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OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING - WALT WHITMAN

Life of Walt Whitman

- **Born:** May 31, **1819**, in **New York**, USA.
- **Parents:** Walter Whitman and Van Velsor Whitman.
- **Died:** March 26, **1892**, in **Camden, New Jersey**.

Career

- **Walt Whitman** was a **poet**, **essayist**, **journalist**, and **humanist**.
- He worked in many roles: as a **journalist**, a **teacher**, a **government worker**, and even a **volunteer nurse during the American Civil War**.
- He believed in **humanism**, and his work shows a mix of **Transcendentalism** (belief in the spiritual connection between humans and nature) and **Realism** (a focus on real life and ordinary people).
- Known as the **"Father of Free Verse"**, because he **didn't use traditional rhyme or meter** in his poetry.
- He edited many newspapers, including:
  - **Long Island Star**
  - **Aurora**
  - **Brooklyn Daily Eagle**
  - **New Orleans Crescent**
  - He also started his own papers: **Long Islander** and **Free Soil**.

Titles and Reputation

- Called a **"Modern American Sage"** (wise man).
- Seen as the **"Prophet of Democracy"** and of **his own soul**.
- He was the **representative voice of 19th-century America**.
- Called the **"Founder of the Poetry of the Future"** and the **"National Poet of America"**.
- Influenced by **Ralph Waldo Emerson** and the ideas of **Transcendentalism**.
- He strongly supported **democracy** and **freedom**, and **opposed slavery**.
- However, he also feared that the **abolitionist movement** might cause **division** in the country.

Final Years & the "Deathbed Edition"

- In **1891**, just before he died, Whitman completed the final version of *Leaves of Grass*, known as the **"Deathbed Edition."**
- Over his lifetime, he published **seven different editions** of *Leaves of Grass*.
- During his final days, he wrote about his **constant pain**, saying:

> **"I suffer all the time, I have no relief, no escape: It is monotony – monotony – monotony – in pain."**

DETAILED SUMMARY

The Prologue" – Anne Bradstreet

Anne Bradstreet's *"The Prologue"* is a clever and powerful poem in which she discusses the **challenges faced by women poets** in a male-dominated society. Although she appears to be **modest** on the surface, she uses this **humble tone** to **sharply criticize gender inequality** in literature and society.

1. Women's Exclusion from Important Subjects

Bradstreet starts the poem by saying she cannot write about **important topics like wars, famous leaders, and the founding of governments or cities**. These are **considered "superior" subjects**, and society believes they are **only fit for male poets and historians**. She calls her own writing "obscure lines" and says they shouldn't interfere with or reduce the greatness of these grand subjects.

But this shows how **women are denied the right** to explore serious or public topics. **She is pointing out the unfair limits** placed on female poets.

2. Envy of Male Poets and Unequal Talent Distribution

She then expresses **admiration and jealousy** when reading the works of **Guillaume du Bartas**, a famous male poet of her time. She is amazed by his skill, but also frustrated that **the Muses gave all their poetic gifts to him** and left her with nothing. She says **Bartas can write whatever he wants**, but she is only able to write **based on her limited skill**.

This reflects **her frustration with the way society praises male poets** while **overlooking women**, no matter how hard they try.

3. Self-Doubt and Society's Low Expectations of Women

Bradstreet compares her poetry to things that are **naturally imperfect**—like a schoolboy's speech, a broken musical instrument, or flawed beauty. She says her Muse (her poetic inspiration) is **"foolish, broken, and blemished"**, and that no amount of learning or art can fix what **nature made defective**.

While this sounds like **self-criticism**, it is actually **a sarcastic way** of showing how **society assumes that women are naturally incapable** of greatness.

4. Art and Improvement Are Denied to Women

She refers to a story about a **famous Greek speaker** (likely Demosthenes), who **started with a speech problem but improved** through hard work. She says that **she can't do the same**, because **a "wounded brain" (as people see women's minds) can't be healed**.

Again, she uses **sarcasm** here. She is **mocking the belief** that **women's minds are too weak to be helped by education or practice**.

