little watched us from the corners [of the place.]

And touched. Sometimes they touched. I didn't remember it

for a long time until ~~Lord~~ <sup>that boy</sup> made me ~~remember it~~.

I asked her if it was true but couldn't hear what she said and there was no point in going back to Miss Lady's if you couldn't hear

what anybody said. ~~Lasted a long time and~~ <sup>so quiet.</sup> made me have to read faces and learn how to figure out what people were thinking

so I didn't need to hear what they said. That's how come

me and Beloved could play together. Not talking. On the

porch. By the creek. In the secret house. ~~Don't worry~~. It's ~~all~~

all one <sup>I</sup> me, but she can count on me. You ~~know~~, I thought she

was trying to kill her that day in the Clearing ~~because she~~

~~killed her~~ <sup>back.</sup> But then she kissed her neck. And I have to

warn her about that. Don't love her too much. Don't. Maybe

it's still in her the thing that makes it all right to kill

her children. I have to tell her. I have to protect her. ^

I have to keep her. She <sup>is</sup> mine. <sup>end.</sup>

By the end of the day  
I had not the time to write

the same empty, without my sister my one friend. But no.  
When I came back to this home, there she was. Beloved.  
Waiting for me. Tired from her long journey back. Ready to  
be taken care of; ready for me to take care of and help-  
feel from my mother. This time I have to keep my mother  
away from her. That's hard, but I have to. It's all on me.  
I have seen my mother in a dark place, with comforting noises.  
A small coming from her. I have kept with her where  
something little watched us from the corners of the place.  
And touched. Sometimes they touched. I didn't remember it.  
for a long time until now. I made me remember it. I asked  
her if it was true but couldn't hear what she said and there  
was a sound in going back to my mother. I couldn't hear  
what anybody said. I have to have to read  
faces and learn how to figure out what people were thinking  
so I didn't need to hear what they said. I have to know  
me and Beloved could play together. Not talking. On the  
porch. By the creek. In the secret. Don't worry. It's all  
all out me, but she's on me. I thought she  
was trying to kill her that day. I thought she  
killed her. I thought she had her. I thought she  
wasn't. I thought she was too much. Don't. Maybe  
it's still in her. I have to right to kill  
her children. I have to protect her. I  
I have to keep her. She's mine.

~~And~~ I do. Love her

I do. She's mine

She played with  
me and always  
came to see with me  
when ever I  
needed her

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Bylan and Howard  
told me she would and she does.

Every night.

storey house up like a cabin where you cook inside. She said  
She cut my head off every night. Her pretty eyes looking at  
me like I was a stranger. Kind. Not mean but like I was  
somebody she found. <sup>and felt sorry for. Like</sup> She didn't want to do it but she had to  
and it wasn't going to hurt. It was just a thing grown-up  
people do--like pull a splinter out your hand ; touch the  
corner of a handkerchief in your eye if you get a cinder in  
it. <sup>She would look over at B. and. H. - see if they were all right.</sup> I knew she <sup>will</sup> be good at it, careful. That when  
she cut <sup>it</sup> off, it <sup>will</sup> be done right. ~~And it was and~~ <sup>then she'd</sup>  
~~I felt good about that.~~ <sup>I won't hurt. After she does it.</sup> I lay there for a minute with just  
my head. Then she would carry <sup>to</sup> it downstairs and braid my hair.  
<sup>I try not</sup> ~~she~~ <sup>but</sup> ~~finishes~~ to cry ~~because~~ it hurts so much to comb it. When she  
finishes the combing and starts the braiding I get sleepy. I  
want to go to sleep, but I know if I do I won't wake up. So  
I have to stay awake while she finishes my hair. Then I can sleep.  
~~The only place she can't get to me in the night~~ The scary part is waiting  
for her to come in and do it. Not when she does it, but when I  
wait for her to. Only place she can't get to me in the night  
is Grandma Baby's room. ~~Downstairs.~~ <sup>we</sup> The room <sup>upstairs</sup> I sleep in <sup>used to</sup>  
be where the help slept when white people lived here. They had a  
~~cook~~ <sup>too</sup> kitchen outside, but Grandma Baby turned it into a wood shed  
and tool room when she moved in. And she boarded up the back door  
that led to <sup>the kitchen</sup> it <sup>because</sup> she said she didn't want to make that  
journey no more. She built around it to make a store room, so  
if you want to get in this house (124) you have to come by her.

Said she didn't care what folks said about her fixing a two-

it was Paul B and he didn't come for me; he wanted her, na'ah.

my daddy was coming  
for me

storey house up like a cabin where you cook inside. She said  
they told her visitors with nice dresses don't want to sit in the  
same room with the cook stove and the peelings and the grease and  
the smoke. She wouldn't pay them no mind, she said. ~~I was safe~~  
at night in there with her. All I could hear was me breathing  
~~in my head~~ but sometimes in the day I couldn't tell whether  
it was me breathing or somebody next to me. I used to watch Here  
Boy's stomach go in and out, <sup>in and out</sup> to see if it matched mine, holding  
my breath to get off his rhythm, releasing it to get on. Just  
to see if that sound like when you blow soft in a bottle only  
regular, regular. Am I making that sound? Who is? ~~Grandma~~  
~~BABy~~ That was when everything <sup>body</sup> was quiet and I couldn't  
hear what <sup>they</sup> people said. ~~I didn't care either because~~ <sup>quiet let me</sup>  
~~before kept me from dreaming my daddy.~~ <sup>dream my daddy better</sup> I always knew he was  
coming. Something <sup>was holding</sup> held him up. He had a problem with the horse.  
The river flooded; the boat sank and he had to make <sup>a new one.</sup> another. Sometimes  
it was a volcano or a windstorm. He was coming and it was a  
secret. I spent all of my outside self loving ma'am so she wouldn't  
kill me ~~and~~ loving her even when she braided my head at night. I  
never let her know <sup>the secret.</sup> That I ~~didn't~~ love anybody but  
my father (and Beloved, but he's her father too. ~~The three of us~~  
~~should be together.~~) <sup>Once</sup> Grandma BABy thought he was coming, too.  
For a long time she thought so, then she stopped. I never did.  
~~Except for the time Paul D came in here.~~ <sup>Even when Buller and Howard ran away.</sup> I heard his voice down  
stairs, and ma'am laughing, so I thought it was him, my daddy.  
Nobody else ever came in this house, but when I got downstairs  
it was Paul D and he didn't come for me; he wanted her, ma'am.

My daddy was coming  
for me

Then he wanted  
my sister too.

~~Next~~ was me, I guess  
but she got ~~rid of~~ him out of here  
and I'm so ~~happy~~  
he's gone.

Now it's just us. and I  
can protect her till my daddy  
gets here and he ~~can~~ watch  
~~out~~ <sup>out</sup> ~~ma'am~~ <sup>what</sup> anything come in  
and the yard.

My daddy do anything for runny fried eggs. Dip his bread in it. Grandma used to tell me <sup>his</sup> things, ~~about him~~. She said anytime she could make him a plate <sup>of soft fried eggs</sup> was Christmas, made him so happy. She said she was always a little scared of my daddy. He was too good, she said, for the world from the beginning. Scared her. She thought he'll never make it through nothing. Whitepeople must have thought so too, because they never got split up. So she got the chance to know him, look after him and he scared her the way he loved things. Animals and tools and crops and the alphabet. He could count on paper. The boys taught him. Offered to teach the other boys but only my daddy wanted <sup>it</sup> ~~ti~~. She said the other boys ~~that worked there~~ said no. One of them, with a number for a name, said it would change his mind. Make him forget things he shouldn't and memorize things he shouldn't and he didn't want his mind messed up. But my daddy said, if you can't count, they can cheat you. If you can't read they can beat you. They thought that was funny. Grandma said she didn't know, but it was because <sup>my</sup> daddy could figure he bought her away from there. And she said she always wished she could read the Bible like real preachers. So it was good for me to learn how, and I did until it got quiet and all I could hear was my own breathing and one other who knocked over the milk jug while it was sitting on the table. Nobody near it. Ma'am whipped Buglar but he didn't touch it. Then it messed up all the ironed clothes and put its hands in the cake. Look like I was the only one who knew right away who it was.

