AP English 12/DiMatteo

*Beloved* background

General:

* Written by Toni Morrison (1931-present)
* Published in 1987
* Won Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved*, received Nobel Prize for literary contributions in 1993
* One of the top 5 most read books on college campuses

PLOT

**Present day: 1873, Ohio**

* Baby Suggs has a son, Halle, who married Sethe while at Sweet Home
* Sethe and Halle’s children: Howard, Buglar, Beloved, Denver (age 18)

\*Howard and Buglar ran away separately, before age 13

\*Beloved is a ghost, almost two years old at death, haunts 124

* Baby Suggs lived at 124 Bluestone Road, died when Denver was 10
* As of 1873, just Sethe and Denver live at 124
* Paul D Garner: knew Sethe as a slave on Sweet Home (Kentucky); hasn’t seen her in 18 yrs

**Flashbacks: 1850’s, Sweet Home plantation, Kentucky**

Slaves at Sweet Home: Baby Suggs, Halle, Paul D, Paul A, Paul F, Sixo, Sethe

Sweet Home owned by Mr. and Mrs. Garner

1855: Sethe pregnant w/ Denver, “those boys” and Schoolteacher abuse Sethe

(Mr. Garner dies; Mrs. Garner is ill, so she brings Schoolteacher to be overseer)

**Literary techniques/ writing style:**

Stream of consciousness

Flashback—happens frequently and without warning; watch for subtle shifts

Repetition—important!

Magical Realism—treating supernatural events as normal occurrences (i.e., having a haunted house)

Gothic style (ghost, setting, etc)

*Bildungsroman*—Sethe, Denver

**Themes/Motifs/Symbols:**

Nature—both positive and negative connotations

Iron/metal

Numbers

Color

Personification and Bestiality (opposite of personification)

Home

Slavery

Identity/naming

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*Beloved* Reader’s Journal Guidelines

REMINDER: The quotes that you choose should illuminate some significant element: plot development, characterization, motif/theme, symbol, writing technique/style, etc. Your response is NOT a summary or paraphrase but an explication of meaning. Use the following as an example:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| “The plash of water, the sight of her shoes and stocking awry on the path where she had flung them; or Here Boy lapping in the puddle near her feet, and suddenly there was Sweet Home rolling, rolling, rolling out before her eyes, and although there was not a leaf on that farm that did not make her want to scream, it rolled itself out before her in shameless beauty. It never looked as terrible as it was and it made her wonder if hell was a pretty place too.” (7) | The string of clauses at the beginning of this long sentence reinforces the idea that anything can trigger a painful flashback to the plantation where Sethe was a slave; the length of the sentence also shows how her present life is inextricably linked to her past. The repetition of the word “rolling” seems to emphasize how unstoppable a force memory is—like a bulldozer. There’s also obvious irony in the name “Sweet Home;” while it was beautiful, just the memory of the sight causes her pain and invokes an allusion to hell. While most people think of “home sweet home” as a tired but accurate cliché, this is obviously an example of harsh discrepancy between naming and reality, an important theme. I wonder what other elements in the novel are not what they seem? |

*Due Chapter: number of required quotes*

2/13 ch. 1: 10

2/15 ch. 2: 3, 3: 5

2/17 ch. 4: 3, ch. 5: 3

2/22 ch. 6: 3, ch. 7: 3; ch. 8: 3, ch. 9: 5

2/24 ch. 10: 3, ch. 11: 3, ch. 12: 3

2/27 ch. 13: 3, ch. 14: 1, ch. 15: 3

3/1 ch. 16: 3, ch. 17: 3, ch. 18: 3

3/3 ch. 19: 10

3/6 ch. 20: 2, 21: 2, 22: 2, 23: 2

3/8 ch. 24: 5, 25: 3

3/14 ch. 26: 10

3/15 ch. 27: 3, 28: 1

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