And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
I am the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

BRAHMA

- *Brahma* was first **published in December 1857** in *The Atlantic Monthly*.
- It was later included in **Emerson's poetry collection *May-Day and Other Pieces* (1867).**
- The poem was inspired by **Hindu philosophy**, particularly the **Bhagavad Gita** and the **Upanishads**, which Emerson read through translations like those by Sir William Jones and Charles Wilkins.
- The poem consists of **four quatrains** (four-line stanzas).
  - It follows a **regular structure**, maintaining a steady rhythm and symmetry throughout.
  - The speaker is **Brahma**, the supreme, formless essence of the universe, who presents paradoxes to challenge human perceptions.
  - The poem follows a **cross-rhyme (alternate rhyme) scheme: ABAB** in each quatrain.

SUMMARY

"Brahma" is a **philosophical poem** written from the perspective of **Brahma**, the Hindu god who represents the eternal, unchanging reality of the universe. The poem expresses the idea that **life and death, good and evil, and all opposites are illusions**, and that everything is part of the **divine unity**.

Stanza 1: The Illusion of Life and Death

If a person **kills someone** and believes that he has truly **ended a life**, he is **mistaken**. Similarly, if someone who is killed believes that he is really **dead**, he is also **wrong**. This is because they do not understand the **mysterious and subtle nature** of **Brahma**, the **eternal spirit** that lies behind all life. According to Brahma's truth, **no one really kills** and **no one really dies**, because the soul is **eternal**—it simply **changes form**, **lives**, **dies**, and is **reborn**. Life and death are **only illusions** in the great cycle controlled by Brahma.

Still, the **poet says that it's not just the hunters**—the gaps in the wall appear **on their own**, especially in **spring**, and **no one ever hears or sees them being made**. It's like **some unseen force** creates them.

Lines 12–27: Rebuilding the Wall Together

The poet asks his **neighbour to come over the hill** and see the wall's condition. Every spring, they meet to **repair the broken wall** that lies between their two lands.

As they work, they **each stay on their own side**, picking up the **fallen stones**. Some of the stones are shaped like **loaves of bread**, and others are **round like balls**, which makes them hard to balance. They **keep falling off**, and the men joke that they **need some magic spell** to make the stones stay.

Their **hands get sore** from lifting the heavy rocks, but they enjoy this task—**it feels like a game**, with **each person on one side**, like a sport played outdoors. Even though the poet believes that **nature doesn't like walls**, the two of them **keep rebuilding it anyway**.

The poet then mentions their different types of trees. His neighbour has **pine trees**, while he has **apple trees**, and he jokes that his **apple trees won't go over** and eat his neighbour's pine cones. But the neighbour doesn't laugh or argue—he just repeats, **"Good fences make good neighbours."**

Lines 28–45: Questioning the Need for Walls

The **spring air makes the poet playful**. He feels like teasing his neighbour. He questions why they even **need a wall**, especially since there are **no cows** to keep in or out. He wants to understand: **What are we protecting? Who are we keeping out or keeping in?** If he were going to build a wall, he'd want to know **what it's for**.

The poet **repeats again**—there is something in the world that **does not love a wall**. He wishes he could get some **magical beings, like elves**, to tell his neighbour this truth. But he knows the neighbour **won't believe it** unless he figures it out for himself.

Then the poet watches his neighbour **carrying a stone**, holding it carefully with both hands. He **looks like a caveman**, like someone from **ancient times**, still following **old traditions**. He is **stuck in the darkness of ignorance**, not because of **shade from trees**, but because of his **blind loyalty to the past**.

The neighbour is clearly **not going to change**. He's just repeating the old idea he learned from his father:

"Good fences make good neighbours."

Structure

- Written in **blank verse** (unrhymed iambic pentameter), which gives it a natural, conversational rhythm.

THE ANTI-SUFFRAGIST - CHARLOTTE ANNA PERKINS GILMAN

Early Life and Background

- **Born** on **July 3, 1860**, in **Hartford, Connecticut**.
- Her **father**, **Frederick Beecher Perkins**, was a librarian and writer but abandoned the family early. Gilman was raised mostly by her **mother**, **Mary Fitch Westcott Perkins**.
- Despite growing up in **poverty**, she was influenced by **intellectual figures**, including her **great-aunt, Harriet Beecher Stowe**, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
- Gilman had **limited formal schooling**, but she was largely **self-educated** and developed a passion for **reading and writing** early in life.

