LESSON 9: Wailing Wall

WHAT’S ON FOR TODAY AND WHY?: You will be able to participate in a ritual similar to May’s wailing wall, enabling you to immerse yourself in the characters of May, as well as reflect upon the inner workings of the other characters in the novel. May’s wailing wall is a moving image in the novel. The stone wall touches each of the characters, particularly Lily. The wall represents a life filled with pain and suffering and an attempt to relieve that pain, which allows you to reflect upon the difficulties of being an African-American in the South in 1964, as well as reflect upon your own practices for dealing with sadness and pain.

May’s Wailing Wall

“We tried for years to get May some help. She saw doctors, but they didn’t have any idea what to do with her except put her away. So June and I came up with this idea of a wailing wall.”

“A what kind of wall?”

“Wailing wall,” she said again. “Like they have in Jerusalem. The Jewish people go there to mourn. It’s a way for them to deal with their suffering. See, they write their prayers on scraps of paper and tuck them in the wall.”

“And that’s what May does?”

August nodded. “All those bits of paper you see out there stuck between the stones are things May has written down – all the heavy feelings she carries around. It seems like the only thing that helps her.” (page 97-98)

What wishes or fears would Rosaleen, June, August, Zach, T-Ray and Lily put in the wailing wall? Get inside their heads, think about their fears and hopes, and create wailing wall notes for each of them. Be creative! What about you? What’s bothering you?
Rosaleen:

June:

August:

Zach:

T-Ray:

Lily:

ME:  - each individual person in your group writes one!