Nov. 11: *Beloved* to p. 75 Vintage (p. 63 Plume); *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1831)

> Love is obviously and essential theme in *Beloved*. The important thing I am focusing on this time reading the novel is each character's perception of love. Each character's perception is slowly revealed, Sethe's being last. Denver's seems to be introduced first: she associates love with a person "sticking around," which is why she 1) feels lonely and brings up that she is never liked and 2) why she asks Paul D how long he will be around. Paul D has a very tragic perception of love: ""The best thing he knew, was to love just a little bit..." (54). Sethe's perception flickers in these chapters, I know it, but I cannot reveal it.

> White woman gave oranges as a Christmas present? Denver's condition "wore her out." On the verge of breaking down.
- Paul D asks to move in.
- Amy wants to find carmine velvet--any relationship with blood?
- Denver sees the dress but Sethe doesn't.
- Theme: nothing ever dies, eternal.
- What kind of plans does the baby have? Just because Paul D moved in?
- Sethe asks if it's alright to feel--proves her insensitivity and her numbness
- Sethe becomes color blind--she can only see colors around the time when her baby was dying and only remembers the color of the pink tombstone.
- Paul D brings about the real things in everybody.
- Paul D says he couldn't imagine living with a woman, explains his stay with Sethe by saying that not only did she pull him in but so did her house.
- Sethe and Paul D don't have a proper marriage. Sinful? Sacreligious?
- Paul D disses Denver and even though Sethe is mad at her she stands up for her. Shows their love. Paul D "Risky, very risky. For a used-to-be slave woman to love anything that much was dangerous..."
- "Two pennis and an insult were well spent if it meant seeing the spectacle of whitefolks making spectacles of themselves."
- Vision of a fully dressed women walking out of water (almost as if she were Aphrodite-girl by the water)
- Sethe compares her urinating to her being pregnant, kind of weird.
- Beloved becomes Denver's "patient"
- Ironic how denver says Here Boy won't come back.
- Speaking different languages (Babel)
- How did Beloved know those things about Sethe?
Beloved acts as a temptation for Paul D. He gets jealous: "If her shining was not for him, who then?"

Sethe wants to plan but is stuck in the past.

Halle is compared to a king

Why couldn’t Paul D talk to Halle? What was in his mouth?

There's a lot of red and orange imagery (red heart, carmine, oranges, orange circles on quilt)

Beloved is very mysterious and sends a bad vibe.

Because I still find myself in a state of confusion I have come up with several points of confusion. In the notes it describes the symbolic change in food. I found that I semi-understood that food was linked to memory, but going back I had not realized its connection to mourning and sex. Second, Beloved has confused me more than I could have imagined. I feel the connection between the dead baby and Beloved, but why now? Furthermore, why does Paul D consider Beloved a nuisance? Why doesn't Sethe and Denver find her to be a nuisance? Finally, how does one mysteriously emerge from the river and not remember a thing? I noticed the reference to the Middle Passage in the notes, is the river symbolic of this?

Sethe is definitely stuck, even in freedom, by her experiences as a slave. She tries to keep the past “at bay,” but also has no future—she is stuck in the present, never running, but never moving forward and keeping herself shut out from everyone.

Beloved’s appearance is definitely strange: it’s like a cross between birth and very old age. Beloved emerges from water, which recalls birth; cannot hold her head up well; cannot open her eyes; sleeps a lot, and has very smooth, new skin. However, she is fully dressed; she can hardly breathe; and she’s sickly and weak but does manage to walk.

Sethe also compares lines on Beloved’s forehead to baby hairs, but she does have “masses of black yarn under her hat.” Beloved’s appearance seems like a rebirth, both a dying and a coming back to life.

The “birth” seems to be going in reverse: first Beloved emerges from the water, then Sethe sees her (all I could picture was a doctor saying “I see the head!”), and then Sethe’s water breaks. Everything is exaggerated or large-scale: Beloved emerges from a river, Sethe releases a “flood” of water, and Beloved drinks a huge amount of water. The drinking of water as Sethe releases water might be connected to the image of “feeding” that connects Sethe and Beloved: Beloved likes sweet things, “any type of dessert Sethe brought home,” and “Sethe was licked, tasted, eaten by Beloved’s eyes.” Beloved is also described as “greedy” for Sethe’s stories, and “it became a way to feed her.”