Personal Struggles

Marriage and Motherhood

- **Married artist Charles Walter Stetson** in **1884** and had a daughter, **Katharine**, in **1885**.
- After **giving birth**, Gilman suffered from **severe postpartum depression**, leading to a **nervous breakdown**.
- She was treated by **Dr. S. Weir Mitchell**, who prescribed the **"rest cure"**, a controversial treatment that forbade intellectual or creative activities.
- This experience inspired her famous short story, "**The Yellow Wallpaper**" (1892), which critiques the **patriarchal medical establishment** and the oppression of women.

Divorce and Independence

- She **separated from Stetson in 1888** and later **divorced him in 1894**—a bold decision for a woman at the time.
- She sent **her daughter** to live with her **ex-husband** and his new wife, a move criticized by society but which allowed her to **focus on her writing** and **activism**.

Career and Activism

Feminist and Social Reformer

- Gilman became a **leading figure in the women's suffrage movement** and an important feminist theorist.
- She advocated for **economic independence** for women and challenged **traditional gender roles**.
- Her work focused on **women's rights, labor reform**, and **social equality**.

Writing Career

- Gilman wrote **numerous essays, poems, short stories**, and **novels**.
- She is best known for her **semi-autobiographical short story**, "**The Yellow Wallpaper**,"
- which critiques the treatment of women's **mental health**.

- His writings laid the groundwork for the modern environmental movement.

Self-Reliance and Individualism:

- Influenced by Transcendentalism, Thoreau emphasized the importance of living authentically and independently.

Civil Disobedience and Social Justice:

- Thoreau's ideas on nonviolent resistance and moral integrity have inspired countless social and political movements.

Simplicity and Minimalism:

- Thoreau's experiment at Walden Pond was a testament to the virtues of living simply and intentionally.

Legacy

- Thoreau is regarded as one of America's greatest literary and philosophical figures.
- His works have influenced environmentalism, civil rights, and the philosophy of nonviolent resistance.
- His emphasis on living in harmony with nature remains particularly relevant in the modern era of environmental crises.

WHERE I LIVED, AND WHAT I LIVED FOR

At a certain season of our life we are accustomed to consider every spot as the possible site of a house. I have thus surveyed the country on every side within a dozen miles of where I live. In imagination I have bought all the farms in succession, for all were to be bought, and I knew their price. I walked over each farmer's premises, tasted his wild apples, discoursed on husbandry with him, took his farm at his price, at any price, mortgaging it to him in my mind; even put a higher price on it,—took everything but a deed of it,—took his word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk,—cultivated it, and him too to some extent, I trust, and withdrew when I had enjoyed it long enough, leaving him to carry it on. This experience entitled me to be regarded as a sort of real-estate broker by my friends. Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly. What is a house but a sedes, a seat?—better if a country seat. I discovered many a site for a house not likely to be soon improved, which some might have thought too far from the village, but to my eyes the village was too far from it. Well, there I might live, I said; and there I did live, for an hour, a summer and a winter life; saw how I could let the years run off, buffet the winter through, and see the spring come in. The future inhabitants of this region, wherever they may place their houses, may be sure that they have been anticipated. An afternoon sufficed to lay out the land into orchard, woodlot, and pasture,

and to decide what fine oaks or pines should be left to stand before the door, and whence each blasted tree could be seen to the best advantage; and then I let it lie, fallow perchance, for a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.

My imagination carried me so far that I even had the refusal of several farms,—the refusal was all I wanted,—but I never got my fingers burned by actual possession. The nearest that I came to actual possession was when I bought the Hollowell place, and had begun to sort my seeds, and collected materials with which to make a wheelbarrow to carry it on or off with; but before the owner gave me a deed of it, his wife—every man has such a wife,—changed her mind and wished to keep it, and he offered me ten dollars to release him. Now, to speak the truth, I had but ten cents in the world, and it surpassed my arithmetic to tell, if I was that man who had ten cents, or who had a farm, or ten dollars, or all together. However, I let him keep the ten dollars and the farm too, for I had carried it far enough; or rather, to be generous, I sold him the farm for just what I gave for it, and, as he was not a rich man, made him a present of ten dollars, and still had my ten cents, and seeds, and materials for a wheelbarrow left. I found thus that I had been a rich man without any damage to my poverty. But I retained the landscape, and I have since annually carried off what it yielded without a wheelbarrow. With respect to landscapes,—

"I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute."

