

Note to students: think of responding to a prompt such as the one below, modified from the 2012 AP exam, as you write your analysis. You may be able to write a successful analysis in one paragraph; you may need more.

Carefully read the following excerpt from the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston. Then write a well-organized paragraph in which you analyze the description of Janie's departure from Eatonville. In your analysis, you may wish to consider such literary elements as selection of detail, figurative language, and tone.

Jacksonville. Tea Cake's letter had said Jacksonville. He had worked in the railroad shops up there before and his old boss had promised him a job come next pay day. No need for Janie to wait any longer. Wear the new blue dress because he meant to marry her right from the train. Hurry up and come because he was about to turn into pure sugar thinking about her. Come on, baby, papa Tea Cake never could be mad with you!

Janie's train left too early in the day for the town to witness much, but the few who saw her leave bore plenty witness. They had to give it to her, she sho looked good, but she had no business to do it. It was hard to love a woman that always made you feel so wishful.

The promise of a new day can make anyone step out into the world with a newfound optimism. Heading to Jacksonville to marry Tea Cake, Janie easily abandons the shallow roots she's established in Eatonville for her new love and a new life. In this passage, we see three features of this new life which serve to make Janie hopeful while simultaneously generating envy among the townsfolk: the depth of Tea Cake's love, Janie's unfettered beauty, and her achievement of the universal wish to be able to start again. First, Tea Cake's unbounded love shows in his eagerness to marry Janie "right from the train" and the tone of his almost unbearable longing for her (described metaphorically as being "about to turn into pure sugar" just from the thought of her). Tea Cake's love is also the most liberating thing to ever happen in Janie's life, for he is the first lover to appreciate her beauty and to wish for her to show it to the world. Unlike her previous husbands, Tea Cake will not have her lovely features hidden behind an old apron or tied up with a gray headrag. Instead, he asks her to wear her stunning "new blue dress" which further enhances her beauty, a detail which is not lost on those who watch her go. The blue dress also symbolizes the trust she has in Tea Cake (like a "true blue" friend). Finally, the notso-simple act of starting over gives Janie a new lease on life; there is a symbolic rebirth in the chance to fulfill her lifelong wish to be truly loved rather than used as a trophy wife or a farm laborer. Ironically, these three positive notes are what generate the most resentment among the "few who saw her leave". They are not the ones who have someone doting on them day and night; they are not the ones with husbands wanting them to show the world how gorgeous they are; and they are not the ones who get the chance in middle age, no less! to seek those things for the first time. Thus, while they can acknowledge that Janie "sho looked

good” as she left town, they have a hard time loving her because they “feel so wishful” (read: envious) of the great things that she and Tea Cake have.