Toni Morrison's first novel *The Bluest Eye* perfectly captures the effects of racism and colorism, telling the story of an 11-year-old black girl with low self-esteem who prays desperately for her eyes to become blue.

The Breedloves did not live in a storefront because they were having temporary difficulty adjusting to the cutbacks at the Plant. They lived there because they were poor and black, and they stayed there because they believed they were ugly. Although their poverty was traditional and stultifying, it was not unique. But their ugliness was unique. No one could have convinced them that they were not relentlessly and aggressively ugly. Except for the father, Cholly, whose ugliness (the result of despair, dissipation, and violence-directed toward petty things and weak people) was behavior, the rest of the family--Mrs. Breedlove, Sammy Breedlove, and Pecola Breedlove--wore their ugliness, put it on, so to speak, although it did not belong to them. The eyes, the small eyes set closely together under narrow foreheads. The low, irregular hairlines, which seemed even more irregular in contrast to the straight, heavy eyebrows which nearly met. Keen but crooked noses, with insolent nostrils. They had high cheekbones, and their ears turned forward. Shapely lips which called attention not to themselves but to the rest of the face. You looked at them and wondered why they were so ugly; you looked closely and could not find the source. Then you realized that it came from conviction, their conviction. It was as though some mysterious all-knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear, and they had each accepted it without question. The master had said, "You are ugly people." They had looked about themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement; saw, in fact, support for it leaning at them from every billboard, every movie, every glance. "Yes," they had said. "You are right." And they took the ugliness in their hands, threw it as a mantle over them, and went about the world with it. Dealing with it each according to his way. Mrs. Breedlove handled hers as an actor does a prop: for the articulation of character, for support of a role she frequently imagined was hers--martyrdom. Sammy used his as a weapon to cause others pain. He adjusted his behavior to it, chose his Companions on the basis of it; people who could be fascinated, even intimidated by it. And Pecola. She hid behind hers Concealed, veiled, eclipsed--peeping out from behind the shroud very seldom, and then only to yearn for the return of her mask. This family, on a Saturday morning in October, began, one by one, to stir out of their dreams of affluence and vengeance into the anonymous misery of their storefront.