

Important Quotations from Their Eyes Were Watching God

Janie's return to Eatonville: "The people all saw her come because it was sundown. The was gone, but he had left his footprints in the sky" (1).

Janie, on her gossiping neighbors, stressing the importance of storytelling and oral tradition: "Ah don't mean to bother wid tellin' 'em nothin', Pheoby. 'Tain't worth de trouble. You can tell 'em what Ah say if you wants to. Dat's just de same as me 'cause mah tongue is in mah friend's mouf" (6).

"Janie saw her life like a great tree in lead with things suffered, things enjoyed, things done and undone. Dawn and doom was in the branches" (8).

Janie, to the men of Eatonville: "Sometimes God gits familiar wid us womenfolks too and talks His inside business. He told me...how surprised y'all is goin' tuh be if you ever find out you don't know half as much 'bout us as you think yo do. It's so easy to make yo'self out God Almighty when you ain't got nothin' tuh strain against but women and chickens" (75).

On Janie: "She was a rut in the road. Plenty of life beneath the surface but it was kept beaten down by the wheels" (76).

Janie, after Joe's death: "To my thinkin' mourning oughtn't tuh last no longer'n grief" (93).

Eatonville on Janie: "It was hard to love a woman that always made you feel so wishful" (116).

On Tea Cake: "Janie looked down on him and felt a self-crushing love. So her soul crawled out from its hiding place" (128).

On waiting for the mighty hurricane: "They sat in company with the others in other shanties, their eyes straining against crude walls and their souls asking if He meant to measure their puny might against His. They seemed to be staring at the dark, but their eyes were watching God" (160).

"She wished she had slipped off that cow-tail and drowned then and there and been done. But to kill her through Tea Cake was too much to bear. Tea Cake, the son of the Evening Sun, had to die for loving her" (178).

Tea Cake, on Janie: "...don't say you'se ole. You'se uh lil girl baby all de time. God made it so you spent yo' ole age first wid somebody else, and saved up yo' young girl days to spend wid me" (180-181).

On Tea Cakes funeral: "Tea Cake was the son of the Evening Sun, and nothing was too good... No expensive veils and robes for Janie this time. She went on in her overalls. She was too busy feeling grief to dress like grief" (189).

Janie, on love: "...love ain't somethin' lak uh grindstone dat's de same thing everywhere and do de same thing tuh everything it touch. Love is lak de sea. It's uh movin' thing, but still and all, it takes its shape from de shore it meets, and it's different with every shore" (191).

Janie: "It's uh known fact, Pheoby, you got tuh go there tuh know there. ...Two things everybody's got tuh do fuh theyselves. They got tuh go tuh God, and they got tuh find out about livin' fuh theyselves" (192).

"The kiss of his memory made pictures of love and light against the wall. Here was peace. She pulled in her horizon like a great fish-net. Pulled it from around the waist of the world and draped it over her shoulder. So much of life in its meshes! She called in her soul to come and see" (193).