**Sculpting Setting:**

**Setting Journal Assignment**

**90pts (15pts per entry)**

“An author knows his landscape best; he can stand around, smell the wind, get a feel for his place.”

-Tony Hillerman

Why?

In order to successfully create settings in your short story, you need to train your eyes to pay attention to the details of location. These entries will be the practice you need to train your eye to see the world around you differently, developing the skills necessary to sculpt a strong setting in your short story.

“The house smelled musty and damp, and a little sweet, as if it were haunted by the ghosts of long-dead cookies.” –Neil Gaiman, *American Gods*

“Bicycles, bullock carts and buses that belched thick, black smoke moved in anarchic steams with the auto rickshaws and cars along the streets. Many of the shops—normally selling everything from groceries to stainless steel cookware to shoes—stood silent behind shutters and honeycomb grilles.” –Ken Doyle, *Bombay Bhel*

What is the assignment?

You will need to go to **five locations** and **write five one-page setting descriptions** (one page handwritten, ½ a page typed with 12pt font, Times, single spaced). Yes, you may write more if you like.

After you’ve created these five entries, **go back to the best place and write for 10 minutes**. During this timed writing, do not describe the place again. **Instead start writing a story in any genre** (fantasy, historical fiction, realistic fiction, sci-fi, etc) **that takes place in this location.**

Where do I go?

* **Two locations can be in your house** (ex: your backyard & the dining room)
* **One can be at school**
* **Two must be somewhere else** (ex: Starbucks, Aztlan Rec Center, your grandma’s living room, City Park, The Museum of Nature and Science, the lobby at a movie theater, etc)

Where do I write this assignment?

* In your **Reader’s Notebook** or a new notebook (which we will now refer to as Out of Class Journal).
* Or you can type this assignment in Word or google docs and submit it digitally

**When is it due?**

**Periods 3&5= January 22nd**

**Periods 8&10= January 23rd**

**How should it look?**

Each entry needs to be labeled, and then you write descriptions of the place where you’re sitting. Here are a couple examples (these are shorter than I expect yours to be, but they give you a sense of format and subject):

#1 My Bedroom:

Clothes spill out of the closet and onto the floor. Scarves dangle like prayer flags from a hook by my mirror. A half unzipped backpack sits on the floor with a small notebook peaking out of the front pocket. The bed has been made but haphazardly, like the person was in a hurry, the blue and brown bedspread clumped in places, disheveled. A pile of books spill across the comforter: Sherman Alexie upright and closed, Flannery O’Conner face down propped open to a middle page, *Heart of Darkness* upside down with a bookmark protruding from the top, and a World Lit textbook open to a page of haiku (“On a withered branch/A crow has settled—/autumn nightfall” by Matsuo Basho). It is quiet. Only the creaking of the house settling can be heard until the heater kicks in, a dull whirr in the background.

#2 My backyard:

A foot of snow glistens white and untouched across the backyard. The bushes and tree branches look pregnant from the white weight. It is just before dawn, so the first light blue is starting to lighten the dark skies…

#6 My bedroom (second writing)

Rachel looked around the room and sighed, her shoulders slumped. Clothes spread out on her floor like a splatter painting, shoes flung in disarray, her school books balanced precariously on the corner of her bed. She’d intended not to leave a mess when she left for soccer practice this afternoon, but… well that clearly hadn’t happened. She threw her soccer bag into the rubble, kicked off her cleats and headed towards the bathroom. First: a shower. Then she would start the seemingly insurmountable task of organizing her life.