

Description

This is an approximately 500-word sample from an ongoing, unpublished memoir. This project is targeted towards men and women between the ages of twenty-five to seventy who are interested in self-help and adventure genres.

This piece exemplifies how Mae Corbin uses sensory information, character development, and interiority to draw the reader into a scene and keep them engaged with the content.

Context

In this excerpt from the second half of the book, the protagonist has just landed in Thailand. She has spent the previous two years planning to move abroad to travel the world and study martial arts in their country of origin. This scene depicts her first impression of the street she will be living on for the next month.

Sample

Outside a man dressed in pants and a long-sleeved button-down waited for me in front of a golf cart. The attendant said something to him in Thai and he silently took my bag and placed it in the back of his cart, waving me to sit in the passenger seat.

The leather of the cart pushed my stale jeans even tighter against my skin. I'd worn my only pair of pants to the airport so my backpack would make weight as a carry-on, but if I had my choice I'd be dressed in shorts and a tank top. I didn't understand how this guy could stand to be dressed so completely. Were all the locals like him?

I looked around as he pulled out of the small parking lot in front of Tiger Muay Thai. It seemed I wasn't the only one wanting to dress sparsely. The street was filled with tan, shirtless men and women in sports bras. Not a single person was completely sweat-free.

High-paced electronic music on my left energized a class of Cross-fitters in a large open warehouse-styled gym that was nestled flush with the curve of the road. A moment in passing allowed me to sample thirty or so insanely toned people doing burpees and deadlifts. Two people who didn't look fit were still lifting just as much as the ones who did. My heart raced - this place was looking to be even better than I'd hoped for.

I covered my mouth as hot, humid fumes poured out of a large truck that squeezed by our golf cart. After it passed, a breeze cleared the air, carrying on it the musk of weeds and freshly cut grass. Everything to the side of the road that wasn't trampled on by foot was exploding with green. There was birdsong, motorcycle engines, laughter, and a dogfight happening somewhere.

While the idea of trying to make new friends still horrified me, I was excited to finally be a part of this place. I closed my eyes and allowed myself to soak up its essence.

A sharp turn had me grabbing onto the side of the cart just in time to be bombarded by a series of holes in a steep drive on a side road. We passed a large restaurant – Tony’s – and approached a large, orange three-story building. The gentleman parked, turned off the engine, grabbed my bag, and led me to the room all the way down on the first floor. He unlocked it and held open the dark grey door to reveal a small room.

It had a similar feel to any standard hotel room, except with nicer wooden furniture. The bathroom was immediately to the right. Unlike a Western-style washroom, it had nothing to separate the shower area from the toilet area. I wasn’t sure if I liked it or not. Back in the main area, was a mini-fridge and a long, wooden dresser with a TV on top of it. Opposite the dresser were two twin beds against the right wall. I walked towards the back of the room and noticed a wardrobe and desk on the wall that was shared with the bathroom.

The room had one window, covered by dark curtains. Hopefully, if I opened them, the room would feel brighter. The back door was next to it and opened to a small balcony overlooking the restaurant kitchen. My ears were greeted by the sounds of women and men flipping rice and noodles in woks, fires raging, and oil sparking. Two of the cooks seemed to be in an argument over an order.

“They no work all day.” The man told me.

I assumed he was reassuring me that I wouldn’t have to hear this all the time. I had a feeling he was lying. At the end of the day, thought I liked the noise. It made the space feel less alone.