

High School Essay Honorable Mention

My Last Sunset in The County

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Four hours late. When the movers finally arrived at 6, my dad and I knew it would be a long night. After showing the men what needed to be moved, we tried to stay out of their way. My dad was going around the house, getting us ready to leave The County, a name we used to differentiate our current home from our future home in Montgomery County. He would occasionally call on my help, but I mainly stayed in my bedroom supervising my dogs, remarking on how foreign the room seemed without my stuff taking up space. It was remarkable how easy it was for these men to move my entire life. They quickly bound each piece of furniture in black shrink wrap and hauled it to the truck. Surveying the scene, the black shrink wrap morbidly reminded me of body bags, something I quickly dispelled from my mind.

I grabbed my dinner from the fridge: a premade hoagie from a brand I had never heard of, another strange thing in a house I barely recognized. I ate on the porch, taking in my neighborhood from left to right, as if reading a book. It was a bland sandwich that starkly juxtaposed the sunset. To my left, towards the entrance of the neighborhood, the sky was a blend of dark indigo and the bright orange of the sun. This created a muddy and dull yet beautiful purple. The sky above the row of townhouses split into two perfect halves. The left half was the same bright orange of the sunset that faded into the blue of night. The right side was bright pink, like that of a sunrise. Had I not known the time, it would have been impossible to tell if it was dawn or dusk. Sitting there, I realized, just like the sky, my move was a blend of endings and beginnings.

As I sat, the streetlights turned on, all except one closest to the construction of more townhouses. Was the darkness of the streetlight a sign too? Maybe the first chapter of my life was over and great opportunities were ahead, shining from one to the next, that I needed to go and seize!

But then the light came on. At first an odd green color, until it rose to the bright white of the other streetlights. I was dismayed. My glittering symbol of hope was washed out by light. But as I looked at the newly lit streetlight, I noticed the dark construction site and forest. What would those houses look like? What was in that forest? My eyes lit up, not unlike the streetlight only moments before, as understanding dawned. It wasn't the shining streetlights that were the opportunities, it was the dark trees. I smiled as I crunched up the empty sandwich wrapper, stood up, and closed the door on my last sunset in The County.