



# The Body in Conflict in *Light in August*

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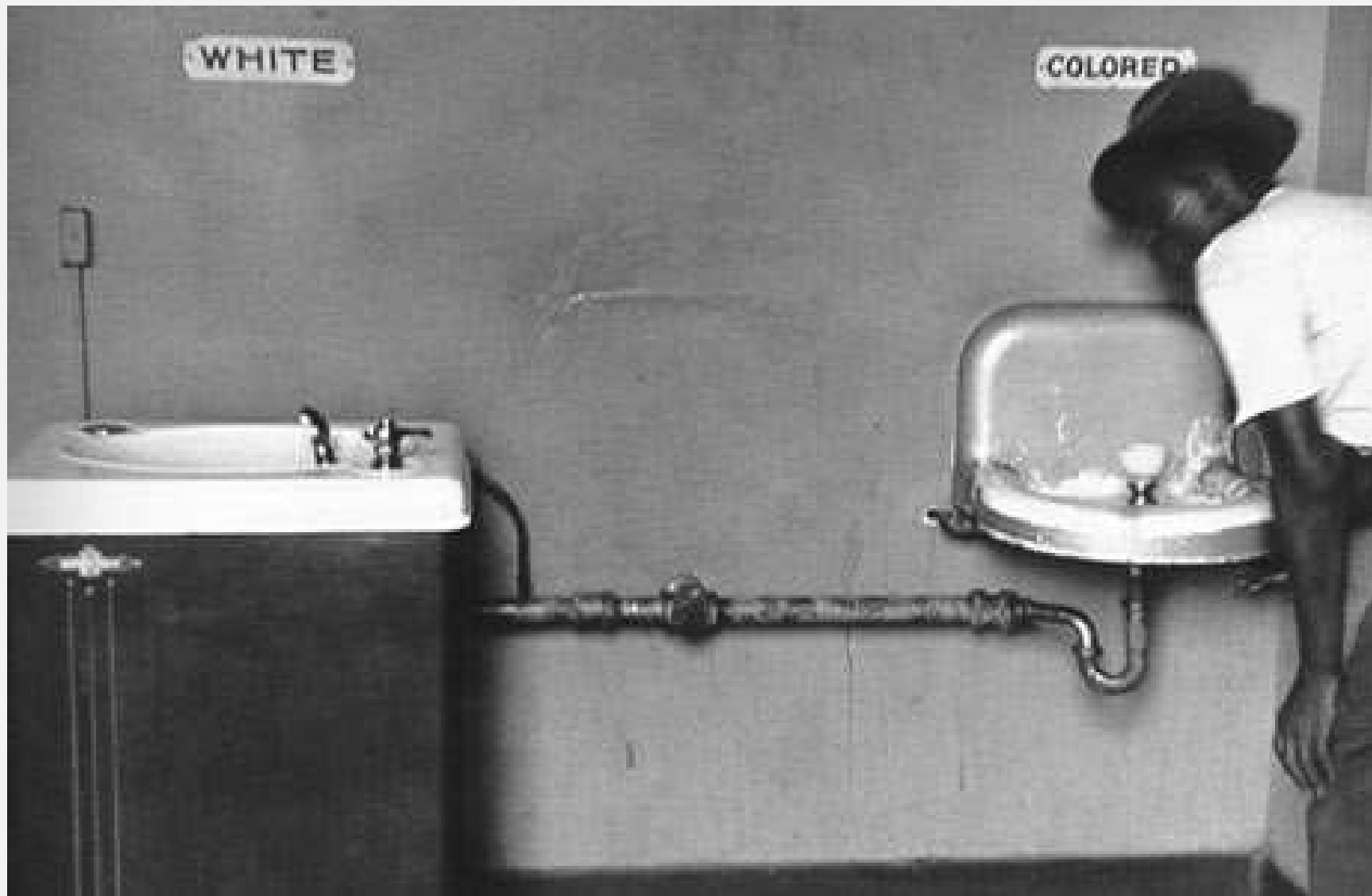
“Nailed to the wall was a **shard of mirror. In the fragment** he watched his **dim face** as he knotted the tie.” (Chapter 5, p. 110)



“(Joe Christmas) didn’t know **what** he was. He knew that he would never know **what** he was, and his only salvation in order to live with himself was **to repudiate mankind, to live outside the human race.** (...) And I don’t think he was bad, I think he was tragic. And his tragedy was that **he didn’t know what he was** and would never know, **and that to me is the most tragic condition that an individual can have—to not know who he was.**”

*(Faulkner in the University, pp. 117-18)*





- “And Byron watched him standing there (...), with a cigarette in one side of his mouth and **his face darkly and contemptuously still**. (Chapter 2, p. 25)
- “the stranger (...) with **his dark, insufferable face**” (Chapter 2, p. 26)
- “Christmas!” one of the men who held him cried back, his face too strained, glaring. “Christmas! That **white nigger** that did that killing up at Jefferson last week!” (Chapter 15, p. 259)

He was in the north now, in Chicago and then Detroit. He lived with negroes, shunning white people. (...) He now lived as man and wife with a woman who resembled an ebony carving. At night he would lie in bed beside her, sleepless, beginning to breathe deep and hard. He would do it deliberately, feeling, even watching, his **white chest arch deeper and deeper within his ribcage, trying to breathe into himself the dark odor,** the **dark and inscrutable thinking and being of negroes,** with each suspiration **trying to expel from himself the white blood and the white thinking and being.** And all the while his nostrils at the odor which he was trying to make his own **would whiten and tauten, his whole being writhe and strain with physical outrage and spiritual denial.**

(Chapter 10, p. 170)



He squatted among the soft womansmelling garments and the shoes. (...) He began to sweat. Then **he found that he had been sweating for some time, that for some time now he had been doing nothing else but sweating.** (...) He **seemed to be turned in upon himself, watching himself sweating, watching himself smear another worm of paste into his mouth which his stomach did not want.** Sure enough, it refused to go down. Motionless now, utterly contemplative, **he seemed to stoop above himself like a chemist in his laboratory, waiting.** (...) At once the paste which he had already swallowed lifted inside him, trying to get back out, into the air where it was cool. It was no longer sweet. In the rife, pinkwomansmelling, obscurity behind the curtain he squatted, pinkfoamed, listening to his insides, waiting with **astonished fatalism** for what was about to happen to him. **Then it happened.** He said to himself with complete and passive surrender: "Well, here I am."

(Chapter 6, p. 122)



- “**he felt a sensation of sweating.**” (Chapter 11, p. 239)
- “He **seemed to watch his hand as if from a distance.** He watched it pick up a dish and swing it up and back and hold it.” (Chapter 11, p. 238)
- “Then **his body seemed to walk away from him.** **It** went to the table and his hands laid the razor.” (Chapter 12, p. 282)

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(Chapter 6, p. 122)

“For a long moment he looked up at them with **peaceful and unfathomable and unbearable eyes**. **Then his face, body, all, seemed to collapse, to fall in upon itself, and from out the slashed garments about his hips and loins the pent black blood seemed to rush like a released breath**. It seemed to rush out of his **pale body like the rush of sparks from a rising rocket**; upon that **black blast** the man seemed **to rise soaring** into their memories forever and ever.” (Chapter 19, 349)

“My, my. **A** body does get around. Here we ain’t been coming from Alabama but two months, and now it’s already Tennessee.”  
(Chapter 21, p. 507)

Thank you.

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