My daddy was an angel man. He could look at you and tell where you hurt and he could fix it too. He made a hanging thing

for Grandma Baby, so she could pull herself up from the floor, <sup>when she woke up in</sup> the morning, and he made a step so when she stood up she was level. Garndma BABY said she was always afraid a white man w<sup>ould</sup> knock her down. She behaved and did everything right in front of her children ~~because~~ <sup>because</sup> because she didn't want them to see her knocked down. She said it made children crazy to see that. At Sweet Home nobody did or said they would. <sup>So</sup> My daddy, Halle, never saw it there and never went crazy and even now could be trying to get here. If Paul D could to it, my daddy could too. Angel man. The three of us should be together. Me, him and Beloved. Ma'am could go off with Paul D, if she wanted to. Unless daddy wanted her himself, but I don't think he would now, since she been with Paul D. Grandma Baby said people look down on her because she had eight children with different men. Colored people and white people <sup>both</sup> look down her for that. Slaves not supposed to have pleasurable feelings on their own; their bodies not supposed to be like that, but they have to have as many children as they can to be worth something to whoever owned them, <sup>but</sup> they <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ not supposed to have pleasure deep down. Nobody should. She said not to listen to all that. That I should always listen to my body and make sure I took responsibility for whatever my body felt. ~~And she was in the secret house.~~ The secret house. When she died I went there. Ma'am wouldn't let me go outside and eat with the others. <sup>WE</sup> ~~A~~ stayed inside. That hurt. I know <sup>Grandma</sup> she would have liked the party and the people who came to it, because she got <sup>low</sup> ~~very lonely~~ not seeing anybody or going anywhere just greiving and thnking how she made a mistake ; that what she thought about what the heart and the body could do

was wrong. The white people came anyway. In her yard.

She had done everything right and they came in her yard. <sup>anyway</sup>

So she didn't know what to think for a long time. ~~I think~~  
she figured it out before she died.

Her heart broke in two, and she didn't mind  
saying so. She told me a lot. His things.  
And After the cake was ~~smashed~~ <sup>ruined</sup> and

the iron clothes all messed up.

And I was the one heard her  
crawling. She told me ~~my~~ <sup>my</sup> things.

That I was charmed. That my birth  
was, ~~and~~ I got saved all the time

And that I shouldn't be afraid  
of the ghost ~~because~~ <sup>wouldn't hurt</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>me</sup>.

because I ~~looked~~ <sup>tasted</sup> the blood when  
Ma'am nursed me; (that it was

after Ma'am and her too far not  
doing any thing to stop it). So, <sup>when</sup> ~~right~~

a man came and it wasn't my daddy  
but somebody for her and I didn't have

Nobody for me, Beloved came and  
it's my responsibility to protect her.

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15

sung along. Loud, something loud and rolling to go with Sixo's tune, but the words put him off--he didn't understand the words, although it shouldn't have mattered because he understood the sound: hatred so loose it was juba. The warm sprinkle came and went, came and went. He thought he heard sobbing that seemed to come from Mrs. Garner's window, but it could have been anything, anyone, even a she cat making her yearning known. Tired of holding his head up, he let his chin rest on the ~~iron~~ collar and speculated on how he could hobble over to the grate, boil a little water and throw in a handful of meal. That's what he was doing when Sethe came in, rain-wet and big-bellied saying she was going to cut. She had just come back from taking her children to the corn. <sup>The whites</sup> ~~Nobody~~ <sup>were not</sup> ~~was~~ around. She couldn't find Halle. Who was caught? Did Sixo get away? Paul ~~A?~~

He told her what he knew: Sixo was dead; the 30-mile woman ran, and he didn't know what happened to Paul ~~A~~ or Halle. Sethe's dress steams before the little fire over which he is boiling water. It is hard to move about with shackled ankles and the neck jewelry embarrasses him. <sup>In his shame</sup> ~~He~~ avoids her eyes, but when he doesn't he sees only black in them--no whites. She says she is going, and he thinks she will never make it to the gate, but he doesn't dissuade her. He knows he will never see her again, and right then and there his heart stopped.

→ The pupils must have taken her to the barn for sport right afterwards, and when she told Mrs. Garner, they took down the cowhide. Who in hell or on this earth would have thought that

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335

22 30 32 34

There wasn't  
a piece of clothing in the house  
that didn't sag on her

124 was quiet. Denver, who knew all about silence, was surprised to learn hunger could do that: sit you down and wear you out. Neither Sethe or Beloved knew it or cared about it one way or another. They were too busy ~~spending the little energy they had~~ fighting each other with their eyes. So it was she who had to step off the edge of the world and die because if she didn't, they all would. The flesh between her mother's forefinger and thumb was thin as silk, and although <sup>she</sup> held her head up with the palms of her hands and <sup>and</sup> slept wherever she whined for sweets, Beloved was getting bigger, plumper, she whined all the ~~time~~ <sup>by the day</sup> for sweets. Everything was gone except two laying hens, and <sup>somebody</sup> she would soon have to decide whether ~~six~~ <sup>an</sup> egg ~~every now and then~~ or ten eggs a month was worth more than two fried chickens and be done with it. The hungrier they got the weaker; the weaker they got the quieter they were--which was better than the furious arguments, the poker slammed up against the wall, all the <sup>shouting and crying</sup> loud screaming that followed that one <sup>happy</sup> month of happiness when they played. Denver had joined in the play, but <sup>holding</sup> held back a bit out of habit, even though it was the most fun she had ever known. <sup>But</sup> Once Sethe had seen the scar, the tip of which Denver had been looking at every night <sup>as</sup> when Beloved slept <sup>of</sup> the little curved shadow ~~like~~ a smile in the kootchy-kootchy coo place under her chin,-- once Sethe saw it, fingered it and closed her eyes for a long time, the <sup>two</sup> ~~two~~ of them cut Denver out of their games. The cooking

she happened to be although she was

games, the <sup>sewing</sup> ~~sweing~~ games, the hair and clothing games. Games her mother loved so well she took to going to work later and later each day <sup>un</sup> till the predictable happened: Sawyer told her not to come back. And instead of looking for another job, Sethe played all the harder, with Beloved who never got enough of anything: old lullabies, new stitches, the bottom of the cake bowl, the top of the milk. If the hen had only two eggs, she got both. It was as though her mother had lost her mind, like Grandma Baby calling for pink and not doing the things she used to. But different, <sup>unlike Baby Suggs,</sup> ~~too~~, because she cut Denver <sup>completely</sup> ~~out altogether~~.

At first they played <sup>all together</sup> ~~together~~ one whole month and Denver loved it. <sup>From</sup> The night they ice skated under a star-loaded sky and drank sweet milk by the stove, <sup>to</sup> The string puzzles Sethe did for them in afternoon light and shadow pictures [when it got dark.] <sup>the teeth of</sup> ~~It was still~~ winter and Sethe, her eyes fever bright, was plotting a garden of vegetables and flowers-- talking, talking about how it would be. She played with Beloved's hair, braiding, puffing, <sup>tying</sup> ~~tying~~, oiling it until it made Denver sick (angry?) to watch her. They changed beds and exchanged clothes. Walked arm in arm and smiled all the time. When the weather broke, they were on thier knees in the back yard ~~disigning~~ a garden in dirt too hard to chop. The ~~thirty~~ <sup>thirty</sup>-eight dollars of life savings went to feed themselves with fancy food and decorate them= selves with ribbon and dress goods which Sethe cut and sewed

in the gloaming

like they were going somewhere in a hurry. Bright <sup>walked the four miles to the city</sup> to buy cloth--stripes and prints. She ~~bought~~ <sup>the three of them</sup> ribbon, buttons, and bits of lace. By the end of March they all looked like carnival women with nothing to do.

~~Denver~~ <sup>Denver began to drift from the play</sup> ~~She played with them,~~ but she watched ~~too,~~ <sup>it</sup> alert for any sign that Beloved was in danger, but, finally, convinced there was none, and, seeing her mother that happy, that smiling--how could it go wrong?--she let down her guard and ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> did. Her problem at first was trying to find out who was to blame? Her eye was on her mother, for a signal that the thing that was in her was out and she would kill again. But it was Beloved who made demands. Anything she wanted she got and when Sethe ran out of things, <sup>to give her</sup> Beloved invented desire. For hours she wanted <sup>at them from</sup> ~~her~~ <sup>Sethe's</sup> company to watch the layer of brown leaves waving <sup>in the</sup> bottom of the creek. As soon as the thaw was complete, <sup>Beloved</sup> she gazed at her gazing face, rippling, folding, spreading, disappearing into the leaves below. She flattened herself on the ground, dirtying her bold stripes, and touched the rocking face <sup>s</sup> with her own. Dressed in Sethe's dresses she ~~touched~~ <sup>stroked</sup> her ~~face~~ <sup>SKIN</sup> with the palm of her hand. ~~Or~~ <sup>or</sup> she filled basket after basket with the first things warmer weather let loose in the ground, presenting them to Sethe who arranged them, stuck them, wound them all over the house. She imitated Sethe, talked <sup>to</sup> the way she did, ~~laughed~~ <sup>laughed</sup> her laugh and used her body the same way, down to the walk, the way Sethe moved her hands, sighed through

same  
In the place ~~where~~, as a little girl,  
Denver played in the  
silence with her invisible sisters  
Now the players were altered.

