

# Beloved Response Journal

- Journal entries must be submitted to Turnitin.com by 7:05 AM on the due dates listed below:
  - Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> – 2 entries from Ch. 1-2 (*bold your favorite one*)
  - Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> – 2 entries from Ch. 4-6 (*bold your favorite one*)
  - Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> – 5 entries from Ch. 7-23 (*bold your favorite two*)
  - Jan. 11<sup>th</sup> – 2 entries from Ch. 20-25 (*bold your favorite one*)
  - Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup> – 2 entries from Ch. 26-28 (*bold your favorite one*)
- I may occasionally ask you to bring in a hardcopy your entries to begin a class discussion by reading a particular entry of my choice.
- Write the entries as you read – not days later.
- Each entry should be approximately ¼ to ½ page in length. I am looking for quality, not quantity.
- Make sure to include a page number citation after the quoted text for each entry.
- Although the two-column format is not required, I ask that you please use something close to the following layout for each of your entries:

“Record the text from *Beloved* in this space. Do not use the ellipsis mark before or after the quote, and I would prefer that you not use it in the middle of the quote either. If the quote is important enough to comment on, then quote it all. Don’t forget to include the page number citation after the quote.” (Citation)

Critical Analysis	Personal Response
<p>In this space you are to analyze Morrison’s use of language and her narrative techniques that you noted. Obviously, you won’t respond to all of these for each quote, but consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Discuss the language in a specific passage. How does the <b>diction</b> contribute to the overall tone? Consider <b>connotations</b>.</li> <li>◆ How is the personality of a specific <b>character</b> established within a specific passage or stanza? Consider the use of dialogue, foils, and/or actions.</li> <li>◆ <b>Setting</b> is often a pivotal factor in the development of them.</li> <li>◆ Consider a notable <b>literary technique</b> in the text? Is there <b>irony, satire, symbolism, allusions</b>, etc.? What is the impact of the technique on the overall work?</li> <li>◆ Are there any <b>predominant images</b> that keep recurring throughout the work?</li> <li>◆ Discuss how some of the characters or situations fit into the typical <b>archetypal</b> categories.</li> <li>◆ Explain the effect of any unusual <b>organizational or rhetorical strategies</b> in the work—multiple narrators; pacing elements (flashbacks, intercalary chapters, time lapses, etc.); unusual punctuation or use of italics; chapter divisions; syntax, like repetition of words and phrases or rhetorical questions; letters about events.</li> <li>◆ What are the key characteristics of the speaker of narrator?</li> <li>◆ How does this quotation connect with any of the in-class notes on the novel’s important symbols, allusions, or other significant elements?</li> </ul>	<p>In this space write your personal response. Express how the quote or events surrounding this quote make you feel. Write in first-person. The response in this column should be similar to how you write in Poetry Responses: you may make connections to your life, to other works of literature that you have read, songs, etc.</p>

# Exemplary Journal Entries

**Text:** “Paul D smiled then, remembering the bedding dress. Sethe was thirteen when she came to Sweet Home and already iron-eyed. She was a timely present for Mrs. Garner who had lost Baby Suggs to her husband’s high principles. The five Sweet Home men looked at the new girl and decided to let her be. They were young and so sick with the absence of women they had taken to calves. Yet they let the iron-eyed girl be, so she could choose in spite of the fact that each one would have beaten the others to mush to have her. It took her a year to choose – a long, tough year of thrashing on pallets eaten up with dreams of her. A year of yearning, when rape seemed the solitary gift of life. The restraint they had exercised possible only because they were Sweet Home men – the ones Mr. Garner bragged about while other farmers shook their heads in warning at the phrase.

