

~~Ch. 13~~

English 3100-011

Reflective Literacy Narrative, Draft #3

Throughout my childhood I was always interested in things that other children my age probably weren't. While going to the park and having sleepovers were of course fun, nothing compared to going away for a weekend with my brothers and grandmother to the farm land my family owned in Herman, Missouri. I would wait weeks for each trip back, I even made my own paper calendar and would mark away another day every morning until my grandma would pick us all up in her Trail Blazer full of her Labrador dogs and we would again be on our way to her farm house. It wasn't just all of the things we would do while we were there that play such a significant role in my life or even my memory of those times like horseback riding or going fishing. It was the time I would spend sitting on the living room floor while we all gathered together on the cold, hardwood eating that days catch of fish and going through all of the National Geographic magazines my grandmother had collected over the years. There were hundreds of them, all of them different, and all of them capable of keeping us interested for hours while she read us the stories as we wide-eyed stared at the pictures that came with each story she told; although to this day I am not sure any of the stories she told were ever actual writings from the magazines, because looking back on it now the stories seemed too simple for National Geographic magazine articles, but I did not care then. All that mattered to me was how it felt for us all to be there together, flipping through the thin, colorful pages and making memories using the stories that she told. I remember the weekends we spent down at the farm so well it's practically unbelievable, but if it wasn't for each thing we did being brought to life

NICE SPECIFICITY

NICE DETAIL

NICE PHRASING

through the National Geographic magazines we read, it may have just been another faded memory like that of the trips to the park or the sleepovers I had once had.

One of my favorite things we would do while at the farm was go down to the creek that flowed a few miles in front of the house my grandmother owned. It would take about twenty minutes to walk there, but it was never a boring trip. My brothers would often race each other there and since I was the youngest I often got left behind, which for them was the perfect opportunity. They would sneak into the field we had to cut through and stoop down into the itchy, two-foot grass so when I walked past they would jump out suddenly yelling, leaving me completely petrified and frustrated. Chris, being the oldest would often just shake his head and laugh but Tim, who was only a couple years older than me would always seem to tease me with no end at sight, which made the trip to the creek usually really irritating for me. But once we actually got to the creek it seemed we would always get quiet just to listen to the gentle sound of water flowing over the rocks and the locusts making their chirping sounds to one another, and this would always get us calm again. The water was around just one foot deep and often contained a lot of crawdads so we would hop around, splashing ourselves in the ice cold water and collecting as many crawdads as we could, than letting them go again after we found out who was able to collect the most; I usually lost. I often was more concerned with catching butterflies with the net my mother had given me from the dollar store, and that I was good at. There were so many colorful ones who all seemed to be attracted to the flowing water of the creek, I'd look up to see the lights peeking through all of the tree tops above me and this abled me to see all of the shadows the butterflies created. After I caught one, I'd just look at all of its colors for a moment, remembering the photograph my grandmother had hanging above her vintage sofa in the living room that was a close up of a black butterfly with pink and yellow-tipped wings, and next to it

Nice setting

Nice imagery

hung the blue ribbon she had won for taking the photo at the exact same spot I had caught this butterfly, I then always would let it go and watch it fly away gracefully from me.

If we were lucky, our grandmother would take us to the field that was right outside of the farmhouse and let us take turns riding her horse, Blackie. Ironically enough Blackie was white as snow, but had a contradicting black snout that never failed to find the sugar cubes my brothers would put in my hand and let Blackie lick out of. She was beautiful and gentle and seemed to actually love letting us all ride on her back as she galloped through the empty field golden with the color of cut down wheat and haystacks every which way. At first, I was scared to ride Blackie but the night before I first got the courage to ride her, my grandmother had shown me an article in one of her hundreds of National Geographic magazines she kept on a floor to ceiling book shelf in the living room. The article had so many pictures of beautiful wild horses and I was so entranced by the pictures, it was as if I couldn't keep my eyes off of them. My grandmother had read me the story about how the horses all traveled in groups of hundreds and would run freely across the countryside, but still taking care of each other and loving one another just as we did. I started to envision the horses in the pictures being friends or being a family and it precipitously made me not afraid to ride Blackie anymore from that moment on. What my grandmother read in the magazine and what I saw in the pictures made me realize Blackie had characteristics like me, and that was really reassuring and made me give her my trust from then on.

nice reflection here

There is one specific night I remember down at the family farm that always seems to stick with me the most and often comes back into memory whenever there is a thunderstorm. It was one time when my entire family had come down for the fourth of July, and for dinner we all had decided to go to the lake that was a ten minute drive down the gravel road and go fishing to

get that night's dinner. My brothers, mom, dad, and I all got into our four wheel drive truck and made our way down to the lake before anyone else so we could have our pick of the fishing gear my grandfather had brought down earlier that day. The sky was beginning to turn a dark grey which brought along with it a cold breeze that flowed through the open windows in the truck. When we got there, I was seldom concerned with fishing and more concerned with catching the croaking frogs that surrounded the water, but never could seem to catch them as they jumped into the muddy waters on the edge of the lake. So defeated, I marched over to my dad who gave me the basics on catching fish. As he casted my line in the water, I suddenly felt a tugging in my hands. Together my dad and I reeled in my first fish which was gross and slimy to me, but I still felt achievement since I had failed to catch a frog earlier that day. I looked at the fish as it gasped for water and began to get upset as I gawked at the hook lodged in its mouth causing it to bleed. The fish stared at me and I swiftly remembered sitting on my grandmas' lap, as she read me a story from another National Geographic about Salmon and the migration habits they had for laying their eggs and traveling back up the river alone. It was the picture that went with the story my grandma was telling me that I remember so much, it was a close up shot of a salmon just staring, almost as if it was sad that it had left its eggs behind, suddenly I got upset. I began to cry to my dad to make it better, to get the hook out of its mouth and let him get back to its family. He wrestled with the hook, but eventually the fish fell free and landed back in the water, my dad then saying, "Sorry sweetie, he was just a bit too slippery for me to hold onto, I didn't mean to let him go." But to this very day I know he let the fish go on purpose just for my sake.

After we all got back home and they ate their fish dinner, which I refused to eat and still to this day will still not eat fish, we all got ready for bed. I was sleeping in the living room in my Mulan sleeping bag when tiny sounds of raindrops began to fall on the roof. Minutes later, the

thunder and lightning began like no storm I had ever experienced. The room lit up in blues and whites and all that could be heard was the loud crack of the thunder, the heavy rain hitting against the windows, and the sounds of the wind chimes on the front porch. It brought me back to the time my oldest brother Chris flipped through the stack of National Geographics already on the coffee table and found an article about lightning. I couldn't read the story, but the pictures and the colors were so similar to what I was seeing I knew that they were the same thing, a thunderstorm. I had heard the word so many times and listened to the rain behind the sound of television back home more times than I could count, but actually seeing it and hearing it in the silence, it was as close as the pictures in the National Geographic as I could have ever imagined, and that made it come to life for me that night.

Nice details

The National Geographics my family and I would read together long ago were so much more than pictures and words for me, they told a story that was relatable to something in my life. Glancing at the magnificent photography on each page and hearing the words my grandmother was saying come to life in my head was always so astonishing, it helped me put those visions into words, and eventually into my own experiences. Seeing a sunset peek through the clouds on a foggy morning is easy to do, but being able to explain what you see into words for others to understand the detailed beauty is almost impossible. But reading the national Geographics together, seeing it all represented through a picture, and linking it all to everyday life is what made me better at putting all of my experiences into words, and that is unforgettable.