Dragon  
thin, 4  
Cra

Over the

over at our place

1 of the  
made

I have from  
 of these from  
 between  
~~between~~

~~Albion~~  
De Haven

but save nothing  
for you / a Feb  
week at the

and they."

~~closed~~ closed. now.  
would have

[illegible]

~~Handwritten scribbles~~

13

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25

"Last August. Day of the carnival."

"That's a bad sign. Was she at the carnival?"

"No. When we got back, there she was--sleep on a stump. Silk dress. Brand new shoes. Black as oil."

that rescue was in order. Whatever Sethe had done--they couldn't allow past errors to take possession of the present.

Sethe's grime was staggering and her pride outraged even that, but <sup>she</sup> <sup>of</sup> ~~no one of them~~ could countenance the possibility of ~~that~~ <sup>her</sup> <sup>however slight and unavoidable</sup> ~~advice~~ <sup>advice</sup> on in the house, unleashed and sassy. Daily life took as much as ~~she~~ <sup>they</sup> had; the future was sunset. The past was some thing to leave behind. And if it didn't stay behind, well, you might have to stomp it out.

~~Most of them were from one of people for whom the past was infinite and simultaneous.~~ Slave life, freed life, every day was a test and a trial. Nothing could be counted on in a world where even when you were ~~was~~ a solution you were a problem. "Sufficient unto the day was the evil thereof." and nobody need more; nobody need a grown up ever sitting at the table with a grudge. As long as the ghost showed out from its ghostly place, shaking stuff, crying, wailing and such, Ella respected it. But if it took flesh and came in her world, well the shoe was on the other foot. She didn't mind a little communication between the two worlds, but this was an invasion.

Shall we pray? ~~by A. A. the is over~~

"But--"

"But nothing. What's fair aint necessarily rihgt."

"You can't just up and kill your children."

"No, and the children can't just up and kill the mama."

It was Ella ~~who~~ more than anyone, who convinced the others that rescue was in order. <sup>(insert)</sup> Whatever Sethe had done--~~they~~ <sup>she</sup> ~~couldn't allow~~ <sup>didn't like the idea of</sup> past errors <sup>inf</sup> to take possession of the present.

Sethe's crime was staggering and her pride outstripped even that, but ~~no one~~ <sup>she</sup> of them could countenance the possibility of ~~their own~~ <sup>SIN</sup> sins (however slight and unavoidable) moving on in the house, unleashed and sassy. Daily life took as much as ~~they~~ <sup>she</sup> had; the future was sunset. The past was some thing to leave behind. And if it didn't stay behind, well, you might have to stomp it out.

~~Most of them came from a race of people for whom the past was infinite and simultaneous.~~ Slave life, freed life, every day was a test and a trial. Nothing could be counted on in a world where ~~even~~ when you were ~~the~~ a solution you were a problem. "Sufficient unto the day was the evil thereof." adn nobody need more; nobody need a grown up ev~~el~~ sitting at the table with a grudge. As long as the ghost showed out from its ghostly place, shaking stuff, crying, smashing and such, Ella respected it. But if it took flesh and came in her world, well the shoe was on the other foot. She didn't mind a little communication between the two worlds, but this was an invasion.

Shall we pray? <sup>asked the women.</sup>

She was an upfront woman, committed  
to taking action in any crisis.

*Said Ella*

Uh huh. ~~Pray.~~ "First. Then we got to get down to business."

Every root worker in the territory got a visit.

The day Denver was to spend her first night at the Bodwins' Mr. Bodwin had some business on the edge of the city and said he would pick her up just before supper. Denver sat on the porch steps with a bundle in her lap.

*When the women assembled a lump of*

① *Sethe was breaking up ice chunks*  
*into chunks.* ② *She dropped the ice*

*pick into her apron pocket and*  
*to scoop the pieces into a basin of water*

378  
38  
""Why you call yourself Beloved?"

Beloved closed her eyes. "In the dark my mane is Beloved."

When the women assembled  
a lump of

① Sethe was breaking ~~a~~ ice ~~chunks~~  
into chunks. ② She dropped the ice

pick into her apron pocket and  
to scoop the pieces into a basin of water

③ When the <sup>music</sup> sound entered 124, Sethe had her hands in a basin of ~~water~~ <sup>cool</sup> wringing a cloth to put on Beloved's forehead. Beloved, sweating profusely in the heat was sprawled on the bed in the keeping room, a salt rock in her hand. Both women heard it at the same time and both lifted their heads. As the voices grew louder, Beloved sat up, <sup>licked</sup> swallowed the salt and went in to the bigger room. Sethe and she exchanged looks and started toward the window. They saw Denver sitting on the steps and beyond her head, where the yard met the road, they saw the rapt faces of <sup>30 neighborhood</sup> ~~thirty or so~~ women. Some had their eyes closed; others looked at the <sup>hot</sup> cloudless sky. Sethe opened the door and reached for Beloved's hand. Together they stood in the open door. <sup>The women</sup> They recognized Sethe at once and surprised themselves by their <sup>absence</sup> of fear when they saw what stood next to her. The <sup>devil</sup> ~~demon~~ <sup>child</sup> was clever, they thought. And beautiful, <sup>it had</sup> ~~having~~ taken the shape of a pregnant woman, naked and smiling in the heat of ~~an~~ <sup>the</sup> after noon sun.. Thunderblack and glistening, she stood on long <sup>stair</sup> ~~thin~~ legs, her belly big and tight. Vines of hair ~~were~~ <sup>up all</sup> twisted over ~~head~~ her head. Her smile was dazzling.

Jesus.

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next page

Singing

358  
188

Near the basin was  
a chunk of ice waited for  
splint broken with the ice pick  
in her apron pocket.

Near her was a smallish chunks of  
ice she had broken into smallish  
chunks. with an ice pick.

Beloved swallowed the rest of her salt;  
Seth picked up the ice pick that had  
rolled to the floor and put it in  
her skirt pocket.

It was as though the Clearing had come to her. with its heat and  
simmering leaves ; absorbing the voices of the women searching  
searching for the right combination, the widest wave of sound  
to sound the ~~xxxxxx~~ deep water; they would build, voice upon vo  
voice until they found it--the key, the code, the sound that was  
rendered the word  
broke the back of words, and when they found it it would

For Sethe

It was as though the Clearing had come to her with all its heat  
and simmering leaves, where the voices of women searched , searched  
for the right combination, the key, the code, the sound that broke  
the back of words. ~~They would build, voice upon voice until~~  
~~they found it and when they did it would be the widest wave of~~  
sound to sound ~~the~~ deep water, and knock the pods off the

Chestnut

<sup>wide enough</sup> <sup>It</sup> broke over Sethe, ~~and~~ She <sup>shipped</sup> ~~trunk~~  
in its wash.

2 Change to  
Present Tense

her eyes  
felt, burn and it may have been to  
keep tears at bay that she  
them clear

Sethe<sup>1</sup> looked up. The sky was blue and clear. Not one touch of death in the definite green of the leaves. ~~She could hear birds and, faintly, the creek way down in the meadow.~~ It was when she lowered her eyes to look again at the loving faces before her that she saw him. Guiding the mare, slowing down, his black hat<sup>1</sup> wide-brimmed enough to hide his face but not his purpose. He was coming in<sup>10</sup> her yard and he was coming for her best thing. She heard wings. Little humming birds stuck their needle beaks right through her head cloth into her hair and beat their wings. And if she thought anything, it was NO. No no. Nonono. As she flew, The ice pick was not in her hand; it was her hand. ~~She flew.~~

per

*Standing alone  
on the porch*

*is*

*But now*

*is*

Beloved ~~was still~~ smiling. Then her hand ~~was~~  
empty. Sethe <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ running away from her, running, and  
*she feels*  
~~Beloved felt~~ the emptiness in the hand Sethe had been holding.  
Now she <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ running into the faces of the people out there,  
joining them and leaving Beloved alone. Then Denver, running  
too. Away from her to the pile of people out there. And  
above them all, rising from his place with a whip in his  
hand, the man without skin, looking.

Stone blind

Stone blind

Sweet Home gal make you lose your mind.

