

Vocabulary List for Beloved

bit - a piece of iron put in a slave's mouth to keep him from talking

bloody side of the Ohio River - reference to Kentucky, the slave side of the river

brine in the barrel - an early method of preserving fish and meat with salt

buffalo men - men with dark, wiry hair, especially blacks

chamomile sap - the medicinal, sweet-smelling juice from an herb

chippy - a young prostitute

chokecherry - a common shrub that bears red berries

clabber - thickened milk or cream

coffle - a line of chained slaves

cold house - a darkened store room used for holding meats and dairy products away from heat

comfrey - an herb used to make tea

croaker sack - burlap bag

dropsy - a sickness caused by excessive accumulation of fluid

faggot - a small bundle of wood, usually used to start a fire

fixing ceremony - preparing a body for burial

foal - a crude term that whites used to refer to the birth of a black baby

four o'clocks - flowers that open in the morning and close at night

Fugitive Bill - a bill that required a free state to return a slave to his/her rightful owner

gone to glory - gone to heaven after dying

haint - a ghost

half peck - a dry measurement equal to four quarts

horehound - a type of candy

huckleberries - wild blueberries

hutch - shanty or lean-to

in deep water - in trouble

juba - an African dance

keeping room - a parlor

let water - urinate

lisle - a good quality cotton fabric

normal school - an advanced school that prepared teachers for their profession

pass air - burp

pateroller - mispronunciation of patroller or slave catcher

pickaninnies - a crude term used by whites to describe black children

pike - turnpike or highway

press - a wardrobe used to hold hanging clothes before closets were built in houses

privy - outdoor toilet

rendered fat - pork fat that has been cooked and hardened into lard

rind - a piece of pork skin used as seasoning while cooking vegetables

rue - a bitter herb, often used in literature to symbolize regret (I rue the day I overslept and got into trouble)

sassafras - a spice taken from the bark of a laurel tree

setting-up - staying up all night to watch over the body of someone who has died

skin voting - the privilege of voting if you had white skin; blacks could not vote

Society of Friends - another name for Quakers, who were usually abolitionists

slop jar - indoor pot used as a toilet, especially at night

stud his boys - use males slaves as breeders

sugar teat - an early form of the pacifier made by placing sugar inside a piece of cloth

talking sheets - members of the Ku Klux Klan

walking man - an unmarried man who did not want to settle down

way station - a stopping place for travelers, especially wandering blacks