

Section 4, Passage #1 (pg 179)

They fought then. Like rivals over the heart of the loved, they fought. Each struggling for the nursing child.

Baby Suggs lost when she slipped in a red puddle and fell. So Denver took her mother's milk right along with the blood of her sister.

And that's the way they were when the sheriff returned, having commandeered a neighbor's cart, and ordered Stamp to drive it.

Outside a throng, now, of black faces stopped murmuring.

Holding the living child, Sethe walked past them in their silence and hers.

She climbed into the cart, her profile knife-clean against a cheery blue sky. A profile that shocked them with its clarity. Was her head a bit too high? Her back a little too straight?

Probably. Otherwise the singing would have begun at once, the moment she appeared in the doorway of the house on Bluestone Road.

Some cape of sound would have quickly been wrapped around her, like arms to hold and steady her on the way.

As it was, they waited till the cart turned about, headed west to town.

And then no words. Humming. No words at all.

Section 4, Passage #2 (pg 187)

"SHE WAS crawling already when I got here. One week, less, and the baby who was sitting up and turning over when I put her on the wagon was crawling already.

Devil of a time keeping her off the stairs.

Nowadays babies get up and walk soon's you drop em, but twenty years ago when I was a girl, babies stayed babies longer.

Howard didn't pick up his own head till he was nine months. Baby Suggs said it was the food, you know. If you ain't got nothing but milk to give em, well they don't do things so quick.

Milk was all I ever had. I thought teeth meant they was ready to chew. Wasn't nobody to ask. Mrs. Garner never had no children and we was the only women there."

She was spinning. Round and round the room.

Past the jelly cupboard, past the window, past the front door, another window, the sideboard, the keeping-room door, the dry sink, the stove--back to the jelly cupboard.

Paul D sat at the table watching her drift into view then disappear behind his back, turning like a slow but steady wheel.

Sometimes she crossed her hands behind her back. Other times she held her ears, covered her mouth or folded her arms across her breasts. Once in a while she rubbed her hips as he turned, but the wheel never stopped.

Section 4, Passage #3 (pg 194)

"Your love is too thick," he said, thinking, That bitch is looking at me; she is right over my head looking down through the floor at me.

"Too thick?" she said, thinking of the Clearing where Baby Suggs' commands knocked the pods off horse chestnuts. "Love is or it ain't. Thin love ain't love at all."

"Yeah. It didn't work, did it? Did it work?" he asked.

"It worked," she said.

"How? Your boys gone you don't know where. One girl dead, the other won't leave the yard. How did it work?"

"They ain't at Sweet Home. Schoolteacher ain't got em."

"Maybe there's worse."

"It ain't my job to know what's worse. It's my job to know what is and to keep them away from what I know is terrible. I did that."

"What you did was wrong, Sethe."

"I should have gone on back there? Taken my babies back there?"

"There could have been a way. Some other way."

"What way?"

"You got two feet, Sethe, not four," he said, and right then a forest sprang up between them; trackless and quiet.

Later he would wonder what made him say it. The calves of his youth? or the conviction that he was being observed through the ceiling?

How fast he had moved from his shame to hers. From his cold- house secret straight to her too-thick love.

Meanwhile the forest was locking the distance between them, giving it shape and heft.

Section 4, Passage #5 (pg 217)

"Schoolteacher left town," she said. "Filed a claim and rode on off.

They going to let you out for the burial," she said, "not the funeral, just the burial," and they did.

The sheriff 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 hair.

I believe a lot of folks were there, but I just saw the box.

Reverend Pike spoke in a real loud voice, but I didn't catch a word—except the first two, and three 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, you might say) what I did have and I'm sorry to this day I never thought to ask him for the whole thing: all I heard of what Reverend 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 slaughterhouse and the Saturday girls who worked its yard.

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 distraction.

I didn't understand it then. I thought you were mad with me. And now I know that if you was, you ain't now because you came back here to me and I was right all along: there is no world outside my door. I only need to know one thing. How bad is



the scar?