I have frequently seen a poet withdraw, having enjoyed the most valuable part of a farm, while the crusty farmer supposed that he had got a few wild apples only. Why, the owner does not know it for many years when a poet has put his farm in rhyme, the most admirable kind of invisible fence, has fairly impounded it, milked it, skimmed it, and got all the cream, and left the farmer only the skimmed milk.

The real attractions of the Hollowell farm, to me, were; its complete retirement, being, about two miles from the village, half a mile from the nearest neighbor, and separated from the highway by a broad field; its bounding on the river, which the owner said protected it by its fogs from frosts in the spring, though that was nothing to me; the gray color and ruinous state of the house and barn, and the dilapidated fences, which put such an interval between me and the last occupant; the hollow and lichen-covered apple trees, gnawed by rabbits, showing what kind of neighbors I should have; but above all, the recollection I had of it from my earliest voyages up the river, when the house was concealed behind a dense grove of red maples, through which I heard the house-dog bark. I was in haste to buy it, before the proprietor finished getting out some rocks, cutting down the hollow apple trees, and grubbing up some young birches which had sprung up in the pasture, or, in short, had made any more of his improvements. To enjoy these

advantages I was ready to carry it on; like Atlas, to take the world on my shoulders,—I never heard what compensation he received for that,—and do all those things which had no other motive or excuse but that I might pay for it and be unmolested in my possession of it; for I knew all the while that it would yield the most abundant crop of the kind I wanted if I could only afford to let it alone. But it turned out as I have said.

All that I could say, then, with respect to farming on a large scale, (I have always cultivated a garden,) was, that I had had my seeds ready. Many think that seeds improve with age. I have no doubt that time discriminates between the good and the bad; and when at last I shall plant, I shall be less likely to be disappointed. But I would say to my fellows, once for all, As long as possible live free and uncommitted. It makes but little difference whether you are committed to a farm or the county jail.

Old Cato, whose "De Re Rusticâ" is my "Cultivator," says, and the only translation I have seen makes sheer nonsense of the passage, "When you think of getting a farm, turn it thus in your mind, not to buy greedily; nor spare your pains to look at it, and do not think it enough to go round it once. The oftener you go there the more it will please you, if it is good." I think I shall not buy greedily, but go round and round it as long as I live, and be buried in it first, that it may please me the more at last.

The present was my next experiment of this kind, which I purpose to describe more at length; for convenience, putting the experience of two years into one. As I have said, I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up.

When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident, was on Independence Day, or the Fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defence against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough, weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated with dew, so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum would exude from them. To my imagination it retained throughout the day more or less of this auroral character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited the year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth every where.

The only house I had been the owner of before, if I except a boat, was a tent, which I used occasionally when making excursions in the summer, and this is still rolled up in my garret; but the boat, after passing from hand to hand, has gone down the stream of time. With this more substantial shelter about me, I had made some progress toward settling in the world. This frame, so slightly clad, was a sort of crystallization around me, and reacted on the builder. It was suggestive somewhat as a picture in outlines. I did not need to go outdoors to take the air, for the atmosphere within had lost none of its freshness. It was not so much within doors as behind a door where I sat, even in the rainiest weather. The Harivansa says, "An abode without birds is like a meat without seasoning." Such was not my abode, for I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them. I was not only nearer to some of those which commonly frequent the garden and the orchard, but to those wilder and more thrilling songsters of the forest which never, or rarely, serenade a villager, — the wood-thrush, the veery, the scarlet tanager, the field-sparrow, the whippoorwill, and many others.