From what I could understand, when Nan is telling Sethe about her mother on page 74, she’s saying how Sethe’s mother had many children (some with white men), and she
“threw them all away...unnamed” except for Sethe. Sethe says she was “unimpressed” as a child and “angry” as an adult. I can only assume that a child wouldn’t understand, and that as a mother herself Sethe couldn’t understand throwing away one’s children—at least not so carelessly. Sethe could only understand it if it was to protect the child (as this is her own reason—sorry for the spoilers).

>These chapters seem to play off each-other as well as those from Tuesday's reading. See below:
¶I found it ironic that Denver would choose 'the wood' as a sanctuary to relax and reflect: Quite a transition from "Boys hanging from the most beautiful sycamore trees" as described in Chapter 1. May be meant to highlight the white man's perversion of a place that was once peaceful and calm? This characterization could possibly parallel the stench of rotting roses on the way to and back from the carnival.
¶I also felt like the arrival of 'Beloved' came at a particularly peculiar time: Chapter 4 leaves off on a pleasant note, with the shadows of Sethe, Denver, and Paul D holding hands. 'Beloved' stumbles into the picture just as the plot seems to be hitting somewhat of an apex. Not only are Sethe and Denver slowly beginning to 'reintegrate' themselves into society, but the tension between Paul D and Denver seems to be less visible.
¶Parallels between the 'Beloved’s:
1. Name
2. Lack of memory (much like a baby, which has nothing to remember)
3. Baby skin!
4. Can’t walk well: although I think there are references to her walking being similar to that of the elderly - so this parallel may not hold-up
5. Sethe’s urination: References to the breaking of water
6. The dog is nowhere to be found
7. **Lifting of chair... maybe a reference to the ghost's supernatural strength? (After all, did ram a dog against a wall!)
8. Attachment to Sethe
9. Sleeps A LOT.
¶Probably more... The end of Chapter 6 sort of questions Beloved’s ability to 'know which questions to ask'

> This book is easier to comprehend than a mercy, but still it is no easy task deciphering the plot of the book, at least for me. Denver seems to have an aversion which becomes even more apparent when Paul D takes her and seethe to the fair. She dislike him and wants him to move on because he is taking her place. Then they meet a woman by the name of beloved. She seems to know more than usual about denver. continuing with the
ghost theme, I would guess that this is the elder version of the ghost of Beloved, te
deadbaby, or something along those lines. I am still confused on the Paul D's role
however.

> I feel like I'm looking at random pieces of a big puzzle.

¶ I have a question:

Is Chapter 3, the story of Amy, about the birth of Denver? (The past of Sethe?)

¶ And here's my short comment:

¶ While reading I was disturbed by Paul D, who tried to distract Sethe and Denver from
the house by bringing them to a festival -- the place where their "rememory[p.36a]" and
"the world out there" are interconnected. (That might be the reason that the rememory is
represented or embodied as an apparition.) But why? Why does Paul D try to make Sethe
and Denver far away from the house and the memory? I have only questions but no
answers!

> Paul D casts out the baby ghost and she returns in human form. Beloved exhibits all the
signs of a baby with her soft skin, constant sleep, love of sugar, and her inability to walk
or even hold her head up. Denver is aware of who Beloved really is, her baby sister, but
Sethe does not make the connection yet, and Paul D is just questioning her presence. A
major hint is the disappearance of Here Boy. Here Boy is traumatized by what the baby
ghost did to him so he would not be anywhere near Beloved. The new dynamic is bound
to bring more drama.

¶ The Confessions of Nat Turner is pretty sickening and pitiful. Just as the slaveholders
would use the Bible to justify slavery, Nat Turner used the Bible to justify the massacre,
although there are many times when he alluded to its injustice.

> I was truly amazed by the tender thoughts and descriptions of baby Suggs in this
reading. In particular, I was transfixed by the statement "because slave life had 'busted
her legs, back, head, eyes, hands, kidneys, womb and tongue,' she had nothing left to
make a living with but her heart-". I felt like this excerpt gave life to a woman who had
faced so many hardships yet somehow become more loving, more remarkable, and more
capable. It seemed to me that every other character is this story gave up on using their
heart when they left sweet home because it hurt too much for them to use it, whereas
baby suggs used it because it was the one thing slavery could never take from her. Baby
Suggs loved in spite of slavery because they could take anything from her, but they
couldn't take her heart and her color. She gave everything but at the end of the day she
retained her ability to appreciate beauty and love and that is truly remarkable.