

First Last

Teacher Name

ENG 3UP

Date

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Personal Essay
EXEMPLAR

Summers of Change

How do you measure growth? Quantitatively with a tape measure? Or qualitatively with remarks, like, “You’re so grown-up!” from your grandparents? Needless to say, growth, whether physical or personal, is not something you can measure constantly. You won’t get a different reading from the tape measure every day, and grandma isn’t going to comment daily on your personality. A significant passage of time and a consistent point of reference are required for reliable measurement; birthdays, and doctor’s appointments are common for this purpose.

Looking at a picture of myself, taken during the summer twelve years ago, I realize that for me, this reference point, in time, has always been summer. And each summer has always been associated with a specific place. The memories evoked by this photograph make me realize how important each of these places has been to me. Not just because they were fun, or beautiful, but because they each represent a stage of development in my life.

I squirm in my seat as we turn onto the final bend of Foxpoint road. Through the thick wall of trees, I catch only glimpses of the lake, sparkling in the mid-afternoon sun. Looking forward, I notice a signpost. As we approach, I can just make out the words, “Foxwood Resort”. We’re here.

“Let’s go to the park!” I yell, as I jump out of the car and race there as fast as my four-year-old legs will carry me, pine needles squishing beneath my feet. I head first to the merry-go-round, where I whirl and spin, staring up at the blurry mesh of blue and branches. Then I fly through the air on swings that creak and groan with old age. Best of all, I rediscover the excitement of the teeter-totter, never knowing when my dad will lift himself off the opposite end, leaving me to shriek with exhilaration at the sudden rush of wind, and swooping feeling in my stomach, as I fall a whole two feet. At last I retire back to our cosy cabin, Deer Run, with black oil, that oozed from the teeter-totter, all over my hands and Lion King sweater.

Foxwood was a place where all childhood dreams could come true. It was where I first roasted marshmallows, and built sand castles. Where I first played kick the can in the woods, ping-pong and shuffleboard in the lodge, card games with the family. Where I first sang campfire songs, made summer friendships, and splashed around in the lake.

To the girl in the picture, this was all that mattered. She took the day one activity at a time, and as long as she was having fun in the moment, life was good. Her greatest concern was whether or not there would be KD for dinner. She went through life carefree and innocent, oblivious to the fact that these days, as well as her days at Foxwood, would all too soon come to an end.

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