I was seated by the shore of a small pond, about a mile and a half south of the village of Concord and somewhat higher than it, in the midst of an extensive wood between that town and Lincoln, and about two miles south of that our only field known to fame, Concord Battle Ground; but I was so low in the woods that the opposite shore, half a mile off, like the rest, covered with wood, was my most distant horizon. For the first week, whenever I looked out on the pond it impressed me like a tarn high up on the side of a mountain, its bottom far above the surface of other lakes, and, as the sun arose, I saw it throwing off its nightly clothing of mist, and here and there, by degrees, its soft ripples or its smooth reflecting surface was revealed, while the mists, like ghosts, were stealthily withdrawing in every direction into the woods, as at the breaking up of some nocturnal conventicle. The very dew seemed to hang upon the trees later into the day than usual, as on the sides of mountains.

This small lake was of most value as a neighbor in the intervals of a gentle rain storm in August, when, both air and water being perfectly still, but the sky overcast, mid-afternoon had all the serenity of evening, and the wood-thrush sang around, and was heard from shore to shore. A lake like this is never smoother than at such a time; and the clear portion of the air above it being shallow and darkened by clouds, the water, full of light and reflections, becomes a lower heaven itself so much the more important. From a hill top near by, where the wood had been recently cut off, there was a pleasing vista southward across the pond, through a wide indentation in the hills which form the shore there, where their opposite sides sloping toward each other suggested a stream flowing out in that direction through a wooded valley, but stream there was none. That way I looked between and over the near green hills to some distant and higher ones in the horizon, tinged with blue. Indeed, by standing on tiptoe I could catch a glimpse of some of the peaks of the still

bluer and more distant mountain ranges in the north-west, those true-blue coins from heaven's own mint, and also of some portion of the village. But in other directions, even from this point, I could not see over or beyond the woods which surrounded me. It is well to have some water in your neighborhood, to give buoyancy to and float the earth. One value even of the smallest well is, that when you look into it you see that earth is not continent but insular. This is as important as that it keeps butter cool. When I looked across the pond from this peak toward the Sudbury meadows, which in time of flood I distinguished elevated perhaps by a mirage in their seething valley, like a coin in a basin, all the earth beyond the pond appeared like a thin crust insulated and floated even by this small sheet of interverting water, and I was reminded that this on which I dwelt was but dry land.

Though the view from my door was still more contracted, I did not feel crowded or confined in the least. There was pasture enough for my imagination. The low shrub-oak plateau to which the opposite shore arose, stretched away toward the prairies of the West and the steppes of Tartary, affording ample room for all the roving families of men. "There are none happy in the world but beings who enjoy freely a vast horizon," —said Damodara, when his herds required new and larger pastures.

WHERE I LIVED, AND WHAT I LIVED FOR
DETAILED SUMMARY

1. Imagining Ownership of Farms

- Thoreau begins by reflecting on a common human tendency: **at a certain stage in life, people consider various locations as potential sites for a home.** He humorously describes how he "surveyed" the countryside within a dozen miles of Concord, imagining himself buying every farm he encountered.
- He walked over each property, tasted wild apples, discussed farming with the owners, and even mentally mortgaged the land. Though he never actually purchased any farms, he enjoyed the experience of imagining ownership and felt entitled to be seen as a **"sort of real-estate broker"** by his friends.
- Thoreau emphasizes that **the true value of a place lies in its potential and beauty, not in its physical possession.** He describes how he could mentally transform a piece of land into an orchard, woodlot, or pasture, deciding which trees to keep and where to place his house. He concludes that **a person is "rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone."**

- Emerson argues that this **power of vision** is a gift, not a curse. He challenges the fear that philosophers might see truths beyond **Nature** and **God**, suggesting that such fear stems from a lack of bravery and a reluctance to embrace the unknown.
- He sees the present age as one of **Revolution**, where the old and new coexist, and the energies of men are tested by **fear and hope**. Despite the challenges, Emerson believes the age is a good one, filled with **auspicious signs** in poetry, art, philosophy, science, church, and state.

The Upgrading of the Lowest Class

- One significant sign of progress is the **upgrading of the lowest class** in society. This theme has become central in British and American literature, shifting focus from the **sublime and beautiful** to the **commonplace** and **ordinary**.
- Writers now explore themes like **poverty, child psychology, street life, and household life**, reflecting a new vigor that has awakened the lowest classes and infused life into their hands and feet.
- Emerson supports this shift, emphasizing the importance of **common themes** over the remote and romantic. He encourages people to find meaning in everyday things, such as a **meal in a firkin**, a **ballad sung in the street**, or the **glance of an eye**, as these reveal the presence of the **Universal Soul**.
- He sees **unity** in the world, where even the lowest and highest are connected by the same soul, giving form and order to what might otherwise seem a chaotic miscellany.