Page Break

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Bare feet and chamomile sap

Took off my shoes; took off my hat.

Bare feet and chamomile sap

Gimme back my shoes, gimme back MY HAT.

Lay my head on a potato sack

Devil sneak up behind my back.

Steam engine got a lonesome whine

Love that woman til you go stone blind.

Stone blind

Stone blind

Sweet Home gal make you lose your mind.

Page  
break

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route

His coming is the reverse of his going,  
~~Coming is the reverse of going~~

He returned

~~His coming is like his going~~

He went back to 124 the same way he left it. First the cold house, ~~then~~ the store room, before he tackled the beds. Here Boy, feeble and shedding his coat in patches, slept by the pump, so Paul D ~~knew~~ Beloved was ~~truly~~ gone. Disappeared, some ~~said~~, exploded right before their eyes. Ella said, "Maybe. Maybe not. Could be hiding in the trees. waiting for another chance." But when Paul D ~~saw~~ the ancient dog, 18 years if a day, he was certain 124 was clear of her. But he opened the door to the cold house halfway expecting to hear her. "Touch me. Touch me. On the inside part and call me my name."

There ~~was~~ the pallet spread with old newspapers gnawed at the edges by mice. The lard can. The potato sacks too, but empty now, they ~~lay~~ on the dirt floor in heaps. In daylight he ~~could not~~ imagine what it ~~was~~ in the dark with moonlight seeping through the cracks. NOR the desire that drowned him there and forced him to struggle up, up into that girl like she was the clear air at the top of the sea. Coupling with her wasn't even fun. It was more like a brainless urge to stay alive. Each time she came, pulled up her skirts, a life-hunger overwhelmed him and he had no more control over ~~it~~ than over his lungs. And afterward, beached and gobbling air, in the midst of repulsion and personal shame, he was thankful too for having been escorted to some place he once belonged to.

386

Daylight ~~sifting into the cold room~~ dissipated that memory turned ~~it into~~ <sup>into</sup> dust motes floating in light. Paul D shut the door

He looked toward the house, and, surprisingly, it ~~did~~ <sup>day</sup> not look back at him. Unloaded, 124 ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> just another weathered house needing repair. Quiet, just as Stamp had said.

*P. ✓* "Used to be voices all round that place. Quiet now," ~~That house is quiet now,~~ Stamp said. "I Been past it a few times and I can't hear a thing. Chastened, I reckon, cause Mr. Bodwin say he selling it soon's he can."

"That the name of the one she tried to stab? That one?"

"Yep. His sister say it's full of trouble. Told Janey they was going to get rid of it."

"And him?"

"Jasay say he against it but won't stop it."

"Who they think want a house out there? Anybody got the money don't want to live out there."

"Beats me," Stamp answerd. "It'll be a spell, I guess, before it get took off his hands."

"He don't plan on pressing charges?"

"Don't seem like it. Janey say all he wants to know is who was the naked woman standing on the porch. He was looking at her so hard, he didn't notice what Sethe was up to. All he saw was some colored <sup>women</sup> fighting. He thought Sethe was after one of them, Janey say."

"Janey tell him any different?"

"No. She say she so glad her boogs ain't dead. If Ella hadn't clipped her, she would have. Scared her to death have that woman kill her boogs. She and Denver be looking for a job."

"Who Janey tell him the naked woman was?"

"Told him she didn't see none."

"You believe they ~~really~~ saw at?"

"Well, they saw <sup>h</sup>something. I trust Ella anyway and she say she looked it in the eye. <sup>It was</sup> Standing right next to Sethe. But from the way they describe it, ~~I~~ don't seem like it was the girl I saw in there. The girl I saw was narrow. This one was big. She say they was holding hands and Sethe looked like a little girl beside it."

"Little girl with a ice pick." How close she get to him?"

"Right up on him, they say. Before <sup>Denver and them</sup> they grabbed her and Ella put her fist in her jaw."

"He got to know Sethe was after him. He got to."

"Maybe. I don't know. If he did think it, I reckon he decided not to. That'd be just like him too. He's somebody never turned us down. Steady as a rock. I tell you something, if <sup>she</sup> had got to him, it 'd be the worst thing in the world for us. You know, don't you, he's the <sup>main</sup> one kept Sethe from the gallows in the first place?"

"Yeah. Damn. That woman is crazy. Crazy."

"Yeah, well, ain't we all?"

They laughed then. A rusty chuckle at first and then <sup>out</sup> more, louder and louder until Stamp took his pocket handkerchief and wiped his eyes while Paul D pressed the <sup>heel</sup> of his hand <sup>in</sup> into his own. As the scene ~~neither~~ one saw took shape before them, its seriousness and its embarrassment made them shake with <sup>laughter</sup> laughter.

"Everytime a whiteman come to the door she got to kill

somebody?"

"For all she know, the man could be coming for the rent."

"Good thing they don't deliver mail out that way."

"Wouldn't nobody get no letter."

he still in his house? Ha!  
"And going to let Denver spend the night ~~there~~

"Aw, no. Hey. Lay off Denver. That's my heart. I'm proud of that girl. She was the first one wrestle her mother down. Before <sup>anybody</sup> the others knew what <sup>the devil</sup> was going on."

#Their laughter spent, they took deep breaths and shook their heads.

"She <sup>saved</sup> ~~saved~~ his life then, you could say."

"You could. You could," said Stamp, thinking suddenly of the leap, the wide swing and snatch of his own arm as he rescued the little curly headed baby from within inches of a split skull. "I'm proud of her. She turning out fine. Fine."

It was ~~true~~ <sup>when</sup> Paul D saw her the ~~very~~ next morning <sup>when</sup> leaving hers. He was on his way to work and she was ~~going home~~. Thinner, steady in the eyes, she ~~looked~~ looked more like Halle than ever.

She smiled first. "Good morning, Mr. D"

"Well, it is now," He touched his cap. "How you ~~do~~ getting along?"

"Don't pay to complain."

"You on your way home?"

She said no. She had heard about an afternoon job at the shirt factory. She hoped that with her night work <sup>at</sup> the

"Good thing they don't deliver mail that way," she thought.  
"For all she knew, the man would be coming for the 'rent' in an hour."  
"You're sure that's all right?" she asked.  
"Of course," he said. "I'll be right back."

A "Except him."  
A "Be a <sup>mighty</sup> hard message."

"You could," she said, "if you want to."

"You could," she said, "if you want to."

"You could," she said, "if you want to."

"You could," she said, "if you want to."

"You could," she said, "if you want to."

"You could," she said, "if you want to."

"You could," she said, "if you want to."

Bodwon's and ~~xxxx~~ another one, she could put away something. When he asked her if they treated her all right over there, she said more than all right. Miss Bodwin taught her stuff. When he asked her what stuff, she laughed and said book stuff. <sup>"I think she's experimenting on me."</sup> and he didn't say "watch out. Watch out. Nothing ~~in~~ the world more dangerous than a white schoolteacher." Instead he nodded and asked the question he wanted to.

"She says I might go to Oberlin"

"Is your mother all right?"

"No," said Denver. "No. Not a bit all right."

"You think I ~~xxx~~ <sup>should</sup> stop by? Would she welcome it?"

"I don't know" said Denver. "I think I've lost my mother, Paul D" They were both silent for a moment and then he said "Uh, that girl. YOU know. Beloved?"

"Yes?"

"You think she ~~really was~~ <sup>sure 'nough</sup> your sister?"

Denver ~~sighed~~ <sup>AT times</sup> "Sometimes I do. ~~Sometimes~~ <sup>AT times,</sup> I think she was ~~something else. Something more.~~ <sup>Suddenly she leveled her eyes at his.</sup> She fiddled with her shirt waist, rubbing a spot of something, ~~only she saw.~~ <sup>sure 'nough</sup> "But who would know that better than you, Paul D? I mean, you ~~really~~ knew her."

looked at her shoes.

He licked his lips. "Well, if you want my opinion--"

"I don't," she said. "I have my own."

"You grown," he said.

"Yes, sir."

"Well. Well, good luck with the job."

"Thanks. And Paul D, you don't have to stay'way, but be care <sup>ful</sup>

Insert

when you talk to my ma'am, hear?"

"Don't worry," he said and left her then or rather she left him because a young man was running toward her saying "Hey, Miss Denver. Wait up."

She turned to him, her face looking like someone had turned up the gas jet.

