

1. In Part I of Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son*, he begins by explaining the circumstances of his father's death. He continues to describe the tense relationship they had, explaining that his harsh anger and bitterness was a result of mental illness and a hatred for the white population that had damned him. He warns his children that white people cannot be trusted. Later, while living in New Jersey, Baldwin experiences the racism his father had warned him about; he becomes bitter and angry, lashing out and throwing a water jug at a waitress after hearing "we don't serve negroes here" for the last time that night, finally understanding the meaning behind his father's behavior.
2. Baldwin describes the circumstances that led him to understand his father's hatred and distrust for white people.
3.
  - a. The "poison" mentioned at his father's funeral refers to the racism and hatred that his father felt and suffered from all of his life; this becomes evident in Baldwin's statement, "the avenues, side streets... even the playgrounds of Harlem- not to mention the houses of correction, the jails, and the morgue- testified to the potency of this poison." His father was an angry, bitter man who suffered greatly from the hatred constantly directed at him. This poison drained his father of visible love and compassion; all of the significant moments he had had with those close to him were stifled by the hatred he felt, and it had taken over his life.
  - b. In this, an antidote is mentioned. Throughout the description of his father's funeral, Baldwin states "it was the Lord who knew of the impossibility... faced: how to prepare the child for the day when the child would be despised and how to create in the child- by what means?- a stronger antidote to this poison than one had found for oneself." This allows the reader to understand that everyone is faced with the struggle of overcoming this poison by seeing through the hardships forced upon them. Baldwin states, "It was better to remember: *Thou knowest this man's fall; but thou knowest not his wrassling.*" By remembering the positive moments, the pieces of the relationship that were not destroyed by the poison, one can find an antidote of understanding and love to combat the hatred and destructive nature of the racism that brought his father down. He makes an effort to remember the good moments he had with his father, saying that in the moments spent looking into the casket, "his life filled that room... life and death so close together, and love and hatred, and right and wrong, said something to me which i did not want to hear..." It is difficult to come to terms with something that is poisoning a family's bond, but empathy for those who struggle with it the best they can is the only cure.

4. In Part III, Baldwin describes an altercation between a black soldier and a white police officer. Rumors spread that the soldier was shot in the back and killed while defending a negro woman, but Baldwin goes out of his way to explain that this is not the truth; “they preferred the invention because this invention expressed and corroborated their hates and fears so perfectly.” The soldier was not shot, and ordinarily the woman’s race wouldn’t have mattered. He continues to describe the scene, citing the extensive damage done to white businesses throughout Harlem, making sure to separate fact from fiction. This is done to emphasize the importance of the hatred felt by the community: he says “that this hatred itself has become an exhausting and self-destructive pose” to allow the reader to understand that it is the distortion of facts and refusal to accept the feelings of the other side that allows for such destruction; the black community in Harlem were so outraged at this situation that only partially embodied their struggles that they transformed the truth into something that would justify their rage. Baldwin emphasises facts over rumors and the significance between the two in order to explain the idea that only truth can “cure” the chaos caused by rumors.