Pantheism and the Unity of All

- Emerson identifies **God with the universe**, a pantheistic idea that inspired writers like **Oliver Goldsmith, Robert Burns, William Cowper, Goethe, and Wordsworth**. This belief reveals the beauty and wonder of **near objects**, binding them to the distant through the **oneness of all**.
- This perspective leads to fruitful discoveries, as it shows that even a **drop of water** is a small ocean and that **man is related to all of nature**. It transforms the mundane into the sublime, inspiring writers to explore the low and common with the same reverence as the grand and remote.

Emanuel Swedenborg and Mysticism

- Emerson highlights the contributions of **Emanuel Swedenborg**, a Swedish philosopher and mystic who sought to reconcile **Christian beliefs** with a **philosophic science of morals**.
- Swedenborg saw a connection between **Nature** and the **affections of the human soul**, interpreting the visible world as a symbol of the spiritual. He revealed the link between **moral evil** and foul material forms, showing how moral corruption can lead to **insanity**.

MAJOR WORKS OF TONI MORRISON

Novels

Title	Year	Key Themes
The Bluest Eye	1970	Internalized racism, beauty standards, childhood trauma.
Sula	1973	Friendship, betrayal, gender roles in Black communities.
Song of Solomon	1977	African American identity, flight as a symbol of escape.
Tar Baby	1981	Love, race, class tensions between Black and white cultures.
Beloved	1987	Slavery's trauma, motherhood, ghostly hauntings of history.
Jazz	1992	Love, violence, and music set in 1920s Harlem.
Paradise	1997	Religious zealotry, violence, and racial identity.
Love	2003	Interpersonal relationships, obsession, and power.
A Mercy	2008	17th-century slavery, religious tolerance, female agency.
Home	2012	A Black soldier's struggles with PTSD after the Korean War.
God Help the Child	2015	Childhood trauma and colorism.

Essays and Nonfiction

- Playing in the Dark (1992): A study of race in American literature.
- What Moves at the Margin (2008): A collection of her essays and speeches.
- The Source of Self-Regard (2019): A posthumous collection of her speeches, essays, and reflections.

Children's Books (with son Slade Morrison)

- The Big Box (1999)
- The Book of Mean People (2002)
- Peeny Butter Fudge (2009)

AWARDS AND HONORS

Award	Year	Work
National Book Critics Circle Award	1977	*Song of Solomon*
Pulitzer Prize for Fiction	1988	*Beloved*
Nobel Prize in Literature	1993	Lifetime achievement
Presidential Medal of Freedom	2012	Lifetime achievement
American Academy of Arts and Letters Gold Medal	2000	Lifetime achievement
Legion of Honor (France)	2010	Lifetime achievement

Legacy and influence

- **First Black woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature**.
- Reclaimed **African American history and identity** through storytelling.
- Inspired writers such as **Ta-Nehisi Coates, Jesmyn Ward, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**.
- Her novel **Beloved** is considered one of the **greatest American novels ever written**.

- **White people** to **plants**
- And believes the **anger from slavery** created a **wild emotional jungle** that made whites **act like animals** out of fear.

Chapter 20: Sethe Becomes the Mother She Never Had

Sethe is **completely convinced** now that **Beloved is her dead daughter**, returned to her in human form. She sees all the **signs and coincidences** that prove it.

Since they are finally **reunited**, Sethe starts to **mother Beloved properly**—teaching her the things a **mother teaches a daughter**. Sethe never really knew her own mother, who was a **nameless woman working in the rice fields**. Now, Sethe wants to become the **kind of mother she always wished she had**.

Chapter 21: Denver's Devotion to Beloved

Denver also believes that Beloved is her **sister reborn**. When **Paul D came to 124**, he **scared away the ghost**, and Denver lost her only **companion**. While waiting for her **father** to return, Denver used to **talk to the ghost** as if it were her friend.