(lover) More. It ~~made~~<sup>makes</sup> about as much sense ~~as~~<sup>out of</sup> the stories he ~~had~~<sup>has</sup> been hearing: Whiteman <sup>a</sup> come to take Denver to work and Sethe cut him. Baby ghost <sup>came</sup> back evil and sent Sethe out to get the man who kept her from hanging. One ~~single~~ point of agreement ~~is~~<sup>is</sup>: first they saw It and then they didn't. When they got SEthe down on the ground and the ice pick out of her hands and looked back to the house It was gone. Later a little boy put it out how he had been looking for bait back of 124, down by the stream, and saw, cutting through the woods, a naked spirit woman with fish for hair.

As a matter of fact, Paul D doesn't care how It went or even why. He cares about how he left and why. When he looks at himself through Garner's eyes, he sees one thing. Through Sixo's another. One makes him feel righteous. One makes him feel ashamed. <sup>^</sup> The resolution is somewhere in 124.

(Insert) ~~So he came the way he left.~~<sup>Not he is coming is the reason he is going</sup> First he stands in the back, near the cold house, amazed by the riot of late summer flowers where vegetables should be growing. Sweet William, morning glory, chrysan themum. The odd placement of cans

16 leaves her, unwillingly,  
because he wants to

he believed were the sons of the guards in Alfred, Georgia.

In four tries he had not one success. Every one of  
like the time he worked both sides of the War. Running <sup>away</sup> ~~first~~  
from the Northpoint Bank and Railway to join the 44th Colored

Regiment in Tennessee, he thought he had made it only to  
<sup>he had arrived at</sup>  
discover another colored regiment forming under a commander  
TK. He stayed there four weeks, <sup>until</sup> the regiment fell

apart before it got started on the question of whether the  
~~soldiers~~ <sup>have</sup> should have weapons or not. Not, it was decided,

and the white commander had to figure out what to command  
them to do instead of kill other whitemen. Some of the  
ten thousand stayed there to clean <sup>and build thurs;</sup> and haul, others drifted  
away to find another regiment; most were abandoned, left to  
their own devices with bitterness for pay. He was trying to

make up his mind <sup>what to do</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~ when an agent from the Northpoint  
Company caught up with him and <sup>took</sup> sent him back to ~~the~~ Delaware  
<sup>Slave</sup> where he worked ~~as a slave for a year~~ <sup>then Northpoint</sup> when the company  
took three hundred dollars in exchange for his services in

Alabama. <sup>first</sup> There he worked for the Rebels, sorting the dead and ~~then~~  
then smelting iron. When he <sup>and his group</sup> combed the battlefields, <sup>their</sup> job was  
to pull ~~out~~ the Confederate wounded from the Confederate dead.

Care, they told them, take good care. Colored men and white  
<sup>the meadows</sup> men picked their way through fields with lamps, listening  
for groans of life in the heavy silence of the dead. They

~~wrapped their faces to their eyes.~~ Mostly young men, some  
just boys, and it shamed him a little to feel pity for what

from  
New Jersey,

their faces  
wrapped to  
their  
eyes,

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(B)

he believed were the sons of the guards in Alfred, Georgia.

In ~~four~~ <sup>five</sup> trys he had not <sup>had</sup> one success. Every one of his escapes (from Sweet Home, from Alfred, Georgia, from Northpoint, from Tennessee) <sup>Brandenburg</sup> had been frustrated. Alone, undisguised, with visible skin ~~and~~ memorable hair, and no whiteman to protect him, he never stayed uncaught. The longest had been when he ran with the convicts, stayed with the Cherokee, followed thier advice and lived in hiding with the weaver-woman. Three years. →

After a few months on the battle fields of Alabama, he was impressed to a foundry in Selma along with three hundred captured, lent or taken colored men. ~~Quitting~~ That's where the War's end found him. Leaving Alabama when he had been declared free, should have been a snap. He should have been able to walk from the foundry in Selma straight to Philadelphia, taking the main roads, a train if he wanted to, or passage on a boat. But it wasn't like that. When he and two colored soldiers (who had been captured from the 44th) walked from Selma toward Mobile, they saw twelve ~~de~~ dead blacks in the first eighteen miles. Two were women, four were little boys. He thought this, for sure, would be the walk of his life. The Yankees in control <sup>turned</sup> ~~put~~ the Rebels out of control. They got to the outskirts of Mobile where blacks were putting down tracks for the Union that they had earlier torn up for the Rebels. One of the men with him, a private called Keane had been with the Massachusetts 54. He told Paul D they had been paid less than white soldiers. It was a sore point with him that, as a group, they had refused the

And in all these  
escapes, ~~but~~  
He could not help  
being astonished by the  
beauty of this land  
that was not his.

He hid in its breast,

E tried  
not to  
faint.

fingered its earth and  
roots. ~~There were~~ <sup>ON</sup> ~~Some~~ nights when

the sky was personal —  
weak with with weight  
of its own stars — ~~and~~ he  
made himself not love it.

~~In~~ its graveyards and  
low lying river banks.

A house, solitary; <sup>under a</sup> chimney  
maybe a mule tethered; anything

and the light  
hitting its hide just so

could stir him.  
and if he <sup>traced</sup> ~~traced~~ <sup>hard</sup> ~~hard~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>love</sup> ~~love~~  
himself not love  
it.

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C

off Massachusetts made to make up the difference in pay. Paul D was so impressed by the idea of ~~paying~~ being paid money to fight, he looked at the private with wonder and envy. Keane and his friend, Sergeant Rossiter, confiscated a skiff and headed for Mobile Bay. There the private <sup>hailed</sup> ~~hired~~ a Union gun boat which took all three ~~xxx~~ aboard. Keane and Rossiter disembarked at TK to look for their commanders. The captain of the gun boat let him stay aboard ~~until TK~~ <sup>all the way to New Jersey</sup>

<sup>By</sup> ~~Up until~~ the time he got to Mobile, he had seen more dead people than living, <sup>but</sup> ~~and~~ when he got to Trenton he ~~felt~~ <sup>the crowds of alive people</sup> a measure of free life so tasty he never forgot it. <sup>neither hunting nor hunted made him feel</sup> Walking down a street ~~in front of a row of brick houses, he heard~~ a whiteman call him ("Say there! Yo!") to help unload two trunks from a coach cab. Afterward the whiteman gave him a coin. Paul D walked around with it for hours--not sure what it could buy (a suit? a meal? a horse?) and if anybody would sell him anything. ~~Finally~~ he saw a green grocer selling vegetables from a wagon. Paul D pointed to a bunch of turnips. The grocer handed them to him, took his one coin and gave him several more. Stunned, he backed away. Looking around, he saw that nobody seemed interested in the "mistake" or him, so he walked along, happily chewing turnips. Only a few women looked vaguely disgusted as they passed. His first earned purchase made him glow, never mind the turnips were withered dry. That was when he decided that to eat, walk and sleep anywhere was <sup>a</sup> life as good as it got. And he did it for fifteen years till he found himself in southern Ohio where an old woman and a girl he used to know had gone.

morning  
~~Walking~~ down a  
busy street full

of <sup>white</sup> people who  
~~found his presence~~

needed no explanation  
~~wanted~~ for his presence.

The glances he got had to do  
with his disgusting clothes  
and unforgivable hair.  
Still n'body raised an  
alarm. Then came the  
miracle.

shriveled,  
 jammed with the rotting stems of things, the blossoms ~~long~~  
~~gone~~. Dead ivy twined <sup>are</sup> around <sup>bean poles</sup> tomato stakes and door <sup>handles</sup> knobs.  
 Newspaper pictures <sup>are</sup> nailed to the out house and on trees. A  
 rope too short for anything but <sup>skip-</sup> jumping ~~lay~~ lies discarded near  
 the washtub. Like a child's house; the house of a very tall  
 child.

Finally he walks to the front door and opens it. It is  
 stone quiet. In the place where once a shaft of sad red light  
 had bathed him, locking him where he stood, is nothing. A bleak  
 and minus nothing. More like an absence, but an absence he has  
 to get through with the same determination he had to have when he  
 trusted Sethe and stepped through the ~~red~~ <sup>pulsing</sup> undulating light. He  
 glances ~~looked~~ quickly at the lightening white stairs. The entire  
<sup>railing</sup> bannisters is wound with ribbons, bows, bouquets. Paul D steps  
 inside. The outdoor breeze he brings with him stirs the ribbons  
 on the lower bannister. Carefully ~~hesitates~~ <sup>luminous</sup> not quite in a hurry,  
 but losing no time, he climbs the white stairs. He enters Sethe's  
 bedroom. She isn't there and the bed looks so small he wonders  
 how the two of them had lain there. It has no sheets and be  
 cause the roof windows do not open, the room is stifling.  
 Brightly colored clothes lie on the floor. Hanging from a wall  
 peg is the dress Beloved wore. A pair of ice skates nestle  
 in a basket in the corner. He turns his eyes back to the bed and  
 keeps looking at it. It seems to him a place he is not. With an  
 effort that makes him sweat he forces a picture of himself lying  
 there and when he sees it, it lifts his spirit. He goes to the  
 other bedroom. Denver's is as neat as the other is messy. But

still no Sethe. Maybe she has gone back to work, gotten better in the days since he talked to Denver. He goes back down the stairs leaving the image of himself firmly in place on the narrow bed. At the kitchen table he sits down. Something is missing from 124. Something larger than the people who have lived there. Something more than the red light. He can't put his finger on it, but it seems, for a moment that just beyond his knowing is the glare of an outside thing that embraces while it accuses.