‘Y’all got boys,’ he told them. ‘Young boys, old boys, picky boys, stroppin boys. Now at Sweet Home, my niggers is men every one of em. Bought em thataway, raised em thataway. Men every one.’ (10)

Critical Analysis	Personal Response
<p>This passage uses flashback as Paul D and Sethe reminisce about life back on Sweet Home. Paul D recalls in his mind and the narrator tells us his thoughts when Sethe came to live at Sweet Home. This use of third person omniscient point of view is important for the reader to understand what happens – not only from Paul D’s perspective but from Sethe’s as well. If we only knew Sethe’s thoughts, we would not understand the impact she had when she came to live at Sweet Home. The juxtaposition of these two ideas – the way the slaves at Sweet Home act and their desires – is an interesting manipulation of language by Morrison. It would be easy to see these slaves as “non-human” since she says that they have sex with the calves in the absence of women, but the inclusion of the detail that they practiced “restraint” with Sethe shows that they were men – real men. If they had “raped” her, which would be expected of slaves who used calves for sexual pleasure, then Morrison would validate the myth that slaves were not real men. But to practice “restraint” for one year – indicates that these Sweet Home men were exactly what Mr. Garner bragged about to other slave owners – his slaves were real men. The way Morrison juxtaposes the words “men” and “niggers” is also interesting in what she is doing and the life she creates at Sweet Home.</p>	<p>I find this passage intriguing. I know this is a slave narrative – and to write about these men as slaves is to be expected. But the way Morrison suggests that they were more than the stereotypical slave is interesting how she does that. I am not sure what is going on – Mr. Garner seems to take pride in his slaves. I know some white slaveholders valued their slaves, but Mr. Garner seems quite different. I am surprised that Morrison, an African-American writer, would make Mr. Garner a decent human being who likes his slaves. If this book is going to be an indictment of slavery and slaveholders, then I am a bit confused here. I really picked up on the word “restraint” in this paragraph. Joseph Conrad admired the “restraint” of the Africans in <i>Heart of Darkness</i> so much. Morrison appears to admire this quality in these characters as well. I think “restraint” is such an important word for the 21<sup>st</sup> century where excess seems to be the norm – not restraint. I love the way Morrison teases us with details and facts about what happened at Sweet Home. I know the name Sweet Home must be ironic – I mean it was a place of enslavement for Baby Suggs and her children, but it seems so nice and pleasant – almost “sweet,” yet the slaves were not free – so how “sweet”? I think Morrison teases us to want to know more than the typical slave narrative here – we want to know the precise details about this place. What made it good, yet what made it a terrible place also. I am intrigued by Baby Suggs’ husband’s “high principles” – can a slave have “high principles” – and yet I know as soon as I say that – of course he can! I feel at the mercy of Morrison’s manipulation of language – and for some reason I like it.</p>

**Text:** “When he turned his head, aiming for a last look at Brother, turned it as much as the rope that connected his neck to the axle of a buckboard allowed, and later on, when they fastened the iron around his ankles and clamped the wrists as well, there was no outward sign of trembling at all. Nor eighteen days after that when he saw the ditches; the one thousand feet of earth—five feet deep, five feet wide, into which wooden boxes had been fitted. A door of bars that you could life on hinges like a cage opened into three walls and a roof of scrap lumber and red dirt. Two feet over his head; three feet of open trench in front of him with anything that crawled or scurried welcome to share that grave that calling itself quarters. And there were forty-five more. He was sent there after trying to kill Brandywine, the man schoolteacher sold him to.” (106)

**Critical Analysis**

This accounting of Paul D’s prison days is another painful memory. Morrison uses many numbers in this passage—eighteen days, one thousand feet of earth, five feet deep, five feet wide, two feet over, three feet of open trench, and forty-five more. These numbers physically describe the scene, illustrating Morrison’s intense research of slave prisons. The numbers also give the passage a much more impersonal feel, a feeling that one would find at such prisons. The simile “like a cage” makes the prison seem like a holding cell for an animal.

