

Lost in the Park

It's hard to believe this will be my last time at Rucker. I walk slowly. I take in everything around me as I walk to the place where I spent most of my childhood. The different sounds and smells are almost too overwhelming as I continue to reminisce. I can't even remember the first time I came here, but it changed my life. I was a scrawny little kid that was just looking for something to do. And basketball just happened to be a hobby. I never pictured how much my life would change after playing there and meeting new people. Making friends. Practicing. Pick-up games. And I can't even remember when I even started. It feels so long ago. I almost feel guilty not remembering.

My mom says we are moving far away, all the way to California. Although California is still big, it feels off the map. All I know is New York and its packed streets and messy subways. That's what I've grown around, and grown to love honestly. Everyone has a schedule, a certain agenda that they must follow to the exact second. And within that mess, I have almost no plans. I play basketball at Rucker. And go to school, but that's not as

exciting as basketball. Nothing complex like meetings in a conference room at 8:00 a.m. or I'm fired. It feels good to be different than from most of these people, on the howling streets of what seems to be America's most exciting and busy city.

California will have other parks. But none like Rucker. There is no other court like Rucker. It's simply one of a kind. It's not just any basketball court. It's a court of legends. Basketball Legends. It's a court where NBA players have played. And not only where they played, but where they have showed off, and *created* legends. Kevin Durant, Julius Erving, Vince Carter. The list keeps on going and going. Knowing and seeing these players that have played here has changed me. It drives me to be the best. It drives me to score more than Durant ever did. Dunk more than Vince ever did. And amaze more than Erving. Those dreams are big. But I'm from New York, what else could be expected. And that's why I visit the park every day. Not only to remind me of my big dream, but to push me toward that dream. I strive to be great. I strive to outperform. I strive to become legendary.

I now stop, and look around me. I'm still relatively far from the park. I've walked extra slow today. Which doesn't make much sense, as this is my last time going. But there's no need to rush things. I would much rather savor my last time than get it over with as fast as possible. All my bags are already packed, plane tickets already bought. Nothing to worry about besides my sanity. I start walking again. I turn a corner and there it is. Rucker Park. The same as always. Busy, but never too busy. I walk over to a set of bleachers and set down my backpack and pull out my shoes and ball. I grab my headphones and phone,

and then I enter my own world. A world where it's just me, a hoop, a ball, and my thoughts. There is no agenda, no schedule. Only jump shots, dunks, and moves.

It's during times like this I'm able to think my clearest. I don't have any other worries or stresses. I can just be myself, and get things off my mind. However, knowing this is my last time almost has me choked up. I think about how I don't want to leave. I would much rather stay, but I can't. I hope I will eventually find my way back to Rucker and this great city. Actually, I will come back. It may not be tomorrow, or next week, or next month, or even next year. But I will return. No matter the time, I will come back. And I will never forget everything that has happened here in my small piece of my own heaven.

It's getting dark, but the lights have come on. I can stay for as long as I want. I don't live too far away. The flight doesn't leave till tomorrow, around noon. I don't have all the time in the world, but I do have time, and for that, I am grateful. I continue to shoot. There are less people now. I continue to shoot. Now, there's even less. Just me and two others, who look exhausted. Then, they leave. And it is just me. Alone. In my favorite park in New York. Standing in my favorite place in the world. And it is the last time I will be here for a considerable amount of time. I don't want to leave, but it's getting late. And my mom is probably worried. So I walk over to my bag, and begin the short walk home, although I don't want to, I must.

I'm going to miss all of this. I will never forget this place. Ever. The effect it has had on me is everlasting. I have grown in New

York. Not only physically, but mentally. I walk to my front door, and use my key to get in. I put my gear next to the pile of bags and cases, and walk to my room. I close my door, turn off the light, and stare at the ceiling. Not prepared to let go. California will present new opportunities, and I'm ready. But it won't be the same. I'll get lost in thought while playing, but it won't be at *the park*.

Connor Grantz

Period 7

September 18, 2014

Rationale: 298 Words

Task: 965 Words

Rationale

My written task one is a short story that would come from a book like a nature book. My mentor text is “Bedrock and Paradox” written by Edward Abbey. My task is titled, “Lost in the Park”. I tried to write in Edward Abbey’s style, by not only using similar sentence structure, but also by using vivid descriptive language. I also included my main characters in thoughts and feeling to show a deeper understanding to the reader, as well as give the reader a connection to the main character.

While learning about nature writing, my favorite text we received was “Bedrock and Paradox” written by Edward Abbey. In my story, I show the thoughts and actions of a young man in New York, who is going to play basketball at Rucker park one last time before moving to California with his mother. I showed this young man’s inner thoughts and feeling about his situation. I also described his surroundings on his way to the park, as well when he arrives at the park. The format of my task was also set to imitate the photocopied pages out of the nature book in which “Bedrock and Paradox” was found. I set my paper orientation to landscape, and added page numbers to the top of each section, like in my mentor text.

The main idea of my text is that some places are able to affect a person forever. Rucker Park is one of the places I would like to visit the most, so it only made sense that, as a basketball player, I would use that as my setting. My audience would be basketball players, as well as

people who are interested in Rucker Park. I want the audience to enjoy the reading, and sympathize with the main character.