To the right of him, where the door to the keeping room is ajar, somebody ~~takes a breath, like a small yawn.~~ <sup>is humming a tune. (over)</sup> Of course, ~~he thinks.~~ That's where she is--and she is. Lying under a quilt of merry colors. Her hair, like the dark delicate roots of good plants, spreads and curves on the pillow. Her eyes, fixed on the window are so expressionless he is not sure she will know who he is. ~~She is singing.~~

High Johnny

Wide Johnny

Sweet William bend down low

Jackweed raise up high

Lambswool over my shoulder

Buttercup and clover fly

High Johnny, wide Johnny

Don't you leave my side Johnny

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Still no Seth. Maybe she has gone back to work, gotten better  
in the days since he talked to her. The goose-bumps on her  
stairs leaving the image of himself. He sits down. Something is  
from 124. Something larger than the people who have lived  
there. Something more than the red light. He does not know  
linger on it, but it seems, for a moment that the house is  
his knowing is the start of an old dream that, somehow  
while it accuses.  
Something soft and sweet - like  
a lullaby.

High Johnny  
Wide Johnny  
Sweet William bend down low  
Jackwood raise up high  
Lampwood over my shoulder  
Bottom up and clover fly  
High Johnny, wide Johnny  
Don't you leave my side Johnny

Paul D clears his throat. "Sethe?"

She turns her head. "Paul D."

"Aw, Sethe."

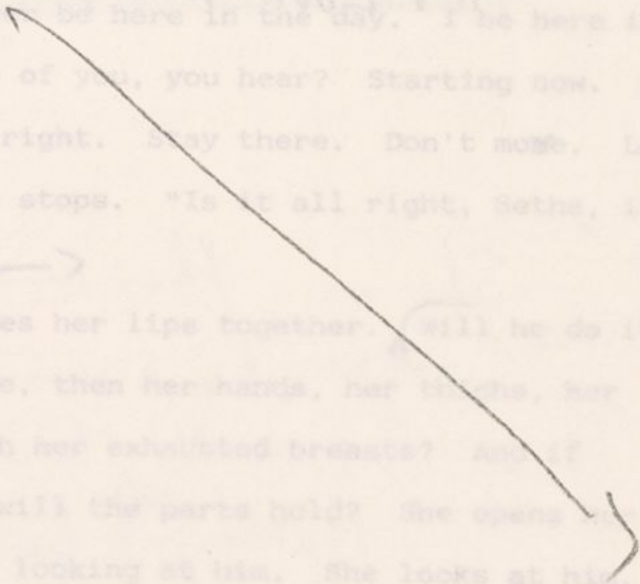
→ No.  
"You looking good."

"Devil's confusion. What's this I hear about you not getting out the bed?"

She smiles, lets it fade and turns her eyes back to the window.

"I need to talk to you," he tells her,

She doesn't answer.



"I made the ink, Paul D. He couldn't have  
done it if I hadn't made the ink."

"What ink? Who?"

"You shaved."

"Yeah.  
Look bad?"

"I saw Denver. She tell you?"

"She comes in the daytime. Denver. She's still with me, my Denver."

"You got to get up from here, girl." He is nervous. This reminds him of something.

"I'm tired, Paul D. So tired. I have to rest a while."

Now he knows what he is reminded of and he shouts at her, "Don't you die on me! This is Baby Suggs' bed! Is that what you planning?" He is so angry he could kill her. He checks himself, remembering Denver's warning, and whispers, "What you planning, Sethe?"

"I ain't got no plans. No plans at all."

"Look," he says, "Denver be here in the day. I be here in the night. I'm a take care of you, you hear? Starting now. First off, you don't smell right. Stay there. Don't move. Let me heat up some water." He stops. "Is it all right, Sethe, if I heat up some water?"

Sethe <sup>close her eyes</sup> ~~frowns~~ and presses her lips together. Will he do it in sections? First her face, then her hands, her thighs, her feet, her back? Ending with her exhausted breasts? And if he bathes her in sections, will the parts hold? She opens her eyes, knowing the danger of looking at him. She looks at him. The peachstone skin, the crease between his ready <sup>waiting</sup> eyes and sees it--the thing in him, the blessedness, that has made him the kind of man who can walk in a house and make the women cry.

And  
① "Can't my feet?"  
"Rub your feet."

~~Give girl. Don't have that against me.~~  
~~I'll be with you.~~

-72 She is thinking "No. This little  
place by a window is what I want.  
And rest. There's <sup>left</sup> nothing to rub.  
Nothing to bathe, assuming <sup>he</sup>  
ever knows how.

when you talk to my ma'am, hear?"

"Don't worry," he said and left her then, or rather she left him, because a young man was running toward her saying

"Hey, Miss Denver. Wait up." She turned to him, ~~and~~ her face <sup>looking</sup> ~~was~~ like someone had turned the gas jet up.

the mum, morning glory. The odd placement of can jammed with the rotting stems of things, the blossoms long gone; dead ivy twined around tomato stakes and door knobs. Newspaper pictures nailed to the out house and on trees. A rope too short for anything but jumping lay discarded near the wash tub. Like a child's house; the house of a very tall child.

Finally he walked to the front door and opened it. It was stone quiet. In the place where once a shaft of sad red light had bathed him, locking him where he stood, was nothing. A black and minus nothing [that had presence nevertheless]. More like an absence, but an absence he had to get through with the same determination he had to have when he stepped through the red ~~xxx~~ light. He looked quickly at the lightening white stairs. The entire bannister was wound with ribbons and bows, ~~as for a wedding~~. Paul B stepped inside. The ~~beating~~ outdoor breeze he brought with him stirred the ribbons of the lower bannister. He climbed the stairs and entered Seth's bedroom. She wasn't there and the bed looked so small he wondered how the two of them had lain there. It had no sheets and because the roof windows did not open it was stifling. Brightly colored

391 390  
TK

So he came the way he left. First he stood in the back, ~~yard~~, near the cold room, amazed by the riot of late summer flowers where vegetables should have been growing. Sweet William; chrysan the mum, mornigg glory. The odd placement of can<sup>s</sup> jammed with the rotting stems of things, the blossoms long gone; dead ivy twined around tomato stakes and door knobs. Newspaper pictures nailed to the out house and on trees. A rope too short for anything but jumping lay discarded near the wash tub. Like a child's house; the house of a very tall child.

Finally he walked to the front door and opened it. It was stone quiet. In the place where once a shaft of sad red light had bathed him, locking him where he stood, was nothing. A bleak and minus nothing [that had presence nevertheless.] More like an absence, but an absnece he had to get through with the same determination he had to have when he <sup>trusted Sethe and</sup> stepped through the red <sup>undulating</sup> ~~and~~ light. He looked quickly at the lightening white stairs. The entire bannister was wound with ribbons and bows, <sup>bouquets.</sup> as for a wedding. Paul D stepped inside. The ~~little~~ outdoor breeze he brought with him stirred the ribbons on the lower bannister. <sup>Carefully</sup> He climbed the stairs and entered Sethe's bedroom. She wasn't there and the ~~bed~~ looked so small he wondered how the two of them had lain there. It had no sheets and because the roof windows did not open <sup>the room</sup> it was stifling. Brightly colored

clothes lay on the floor, <sup>hanging</sup> and hung from wall pegs. A pair of ice skates nestled in a basket in the corner. He turned his eyes ~~away from the debris~~ back to the bed and kept looking at it. It seemed to him a place he was not. With an effort that made him sweat he forced a picture of himself lying there and when he saw it, he sighed, and went to the other bedroom. Denver's, <sup>was</sup> and as neat as the other was messy. But still, no Sethe. Maybe she had gone back to work, gotten better in the week since he talked to Denver. He went back down the stairs leaving the image of himself firmly in place on the narrow bed. At the kitchen table he sat down, and thought about <sup>something</sup> what was missing from 124. Something larger than the people who lived there. <sup>(over)</sup> ~~Some terrible outside thing that both loved and accused.~~ <sup>The glare of an embraced while it,</sup> ~~Whatever it was, it wanted to be embraced, noticed, spoken to.~~

tk

To the right of him, where the door to the keeping room was ajar, somebody took a breath, like a small yawn. He lifted his head. Of course, that's where she was—and she was. Lying under a quilt of <sup>merry</sup> colors. Her hair <sup>like the</sup> dark delicate roots of good plants, spread and curved on the pillow. Her eyes <sup>fixed on</sup> ~~gazing toward~~ the single window were so expressionless, he was not sure she knew who he was.

