“A man knocked over her son in the subway. You feel your own body wince. He’s okay, but the son of a bitch kept walking. She says she grabbed the stranger’s arm and told him to apologize: I told him to look at the boy and apologize. Yes, and you want it to stop, you want the child pushed to the ground to be seen, to be helped to his feet, to be brushed off by the person that did not see him, has never seen him, has perhaps never seen anyone who is not a reflection of himself.”

“You feel your own body wince… :”

Ask students, which whom they initially identify with, or empathize with?
Then try some perspective taking:
Son?
Mother?
Man?
Bystanders?

“She says she grabbed the stranger’s arm and told him to apologize.”

Again, reflect on this passage and describe your immediate identification with whom? Mother? Stranger? Child?

“Has perhaps never seen anyone who is not a reflection of himself”

Perhaps people of color related to the many indignities represented here of being unseen, unrecognized, lumped with others, all look the same…..

What is the reaction from white people in the room?

“ The beautiful thing is that a group of men began to stand behind me like a fleet of bodyguards, she says, like newly found uncles and brothers.”

Citizen

Exercise on Anger

p. 25
“What does a victorious or defeated black woman's body in a historically white space look like? Serena and her big sister Venus Williams brought to mind Zora Neale Hurston’s “I feel most colored when I am thrown against a sharp white background.”...seemed to be ad copy for some aspect of life for all black bodies.”

p. 28, after detailing Serena Williams career with a reflection on bias and resilience

“...Yes, and the body has memory. The physical carriage hauls more than its weight. The body is the threshold across which each objectionable call passes into consciousness—all the unintimidated, unblinking, and unflappable resilience does not erase the moments lived through, even as we are eternally stupid or everlastingly optimistic, so ready to be inside, among, a part of the game.”

What are your thoughts around “angry blacks”?

As we learn more about oppression/bias/invisibility, and we empathize, how do your views about black anger change?

What are the racist and gendered stereotypes around Serena that you have heard? What happens when you state them aloud?

What is it like to reflect on her inner experience, and the physical cost of racism for others?