Cycle I Annotate: What details does ea person remember?

other people's memory

You were born in the morning, Grandma Georgiana said. I remember the sound of the birds. Mean old blue jays squawking. They like to fight, you know. Don't mess with blue jays!

I hear they can kill a cat if they get mad enough.

teacher

And then the phone was ringing.

Through all that static and squawking, I heard your mama telling me you'd come.

Another girl, I stood there thinking,

so close to the first one.

Just like your mama and Caroline. Not even a year between them and so close, you could hardly tell where one ended and the other started.

And that's how I know you came in the morning.

That's how I remember.

1

You came in the late afternoon, my mother said.
Two days after I turned twenty-two.
Your father was at work.
Took a rush hour bus

Stu 1

by the time he arrived,
you were already here.

He missed the moment, my mother said,
but what else is new.

You're the one that was born near night, my father says.

Stu 2 When I saw you, I said, She's the unlucky one come out looking just like her daddy.

He laughs. Right off the bat, I told your mama,

We're gonna call this one after me.

feacher

My time of birth wasn't listed on the certificate, then got lost again amid other people's bad memory. Cycle 2: AIR

no returns

When my mother comes home from the hospital with me, my older brother takes one look inside the pink blanket, says, Take her back. We already have one of those.

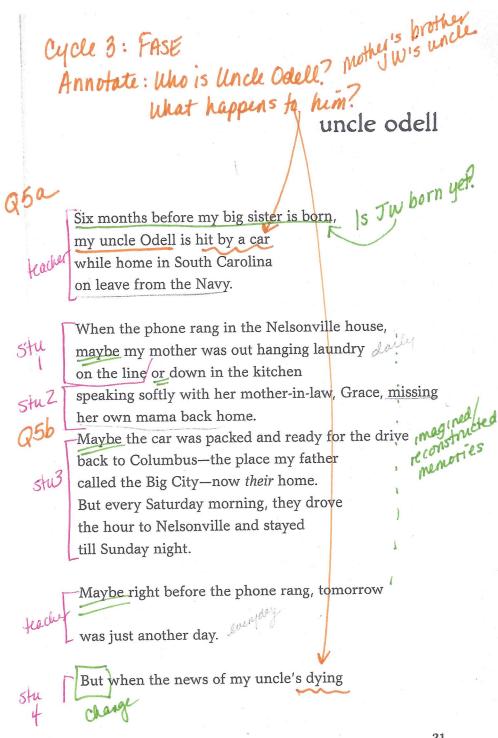
Already three years old and still doesn't understand how something so tiny and new can't be returned.

94

Somewhere in/my/brain each/laugh/tear/and/lullaby becomes memory.

haiku

memories are made even when we are not exactly conscious of them



Stu 4 traveled from the place he fell in South Carolina, to the cold March morning in Ohio, my mother looked out into a gray day that would change her forever.

Jucke

Your brother

and then there was only a roaring in the air around her a new pain where once there wasn't pain a hollowness where only minutes before she had been whole.

Find Unck Odell on Woodson family tree. How's he related to JW? Cycle 4: FASE
Annotate: What good news is? good news
Who receives news? good news

Menthol Assures

Months before the bone-cold Buckeye winter settles over Ohio, the last September light brings

my older sister,

named

Odella Caroline after my uncle Odell and my aunt Caroline.

How much time has passed since "uncle odell"?

" six months before" "cold marth morning "

"last Sept-light"

In South Carolina, the phone rings.

As my mother's mother moves toward it, she closes her eyes, then opens them to look out over her yard. As she reaches for it, she watches the way the light slips through the heavy pine needles, dapples everything with sweet September light...

Her hand on the phone now, she lifts it praying silently

for the good news
the sweet chill of autumn
is finally bringing her way.



my mother and grace

It is the South that brings my mother and my father's mother, Grace, = mother - in -law together.

Grace's family is from Greenville, too.

So my mother is home to her, in a way her own kids can't understand.

You know how those Woodsons are, Grace says.

The Woodsons this and the North that making Mama smile, remember that Grace, too, was someone else before. Remember that Grace, like my mother, wasn't always a Woodson.

They are *home* to each other, Grace to my mother is as familiar as the Greenville air.

Both know that southern way of talking without words, remember when the heat of summer could melt the mouth, so southerners stayed quiet

looked out over the land, nodded at what seemed like nothing but that silent nod said everything anyone needed to hear.

Here in Ohio, my mother and Grace aren't afraid of too much air between words, are happy just for another familiar body in the room.

Pariet

But the few words in my mother's mouth become the missing = guist scleace who could have after Odell dies—a different silence than either of them has ever known.

I'm sorry about your brother, Grace says.

Guess God needed him back and sent you a baby girl.

But both of them know
the hole that is the missing isn't filled now.

Uhmm, my mother says.

Bless the dead and the living, Grace says.

Then more silence both of them knowing there's nothing left to say.

can't fell the "hole" or fix this.

M.

each winter

Each winter just as the first of the snow begins to fall, my mother goes home to South Carolina.

Sometimes,

my father goes with her <u>but mostly</u>, he doesn't.

So she gets on the bus alone.

The first year with one,
the second year with two,
and finally with three children, Hope and Dell hugging
each leg and me
in her arms. Always
there is a fight before she leaves.

Ohio

is where my father wants to be but to my mother Ohio will never be home,

the South no matter how many plants she brings indoors each winter, singing softly to them, the lilt of her words a breath of warm air moving over each leaf. In return, they hold on to their color even as the snow begins to fall. A reminder of the deep green South. A promise somewhere but not here.

journey

You can keep your South, my father says.
The way they treated us down there,
I got your mama out as quick as I could.
Brought her right up here to Ohio.

Told her there's never gonna be a Woodson that sits in the back of the bus.

Never gonna be a Woodson that has to

Yes sir and No sir white people.

Never gonna be a Woodson made to look down at the ground.

All you kids are stronger than that, my father says.
All you Woodson kids deserve to be
as good as you already are.

Yes sirree, Bob, my father says. You can keep your South Carolina.