**Personal Response**

Like Sethe, Paul D has had a rough past. It seems so archaic to me that prisoners wore ropes on their necks and fastened iron around their ankles and wrists. The prison guards must be going over the edge here—not only are the prisoner’s stuck in a clammy hole in the mud, they are restrained with rope and chains three different ways. At the end of the passage, Morrison says Paul d was here for an attempted murder at his new master. Given the unfathomable acts Schoolteacher committed, it is not imaginable what type of person Paul D’s new master was.

**Text:** “The twenty-eight 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—all that was 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 of the Fugitive bill, the Settlement Fee, God’s Ways and Negro pews; antislavery, manumission, skin voting, Republicans, Dred Scott, book learning, Sojourner’s high-wheeled buggy, the colored ladies of Delaware, Ohio, and other weighty issues that held them in chairs, scraping the floorboards or pacing them in agony or exhilaration.” (173)

**Critical Analysis**

This passage is narrated in third-person limited point of view from Sethe’s perspective. This choice gives the passage a slight tone of self-pity and dramatically increases pathos, or the audience’s pity for Sethe. The passage also makes use of lengthy periodic sentences to list all the things Sethe lost eighteen years ago. Finally, the list of Sethe’s losses has great variety of matters both of practical importance, like antislavery, to almost gossipy matters like “Sojourner’s high-wheeled buggy.” This variety gives a realistic view of the things one loses when one loses their neighbors, and thus increases pity for Sethe.

**Personal Response**

It continues to amaze me how this book plays with my feelings. I continue to shift from a disgust and horror of Sethe to an intense pity for her. How I can pity someone who murdered their child with no shame, I do not know, but this book masterfully makes me do so. I feel that Sethe is proud, too much so, but in spite, or perhaps because of it, she is piteous. Her losses, almost meaningless as they are to me, a white male in the twenty-first century, are nonetheless poignant because they feel as real as the things I might lose were all my neighbors and friends to suddenly despise me. It sounds so terrible.

**Text:** “A truth for all times, thought Denver. Maybe the white dress holding its arm around her mother’s dress was in pain. If so it could mean the baby ghost had plans. When she opened the door, Sethe was just leaving the keeping room.” (35)

**Critical Analysis**

This passage utilizes personification by making it seem as if the dress has the ability to feel pain. The passage also suggests that the baby ghost is controlling the dress to carry out plans. Either way the dress is being endowed with human-like qualities.

**Personal Response**

This passage intrigued me because prior to this point I was not sure if there actually was a ghost or not. The presence of the dress wrapping around Sethe’s waist is the first evidence that the reader is actually presented with. The passage had an ominous tone to it as well. I wonder if the baby really does have plans. Denver and Sethe seem fairly calm and content with the prospect of a ghost making plans. I suppose that is a common aspect of life for them now.

**Text:** “Trying to get to 124 for the second time now, he regretted that conversation: the high tone he took; his refusal to see the effect of marrow weariness in a woman he believed was a mountain. Now, too late, he understood her. The heard that pumped out love, the mouth that spoke the Word, didn’t count. They came in her yard anyway and she could not approve or condemn Sethe’s rough choice. One or the other might have saved her, but beaten up by the claims of both, she went to bed. The whitefolks had tired her out at last.” (180)

**Critical Analysis**

The diction used in this quote like “regretted,” “high tone,” “refusal,” and “weariness” led to a serious and somber tone. The metaphor referring Baby Suggs to a mountain shows how strong the elder females in the black community are seen. After the white man came into Baby Suggs’ land she had had enough and no longer felt safe or truly free from them since they could just show up on her property.

**Personal Response**

I felt so sad for Baby Suggs after reading this quote, but I felt like Stamp Paid’s realization of how Baby Suggs felt shed light on her character and actions as she dies slowly. I can also understand why she felt like the “Word” she preached was somewhat lost because some of the people in the black community not only disliked whites but also discriminated against other blacks based on what they had or did. It is sad for me because knowing that Baby Suggs died with this mind set leaves no hope for Sethe and her children.