"Sethe?"

She turned her head. "Paul D."

"Aw, Sethe."

*and after a long moment, said.*

Something more than the red light; ~~more than~~  
whatever it was it was missing from all their  
lives.

He couldn't put his finger on it, but it  
~~Seemed~~ ~~seemed~~ for a moment that just beyond  
his ~~eyes~~ knowing was

"Hello." <sup>Tell me something good.</sup>  
<sup>What's this I hear about you not getting</sup>  
~~"Somebody told me you don't get out the bed."~~

She smiled, let it fade, and turned her eyes back to the window.

"I need to talk to you," he said.

She didn't answer.

"I saw Denver." <sup>She tell you?</sup>

<sup>time.</sup>  
~~"Yes.~~ She comes in the day ~~time.~~ Denver. She's still with me, <sup>my</sup> Denver."

"You got to get up, girl."

<sup>Need have</sup>  
~~"I want~~ to rest a little. Just a little before I go."

"Don't you die on me. that's Baby's bed. That what you thinking?"

"A little rest, Paul D, that's all. I'm so tired."

"Look here. Denver be here in the day. I be here in the night. I'm a take care of you, hear?"

"so tired."

~~I reckon so, he thought. I reckon so.~~ "You don't smell right," he said. "Stay there. Let me heat up some water."

He stoped. "Is it all right, Sethe, if I heat up some water?"

She looked at him and must have seen it--the thing in him, the blessedness, that made it possible ~~for~~ for him to walk in a room and make the women cry. Cry and tell him ~~xxxx~~ things they hadn't told each other: that time didn't stay put; that ~~Howard~~ she called <sup>but</sup> Howard and Buglar walked on down the railroad track and couldn't hear her; that Amy was scared to stay with her

because her feet looked so bad; that her ma'am<sup>ie</sup> had hurt her feelings and she couldn't find her hat and "~~Paul~~<sup>Paul</sup> D?"

"What?"

"She left me."

"Who? Who left you?"

"She was my best thing."

Paul D knelt down and leaned on the quilt patched in carnival colors. ~~X~~ He took <sup>her</sup> Sethe's hand, ~~in one of his own.~~ With the other he touched her face. "You your best <sup>thing</sup> ~~ting~~ Sethe. You are."

"Me?"

There were so many things to feel about this woman. So many things. He remembered ~~what~~ Sixo <sup>trying</sup> had said when he tried to describe what he felt about the 30-mile woman. "She is a friend of my mind. She gathers me, man. ~~All~~ the peices of me that I am, she gather them and give them back to me in all the right order. It's good, you know when you get a women who is a friend of your mind." <sup>that's</sup> ~~That is what she is,~~ <sup>Wrought-iron body.</sup> he thought. still puffy at the corner from Ella's fist the mean black eyes. He wanted to know about her ~~what she knew and what she did and how she did it, and he wanted to put his story~~ <sup>next to</sup> ~~xxxxxxx with hers. and xxxxxxxx~~ Talk to her. They hadn't finished talking about it. About what it was, And what about tomorrow? They needed tomorrow and tomorrow <sup>he said</sup> needed them to be in it. "Sethe, me and you, we need a <sup>some kind of</sup> tomorrow, ~~(and tomorrow needs us in it.)~~

"What? What?"

(got more yesterday than anybody. We

because her feet looked so bad; that her ma'am had hurt her feelings and she couldn't find her hat again and "Paul D?"

"What?"

"She left me."

"Who? Who left you?"

"She was my best thing."

Paul D <sup>sat</sup> <sup>in the rocking chair</sup> ~~kneelt~~ down and ~~leaned on~~ the quilt patched in <sup>His hands were limp between his knees, staring at</sup> carnival colors. <sup>too</sup> There were ~~so~~ many things to feel about this woman. He remembered Sixo trying to describe what he felt about the 30-mile woman. "She is a friend of my mind. She gathers me, man. The pieces of me that I am, she gather them and give them back to me in all the right order. It's good you know, when you get a women who is a friend of your mind."

Wrought-iron back. The delicious mouth still <sup>(over)</sup> puffy at the corner from Ella's fist. The mean black eyes. <sup>(over)</sup> He wanted to put his story next to hers.

"Sethe," he said, "me and you, we got more yesterday than anybody. <sup>I think</sup> We need some kind of <sup>today.</sup> tomorrow."

"What? What?"

<sup>leaned over and</sup> He took her hand. With the other he touched her face.

"You your best thing, Sethe. You are."

She looked down at his <sup>holding fingers</sup> ~~hard~~ hand holding hers.

"Me?"

revels

because her feet looked so bad; that her ma's had hurt  
her feelings and she couldn't find her hat again and "Paul

The smell of her <sup>wet</sup> dress before the fire.

Her tenderness about  
~~She had not looked at~~ his neck jewelry—

its 3 ~~curved~~ wands like attentive

baby rattlers curving two feet into  
the air.

This woman. He remembered six trying to describe what he  
felt about the 30-mile woman. "She is a friend of my mind."  
She gathers me, man. The pieces of me that I am, she gather  
them and give them back to me in all the right order. It's good  
you know, when you get a woman who is a friend of your mind."  
Wrong—iron back. The delicious mouth stilling at  
the corner from Lisa's fist. The mean black eyes. He wanted to  
put his story next to hers.  
"Sethe," he said, "me and you, we got more yesterday than  
anybody. We need some kind of tomorrow."  
"What? What?"  
He took her hand. With the other he touched her face.  
"You your best thing, Sethe. You are."  
She looked down at his hand holding hers.  
"Me?"

Beloved.

They forgot her like a bad dream.

Occasionally the rustle of a skirt was heard upon waking.

and the knuckles brushing a cheek in sleep seemed to belong to the sleeper. Sometimes the photograph of a close friend or relative -- looked at too long -- shifted and something more familiar than the dear face itself moved there. They could touch it, if they like, but didn't because they knew they would never be the same if they did.

Down by the creek in back of 124 her footprints come and go. They are so familiar, a child, an adult, should place their feet in them and they would fit. Or little girls' feet and they disappear again as though nobody ever walked there.

By and by all trace was gone and what was forgotten was not only the footprints, but the water too and what it is down there. The rest was weather. Not the breath of the remembered, but September wind in the eaves, or spring ice thawing too quickly. Just weather. Certainly no clamor for the join.

and

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Beloved.

They forgot her like a bad dream.

Occasionally the rustle of a skirt <sup>hushed</sup> ~~was heard upon waking;~~ <sup>ceased when they woke</sup>

and the knuckles brushing a cheek in sleep seemed to belong to the sleeper. Sometimes the photograph of a close friend or relative --looked at too long--shifted and something more familiar than the dear face itself moved there. They could touch it, if they like<sup>d</sup>, but didn't because they knew they would never be the same if they did.

Down by the creek in back of 124 her footprints come and go, come and go. They are so familiar. <sup>Should</sup> A child, an adult <sup>can</sup> ~~could~~ place their feet in them and they <sup>will</sup> ~~would~~ fit. <sup>Take them out</sup> ~~Or lift their feet~~ away and they disappear again as though nobody ever walked there.

By and by all trace was gone and what was forgotten was not only the footprints, but the water too and what it is down there. The rest was weather. Not the breath of the disremembered, but September wind in the eaves, or spring ice thawing too quickly. Just weather. Certainly no clamor for the join.

end

I saw Denver. She tell you?"

still no Sethe. Maybe she has gone back to work, gotten better in the week since he talked to Denver. He goes back down the ~~xxxxi~~ stairs leaving the image of himself firmly in place on the narrow bed. At the kitchen table he sits down. Something is missing from 124. Something larger than the people who have lived there. Something more than the red light. He can't put his finger on it, but it seems, for a moment that just beyond his knowing is the glare of an outside thing that embraces while it accuses.

