“...students often don’t read and/or understand feedback to their writing (Campbell, Smith, & Brooker; Connors & Lunsford; Dohrer; Gee; McCune; Norton; O’Neill & Mathison-Fife; Shepard; Straub; Treglia; Williams). The issues are complex, but to put it simply, if students don’t share your assumptions, expectations, or language about good writing, they won’t read the comments in the way they were intended.”

“Ask Professor Pedagogy: A Mountain of Grading”

was only by kneeling on the dove gray seat and looking out the back window that he could see anything” (31). Milkman was only a boy at this time, but his looking out the back window was foreshadowing his life struggle. He focuses on too many things behind him, or his past. It is as if he will have no real future, but a future of being stuck in the past. Morrison also alludes to this later in the book when Milkman is walking to Tommy’s Barber Shop. He had just found out that his mother may have had sexual relations with her own father and that her mother breast fed him until he could walk and talk. As he continued down the street, he realized that the side he walked on was covered with people and every single person was walking the opposite direction of him (78). Everyone else walked forward in their life, they had purpose and drive. Milkman lacked the ability to move forward and was enveloped by his past at that moment. It is not until the near end of the book, that he begins to do things on his own and actually take interest in something. He finds interest in his ancestors and the past of his relatives; how fitting. He goes on a journey to recover Pilate’s gold, and instead he uncovers the history of his family. This journey was the one and only journey he would take by himself; free from family pressures and from his friend Guitar. He is free and he chooses to search his grandfather’s past, in order to define himself. In this way, his future is his past because not long after this journey, his life comes to an end.

Milkman’s aunt, Pilate, has a very mystical quality that connects her with time. She was born with a very strange and impossible deformity: she had no navel. Circe, an old maid and experienced midwife, explained to Milkman that Pilate “born herself” (244). Of course, in our world, this is impossible. Without a navel, without an umbilical cord, a fetus would die almost immediately. The umbilical cord is the baby’s life support. It is as if Pilate was never born; she had no beginning. With time, there is always a beginning. Somewhere, somehow, some time things began and eventually come to an end. The beginning was simply absent from Pilate’s life and she was in a way, eternal.