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A Writer's Guide to Descriptive Settings

discussion: lesson 7 discussion area



Place in Memoir

by: *Renaë*

This piece is about a meaningful place from my past. Amazing how those memories come back.

The Bridge

I hurried out the front door before my mother could see I'd been crying again. I didn't want to explain the newest problem in my teenage life. She wouldn't understand, I thought. I needed to get out of the house. I needed to think, to cry, to be alone.

I headed down the back driveway, toward the feedlot and cattle barn. Hitting the gravel road, I turned east. Rocks and dirt crunched under my tennis shoes as my stride lengthened down the hill. My eyes fixed on the bridge about a quarter mile away. The cattle bellowed in the feedlot to my right, their heads sticking out over the barbed-wire fence. I didn't care about them right now. I just needed to get to the bridge.

I started to cry again as I reached the little stream. I sat down along the road on the edge of the bridge, my legs dangling in the air. Now I could think. I could breathe.

The bridge was barely a bridge, the stream barely a stream. The road did not noticeably change as you drove over the bridge. The rusted red metal rails on either side of the road marked its existence. I leaned against the vertical post and draped my arms over the middle rail. The sun had warmed it just enough. No one could see me here from the farmhouse. Trees blocked the view. As far as I was concerned, I was invisible to the world.

When the stream had water, it was only a trickle that ran through the prairie grasses which covered the stream bed. Pale green and yellow blades fought for space with the purple wild flowers that grew up alongside them. Pasture lands and corn fields spread out on all sides, with the occasional shelter belt and farmhouse to break up the horizon. A whiff of cow manure would sometimes mix in with the smell of dirt and grass.

After 15 or 20 minutes of mulling through whatever problem plagued me, I stood up and brushed the dirt off the seat of my jeans. I breathed in the summer air and headed back toward the house. I greeted the cattle as I walked by. They mooed back lazily. I looked back at my spot on the bridge and smiled. It was a simple place for a complicated life.

I felt in control again. I skipped a couple times on my way up the hill, just to show I could. When I reached the house, Mom was weeding in the garden.

"Where did you go?" she asked.

"Just for a walk," I said. I would keep my spot on the bridge a secret as long as I could.

3/16/2013 1:06:25 PM

Replies:

by: **C.G**

I loved your description of the bridge and the surroundings. even" the whiff of cow manure mixed in with the dirt and grass" made it come alive .
This description was particularly good :
" It was a simple place for a complicated life."

3/17/2013 9:23:10 AM

[reply](#)by: **Your Instructor**

Renaë, reading your work is like savoring fine chocolate--a pure pleasure. You've told a story, and you didn't ignore your descriptive responsibilities anywhere. I especially like the image of the rocks and dirt crunching beneath your shoes. That's a two-fer, sound and feel at the same time. Fine, fine work.

Eva

3/17/2013 10:15:05 AM

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