**Prompt 1:**

“And, after all, our surroundings influence our lives and characters as much as fate, destiny, or any supernatural agency.” ~Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces*

Write a well-organized essay analyzing how the cultural, physical, or geographical surroundings shape the psychological or moral traits of one of the characters in *Reservation Blues*. Focus on how the surroundings affect this character and illuminate the meaning of the work as a whole.

**Prompt 2:**

“You can leave home all you want, but home will never leave you.” ~Sonsyrea Tate

Sonsyrea Tate’s statement suggests that “home” may be conceived of as a dwelling, a place, or a state of mind. It may have positive or negative associations, but in either case, it may have a considerable influence on an individual.

Write a well-organized essay analyzing how in *Reservation* Blues when the characters leave home they still find that home to be significant. Focus on the importance of “home” to these character and the reasons for its continuing influence. Explain how the characters’ idea of home illuminates the larger meaning of the work.

**Prompt 3:**

A motif is a repeated image, symbol, or idea that illustrates that explains or helps develop a theme.

In *Reservation Blues*, focus on one motif and write a well-developed essay analyzing how that motif functions in the work and what it reveals about the characters or themes of the work as a whole.

**Prompt 4:**

In many literary works, past events can affect, positively or negatively, the present actions, attitudes, or values of a character.

In *Reservation Blues*, choose a character who must contend with some aspect of the past, either societal or personal. Write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the character’s relationship to the past contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.