*Beloved* Final Discussion Socratic Seminar Questions to answer before class on Friday:

Have fully developed written answers to turn in for TWO of the seven questions.

Be prepared to discuss **ALL** topics listed. You may bring in notes to reference during the discussion.

1. Re-read the opening scenes of the novel to page 6 ending at “the baby blood that soaked her fingers like oil.” What are your reactions to this beginning of the novel now, knowing the entirety of the story? How is it different from your first read? Why would Morrison open her novel this way? What imagery stands out? How do these opening scenes function in relation to the novel as a whole?

2. Think about the novel’s complex structure and non-linear timeline. Why does Morrison choose this particular way of telling Sethe's story? What does the way the story is told suggest about Morrison's view of the human mind and its workings?

3. Is Toni Morrison making a judgement on Sethe's killing of her daughter? How does Sethe's community judge her? How does Paul D. judge her? How does she judge herself? How do you judge her?

4. The above question leads to one of the essential questions I asked you to consider before we started reading – is it possible for slaves, and particularly slave women, to have a moral compass while under the institution of slavery? Based on these characters’ experiences, what do you think?

5. I also asked you to consider the larger question/concept of the past, the present and the future and whether one can move on from an overwhelmingly negative past and create a future. More specifically can a former slave move on from that suffering? What is Morrison’s message? Consider more than just Sethe.

6. Reflect on the detailed attention that Morrison gives to experiences that will certainly claim your attention and may disturb you: Paul D. on the chain gang, locked in the box; Paul's experience of the bit; the milking of Sethe; Schoolteacher's recording of the slaves' animal characteristics; Sixo's death and more. What is the effect of those experiences, on those who live them and on us as readers?

7. While some scenes like the above are written in detail, why is ambiguity important in this novel? Morrison is deliberate in her choice to be ambiguous in meaning at many points. What are some of those and why?

8. How does Morrison close the novel? What is the meaning of the repeated sentence? How do you feel about the ending?