

Summer reading assignment
“Notes of a Native Son”

1. The first part of the essay “Notes of a Native son” by James Baldwin is the perfect introduction to his story. The use of exemplatory language and metaphors is perfect. The way James Baldwin uses the word “ill” to describe his father’s scorn over racism is an odd yet true way. The author describes his upbringing by his father who has a strong hate for white people and the effects it has on his mental state up until the time he dies. While growing up he never realizes what’s happening around him and at the end of the first part finally understands the illness his father had. As well as the consequences he may face just for having dark skin.
2. James’ dad dies and he is thrust into the real world of racism and scorn, based on his skin color.
3. This poison the author speaks of is undoubtedly racism. The author lays out examples of places that are suitable for white people and activities that white people engaged in, that blacks were not allowed. James Baldwin goes on to say these places, “testified to the potency of the poison while remaining silent as to the efficacy of whatever antidote”. It seems the cure he has chosen for this poison is the bonds in his family and the memories of his father. As his thoughts become jumbled he finally remembers the good times he had shared with his father and accepts that family and his relationship with the Lord saved him from the raging poison that is racism.
4. The author describes the evidence as something the people can warp to fit their needs. He also states that sometimes the provided evidence can have nothing to do with the facts of a given situation at all. The facts however are the undeniable truth of what has actually happened. With the facts being directly backed by the evidence the facts are usually harder to deny. However, that doesn’t stop people’s stubbornness and unwillingness to change views. The rioters in this situation despite having the facts available to them are more inclined to believe rumors and warp evidence to meet the point they are trying to get across. The people in that neighborhood didn’t care about facts because these rumors reflected all the animosity they held towards white people. What mainly stands out however is that the people are not interested in hurting the white people themselves. The physical violence against the body isn’t what they’re after, the ideals are what they were after. These riots were aimed at the idea of white supremacy and the stigma around white people being higher. Which seems to be the complete opposite of what the white people do to them as they engage in single targeted physical harm.