To the right of him where the door to the keeping room is ajar, somebody takes a breath, like a small yawn. ~~He lifts his head.~~ Of course. That's where she is--and she is. Lying like a dead woman under a quilt of merry colors. Her hair is like the dark delicate roots of good plants, spread <sup>ing</sup> and <sup>ing</sup> curved on the pillow. Her eyes, fixed on the single window are so expressionless he is not sure she knows who he is. *She is singing:*

"Sethe?"

*The moment is long.*  
She turns her head, ~~and, after a long moment:~~ "Paul D."

"Aw, Sethe."

*looking*  
[ "You ~~going to tell me something good?~~" ]

*Devil's confusion. He lets me look good long as I feel bad.*  
"What's this I hear about you not getting out the bed?" *Say,*

She smiles, lets it fade and turns her eyes back to the window.

"I need to talk to you," he tells her.

She doesn't answer.

"I saw Denver. She tell you?"

"She comes in the daytime. Denver. She's still with me, my Denver."

"You got to get up from here, girl." He is nervous. This reminds him of something.

*"I'm tired Paul D, so tired. I have to rest awhile"*  
~~"I have to rest,"~~ she whispers. ~~"Just a little before I go."~~

Now he knows what he is reminded of and he shouts, "Don't you die on me! / This is Baby Suggs' bed. Is that what you planning?" He is so angry he could kill her.

~~"A little rest, that's all. I'm so tired."~~

*I ain't got no plans. No plan at all!*  
 (He checks himself, remembering Denver's warning. "Look here," <sup>he says.</sup> "Denver be here in the day. I be here in the night, I'm a take care of you, <sup>you</sup> hear?" *Starting now. First of*

~~"So tired."~~

*right* "You don't smell right," ~~he says.~~ "Stay there. "Let me heat up some water." He stops. "Is it all right, Sethe, if I heat up some water?"

(over)

She looks at him, the ~~hazel~~ *peachstone* nut skin, the *crease* between his *soft*

and sees it--the thing in him, the blessedness, that ~~makes it~~ *has made him*  
~~the kind of man who can~~ *house* possible for him to walk in a room and make the women cry. *because*  
 with him, in his presence, they could. *only*  
 Cry and tell him things they ~~hadn't~~ told each other: that time

didn't stay put; that she called but Howard and Buglar walked on down the railroad track and couldn't hear her; that Amy was scared to stay with her because her feet looked so bad; that her ma'am had hurt her feelings and she couldn't find her hat anywhere and "Paul D?"

*to too far  
 I surfaced again.*

*soft  
 ready  
 eyes.*

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She ~~doesn't~~ answer. He goes into  
the kitchen, lights a fire

<sup>Seeth</sup>  
She frowns and purses her lips.

Will he do it in sections? First her  
face, then her hands, her feet and  
finally her back? She opens  
her eyes knowing the danger (LICK)

Looking at him -

"What?"

"She left me."

"Who? Who left you?"

"She was my best thing."

Paul D sits down in the rocking chair and stares at the quilt patched in carnival colors. His hands are limp between his knees. There are too many thing<sup>s</sup> to feel about this woman. Suddenly he remembers Sixo trying to describe what he felt about the 30-mile woman. "She is a friend of my mind. She gathers me, man. The peices of me that I am, she ~~gathern~~ gather them and give them back to me in all the right order. It's good, you know, when you got a women who is a friend of your mind."

Wrought-iron back. The delicious mouth still puffy at the corner from Ella's fist. The mean black eyes; the odor of her wet dress before the fire. Her tenderness about his neck jewelry--its three wands, ~~like~~ like attentive baby rattlers, curving two feet into the air. He wants to put his story next to hers.

"Sethe," he says, "me and you, we got more yesterday than anybody. I think we need some kind of today."

"What?" ~~What?~~

He leans over and takes her hand. With the other he touches her face. "You your best thing, Sethe. You are."

She looks down at his holding fingers holding hers.

"Me?" ~~me?~~

Beloved.

They forgot her like a bad dream. After they made up their stories, shaped and decorated them, those that saw her that day on the porch quickly and deliberately forgot her.

I t was not a story to pass on. <sup>But for</sup> Those who had spoken to her, lived with her <sup>it took longer</sup> had more trouble forgetting until they realized they couldn't remember or repeat a single thing she said, and began to believe that, other than what they themselves were thinking, she hadn't said anything at all. <sup>SO (me)</sup> ~~just like a bad dream during a bothersome,~~ troubling sleep, they forgot her.

Occasionally, however, the rustle of a skirt hushed when they wake, and the knuckles brushing a cheek in sleep seemed to belong to the sleeper. Sometimes the photograph of a close friend or relative--looked at too long--shifts and something more familiar than the dear face itself moves there. They can touch it, if they like, but don't because they know they will never be the same if they do.

Down by the creek in back of 124 her footprints come and go, come and go. They are so familiar. Should a child, an adult place their feet in them they will fit. Take them out and they disappear again as though nobody ever walked there.

By and by all trace ~~was~~ is gone and what is forgotten is not only the footprints, but the water too and what it is down there. The rest is weather. Not the breath of the disremembered, but ~~September~~ wind in the eaves, or spring ice thawing too quickly. Just weather. Certainly no clamor for the join.

A hot thing.

Remembering that part of themselves seemed unwise (me)

They never knew where or why she  
Crouched, who named her, or  
whose was the <sup>underwater</sup> face she <sup>needed</sup> loved <sup>liked that.</sup> ~~so much~~  
at the ~~shadow of~~ <sup>crooked</sup> Nor The ~~scar~~ like a smile  
under her chin

And It was not a story to pass on.

405

Disremembered and unaccounted for, the girl who waited to  
be loved and cry shame, crumbled into her separate parts.  
Where the memory of the ~~blade~~ <sup>metal steel</sup> under her chin might have been  
and was not, a latch latched and lichen attached its apple  
green bloom to the metal. What made her think her fingernails  
could open locks the rain rained on? <sup>Better</sup>

400 A

Page  
Break

400 B  
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~~Beloved.~~

They forgot her like a bad dream. After they made up their stories, shaped and decorated them, those that saw her that day on the porch, quickly and deliberately forgot her.

It was not a story to pass on.

It took longer for those who had spoken to her, lived with her, fallen in love with her to forget, until they realized that ~~y~~ couldn't remember or repeat a single thing she said, and began to believe that, other than what they themselves were thinking, she hadn't said anything at all. So, in the end, they forgot her too. Remembering [that part of themselves] seemed ~~so the latch latched.~~ unwise. They never knew ~~how she got the smile under her chin.~~ Where or why she crouched, ~~who named her,~~ or whose was the underwater face she needed like that. #

It was not a story to pass on.

Like a bothersome dream during a troubling sleep, they forgot her.

Occasionally, however, the rustle of a skirt hushes when they wake, and the knuckles brushing a cheek in sleep seems to belong to the sleeper. Sometimes the photograph of a close friend or relative--looked at too long--shifts and something more familiar than the dear face itself moves there. They can touch it, if they like, but don't because they know things will never be the same if they do.

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There is a loneliness that can be rocked. Arms crossed, knees drawn up; holding, holding on, this motion, unlike a ship's, smooths and contains the rocker. It's an inside kind of loneliness--wrapped tight like skin.

Then there is a loneliness that roams. No rocking can hold it down. It is alive, on its own. A dry and spreading thing that makes the sound of her own feet going seem to come from a far off place.

Everybody knew what she was called, but nobody anywhere knew her name. She can not be lost because no one is looking for her. Although she has claim, she is not claimed. Disremembered and unaccounted for, the girl who waited to be loved and cry shame, crumbled into her separate parts. Where the memory of the smile steel under her chin might have been and was not, a latch latched and lichen attached its apple green bloom to the metal. What made her think her fingernails could open locks the rain rained on? Better for her to return to the place where the grass parts and chewing laughter can swallow it all away. No one is looking for her and if they were how could they call her if they don't know her name?

which is why

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Down by the stream in back of 124 her footprints come and go, come and go. They are so familiar. Should a child, an adult place thier feet in them, they will fit. Take them out and they disappear again as though nobody ever walked there.

By and by all trace is gone and what is forgotten is not only the footprints, but the water too and what it is down there. The rest is weather. Not the breath of the disremembered, ~~the unaccounted for~~  
^ but wind in the eaves, or spring ice thawing too quickly.

Just weather. Certainly no clamor for the join.  
Beloved.  
A hot thing.

end

~~397~~