Denver had always been a little **afraid of Sethe**, but when Beloved appeared, she felt a **strong need to protect her** from their mother. Denver remembers the time when she couldn't hear for a while, but she began to recover her hearing when she felt the **baby ghost crawling up the stairs**, breathing along with her. Now, Denver loves Beloved **passionately and possessively**, feeling like it's her job to keep her safe.

Chapter 22 – Beloved's Inner Thoughts

This chapter shows **Beloved's thoughts** in **fragmented, dream-like language**. She seems to remember **a dead man**, possibly someone from her past life, and is fascinated by his **white teeth** and a mysterious **"hot thing"**—possibly representing **violence or passion**.
She talks about **white men** doing **unpleasant and confusing things** to her, though the details are vague. She sees a **woman** in three forms:

- One carrying a basket of **flowers**.
- Another with **iron around her neck** (possibly enslaved).
- Then wearing **diamond earrings** (perhaps representing freedom or transformation).

Beloved watches this woman from a **bridge**, thinking she will **smile at her**. But when she sees the **woman's face in the water**, it **eats her own face**, and her **old self floats away**. After losing her old self, she searches for **a place to go**, and that's how she **finds 124**.

Chapter 23 – Beloved's Obsession and Denver's Protection

Beloved believes that she and Sethe have **lost and found each other**. She says she **came back from the dead** to find Sethe. Denver warns Beloved **not to love Sethe too much**, but Beloved already **loves her obsessively**.

- Shortly after, Willy contradicts himself, declaring that Biff is **not lazy**, highlighting his unstable mindset.
- This pattern of **contradiction** becomes a recurring theme in Willy's character.

Biff and Happy's Conversation

- Willy's loud rambling wakes Biff and Happy, who speculate that he had another accident.
- Linda returns to bed, and Willy goes to the kitchen to eat.
- Biff and Happy reminisce about their **youth** and the **"good old days."**
  - **Happy** is more confident and successful, working a steady job in New York, though he feels unfulfilled.
  - **Biff** appears worn, apprehensive, and confused, feeling he has **"wasted his life"** by hopping from job to job.
- Biff is disillusioned by the disparity between his life and the **notions of success** Willy instilled in him as a boy.

The Brothers' Aspirations and Frustrations

- Happy expresses dissatisfaction with the **corporate rat race** and fantasizes about going **out west** with Biff.
  - Despite this, Happy still dreams of becoming an **important executive**.
  - He engages in unethical behavior, such as sleeping with his superiors' girlfriends and taking **bribes**, to climb the corporate ladder.
- Biff plans to ask **Bill Oliver**, a former employer, for a loan to buy a **ranch**.
  - He wonders if Oliver still believes he stole a carton of **basketballs** while working for him.
- Happy encourages Biff, emphasizing that Biff is **"well liked"**—a key measure of success in the Loman household.

Willy's Unstable Behavior

- Biff and Happy are **disgusted** to hear Willy talking to himself downstairs, a sign of his deteriorating mental state.
- They try to go back to sleep, but the tension in the household is palpable.

Willy's First Daydream: The Past Comes Alive

- Willy becomes lost in a **daydream**, reliving memories of his sons' **childhood**.
- **Young Biff** and **Happy** are washing and waxing Willy's car after he returns from a sales trip.
- Biff tells Willy he "borrowed" a **football** from the locker room to practice, and Willy laughs, showing his approval of Biff's rebelliousness.

Brutus Jones Enters in Royal Uniform

Brutus Jones, a **middle-aged African American man**, walks in. He is wearing **fancy clothes** like a military-style uniform, a **hat, shiny shoes, and spurs**. He looks **angry** and is carrying a **revolver (gun)**. Smithers, who seems both **nervous and bold**, asks Jones if he has noticed anything different today. Jones says no. Smithers then **sarcastically asks** where all the **cabinet members and court officials** have gone. Jones calmly replies that they are in **town**. He jokes that **Smithers drinks with them** every day. Smithers says he **has to** because of his business. Jones **mocks him**, and Smithers gets angry. He reminds Jones that he used to work for him when he came to the island. Jones **touches his gun**, reminding Smithers who's boss. Smithers quickly **apologizes**.

