Your Own Space

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Driving there along beautiful Highland Ave., you'd never know you're on your way to the highest elevation in Rochester. The gentle sloping of the road and trees make it easy to forget how high you really are. That is only the beginning to the one-of-a-kind atmosphere you find at Cobb's Hill.'

Cover Page Footnote
Dream Realized
by
Keith Edward Hahn

I ride off-the dark closing in around me.
My steed thunders below me as I approach my destination.
The field I am riding in waves in the wind.
The horse's breath shows in the air, but strangely, the air is not cold.

The two of us become one.
My speed increases.
In the distance rages an argument,
between Sky and Earth.
My transportation is no longer below me. I am on my own.
Flying.

I soar upward into the storm where Sky strikes out at Earth with blazing spears of light.
Thunder roars around me as the Earth cries out.
I continue upward.
As I look down the horse is still galloping across the ground.

Clouds begin to obscure my view, but the continuous flashes of light illuminate something ahead.
I see my birth.
I see my death.
And everything in between.

Clouds and light combine,
forming people I know.
My mother.
My father.
My friend.
And everybody else I have ever seen.
They all speak a single word.
"Go"

I drop down out of the clouds,
and the ground is very close.
I continue to soar,
yet the ground is mere inches below.
I see images from my childhood.

My flight twists through the trees.
Kids playing nearby take no notice of me
My speed once again increases,
faster than before.

Again I climb upward.
The clouds approach and I punch through into the light, the giver of life.
Higher and higher I go.
The light begins to fade and the stars wink into existence.
The air disappears-
I don't notice.

Growing and coming toward me, the moon.
Jupiter, the giant,
the ringed Saturn.
Onward...

Sights I cannot describe go by.
Color makes up these celestial wonders.
To my left- another storm.
There is light but no sound.

Ahead: a pinpoint of light,
growing brilliant as I approach.
The light is tremendous- it does not burn, it merely comforts as its warmth surrounds me.

I awaken, lying in bed,
back to reality.
But then it occurs to me,
Which is reality?

Your Own Space
by
Adam C. Slick

Driving there along beautiful Highland Ave., you'd never know you're on your way to the highest elevation in Rochester. The gentle sloping of the road and trees make it easy to forget how high you really are. That is only the beginning to the one-of-a-kind atmosphere you find at Cobb's Hill.

First-time visitors entering the park must wonder what the ominous black fence protects. Physically, it is not all that high, but the unforgiving charcoaled bars lack any hospitality. The message conveyed is very clear, "stay out!" However, walking up to the fortress reveals the unexpected indeed. Inside, there is a seemingly misplaced sprawling crystal-blue lake, rippling in the ever-present stiff winds. But don't be too quick to disrobe, because the sloping rust-stained concrete walls prevent anyone who jumps in from getting out. This lake is truly for your viewing pleasure only.
Your first taste of the collage of people will probably be the walkers. They consist of the dog walkers, the couple walkers, the speed walkers and, what I affectionately name, the aimless walkers. The aimless walkers are the most relaxing to watch. Usually slovenly dressed in drab earth tones, they casually patrol the park with lofty gazes and an occasional perma-grin. By contrast, the couple walkers are the slowest of the bunch, often stopping at long intervals to cuddle or kiss. On the other hand, the ever-present dog walkers show the most responsibility. They have a job to do, and so do their animals. Their pace is usually brisk, until Fido sees it fit. As a tribute, I save the speed walkers for last. They are not only the most flamboyant of the landsweepers, but they are also easily the most entertaining. Whoever started the sport of speed-walking must not have realized how ultimately stupid they looked. Whether in neon spandex or dark nylon, these characters remind me of the Fisher-Price Weebie Wobbles. This toy’s claim to fame was: “They weeble, they wobble, but they won’t fall down!”

The slope of the grassy fields that surround the reservoir is much too harsh for traditional American lawn games. The hills are a haven to young tanners though, spotting the landscape in little brightly colored clusters until they evaporate around three or four in the afternoon. I learned from some local devotees of Apollo that the sun’s rays are deemed useless after that time.

I also learned that the most colorful of the visitors to Cobb’s Hill are also the most destructive. Rolling through in their late-model Volkswagons laden with decorations and remnants of a past generation, the “Deadheads” receive no welcome looks from any of the “Hillers.” The rainbow-striped crews are usually looking to sell or buy drugs. Their actions are deliberate and quite public, as if no one were looking. Most patrons accept the activities as part of the general consensus that “anything goes,” but others, especially the aimless walkers, find no fault in staring the trash down.

In sharp contrast to the “Deadheads,” the stay-ins cause the least friction at the park. Finding no important reason to leave their cars, they’re content to take in the view from adjustable seats. Their visits are the shortest the park knows, usually under fifteen minutes. Judging from their fine dress, the park must be a little inspirational pitstop to the stay-ins, maybe on their way to a movie, dinner, or an evening of dancing.

The fun-loving stay-ins, however, will find nothing in common with the fiercely determined cyclists. These driven young men and women seem the most unimpressed by the beauty of the Hill as they grunt through the park in sweat-laden day-glo windsuits, grogging for the thin air. As you watch them douse their aching, swollen bodies with water, you find yourself wondering how the sport can yield any enjoyment.

The most important of all the observations I collected is one which makes Cobb’s Hill so special. It is the general adherence to the unwritten rule of minding your own business and just being yourself. Do your own thing and like it. Not once during my tenure at the Hill did I feel at all uncomfortable. No one seemed to mind or even notice my avid note-taking. You’re not ignored at Cobb’s Hill, just given your own space.
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