Jones Talks About His Past and Rise to Power

Jones accepts Smithers's apology and explains that he is no longer the man he was before. He reminds Smithers that he was once a **good worker**, even though he had been in **jail**. Smithers agrees but gets mad when Jones says **Smithers was in jail too**. Then Jones proudly says it only took him **two years to go from a stowaway to an emperor**.

Money, Power, and His Way of Ruling

Smithers asks Jones if he has **saved any money**. Jones says he has money in a **foreign bank** that **only he can touch**. He explains that he didn't become emperor for **fame**, but to **give the natives what they want – a big show** – and **collect taxes** from them. Jones says he knows **Smithers breaks laws** through **dishonest trading**, but he lets it go even though he made those laws himself.

Smithers says the natives are **broke from taxes**, and Jones is breaking his own rules. Jones **laughs** and says **laws don't apply to emperors**. He says there are two kinds of stealing: **small stealing and big stealing**. People go to **jail for small crimes**, but **people who steal big become emperors**. Jones says he learned this from **rich white men** while working as a **Pullman porter** (a train worker).

The Story of the Silver Bullet

Smithers says Jones was **lucky to scare the natives**. Jones agrees that part of his success was **luck**, especially the **silver bullet story**. He tells how **Lem**, a native leader, once **hired a man to shoot him**, but the man **missed**, and Jones **killed him**. After that, Jones told the people that **only a silver bullet** could kill him. He says they believed it because silver bullets are **rare and expensive**, so they **feared him**.

Jones even **had a silver bullet made** – just in case he needs to **kill himself one day**. He told the natives that **he is the only one strong enough to shoot himself**. He shows Smithers the bullets in his revolver: **five lead bullets** and **one silver bullet**.

Scene 11

Stanley's Poker Game and Mitch's Tension

In the kitchen, **Stanley, Mitch, Steve, and Pablo** are playing poker, while **Eunice enters**. Stanley brags about his **army exploits** during the war, but Mitch seems upset by Stanley's constant boasting. Mitch tries to accuse Stanley of bragging but can't quite get the words out.

Meanwhile, **Eunice meets Stella in the bedroom**, where **Blanche is taking a bath**. Stella has told Blanche that she made arrangements for her to "rest in the country," but in reality, Stella has arranged for **Blanche to be taken to a mental institution**. Stella reassures Blanche by saying she has "got it mixed in her mind with Shep Huntleigh." After Blanche closes the bathroom door, Stella expresses her disbelief at Blanche's story, but Eunice advises that life must continue.

Blanche's Growing Suspicion

Blanche emerges from the bathroom in a **satin robe**. At the poker table, Mitch seems **depressed**. When Stanley's voice is heard from the bedroom, Blanche grows suspicious and wonders what is going on. **Eunice and Stella** try to calm her, but this only increases Blanche's anxiety. She insists that she is going on **vacation**, but in a fearful, almost nonsensical way, she talks about dying from eating an unwashed grape and being buried at sea.

As Blanche becomes more frantic, the **Doctor and Matron** approach the apartment. **The Doctor rings the doorbell**, and **Eunice answers the door**, telling Blanche she has a visitor. Blanche assumes it's **Shep**. **Eunice pretends it is Shep**, and Blanche walks nervously past the men playing poker.

Blanche's Final Departure

Blanche, now visibly distressed, makes her way toward the **bedroom**, but Stanley blocks her way. He asks if she forgot something, and Blanche, feeling cornered, moves past him into the bedroom. Meanwhile, **Stella** is tormented on the porch, **closing her eyes in sorrow** as Eunice comforts her.

As Blanche enters the bedroom, **Stanley follows her**, tearing off the **paper lantern** from the light bulb as a symbolic final act of destroying her illusions. Blanche screams and tries to escape but is restrained by the **Matron**.

Blanche's Breakdown and Stanley's Victory

Blanche begs to be left alone, but Stanley insists on removing the lantern, further shattering her fragile façade. She attempts to push past the Matron, but the **Matron grabs her**, and Blanche struggles wildly, crying out and dropping to her knees.

The Matron suggests putting **Blanche in a straightjacket**, but the **Doctor** says it's unnecessary unless absolutely necessary. The Doctor approaches Blanche, who looks at him in a pleading way. He gently draws her up, and she takes his arm. As the Doctor