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Once More to the Lake

Life is a cycle. One has to go through the childhood and finally to old age. In old age, one nostalgically reflects the childhood memories that are full of joy but at the same time the painful reminder that the youth cannot be recaptured prevails. The story by E.B White is about childhood memories when he used to go camping with his father at the lake (McMillan 263). Time has passed and he revisits the place with his son in an attempt to enjoy good moments with nature. His son constantly reminds him of his youthful moments and he sees himself as both the son and the father but the painful reminder that the youth is past and he is nearing his death bed sends a chill of death down his spine.

During the visit with his son, the narrator finds that some things about the lake had not yet changed. The waves were the same, gently tapping the rowboat under the chin. The boat was the same, the same color green and the rib broken in the same place. The narrator feels the same damp moss covering the bait can during their fishing. The dragonflies alight on the tips of their fishing rods as it used to be during his childhood. The waitresses at the farmhouse were the same country girls and they remained to be fifteen in number. These memories remind him of the old days during their camping with his father. He describes it as “years were a mirage and there had been no years.”

Things have changed from the way they were during youthful days. The familiar sound of the lakeside has changed to unfamiliar nervous sound of the outboard motors. All the inboard motors that from far produced as seductive noise had been replaced by outboard motors that made petulant, irritable sound “they whined about one’s ears like mosquitoes.” Initially, the road was a three-track way but it had been narrowed down to a two-track road. The middle track was missing. Arrival at the lakeside in the past summers was a big business at the train station as the campers loaded their trunks in the farm wagons. It was memorable riding in the wagon and seeing the father authoritatively oversee the settlement. This arrival has changed and it is no longer interesting as one merely drives to the camp and easily unloads the car.

The narrator constantly sees himself in his son. During the fishing, he feels as if he is the boy holding the rod and gets confused. “If felt dizzy and didn’t know which rod I was at the end of.” As the boy sneaks out of the cottage in the mornings, just as the narrator used to, he feels as though he is the boy. The narrator at the end feels a sense of depression when he realizes he cannot relive in his son (McMillan 264). He also does not want to believe that he has grown old and can no longer enjoy the funs of the lake as he used to. He at last accepts the fact that his son is a different individual and not his copy. Things had changed and the long moments were gone. The crack of the thunder foreshadows his awe upon realizing the fact that old age had caught up with him and he was nearing death. This led to the last words: Chill of death.

Work cited

McMillan May. *The Shortest Way to the Essay: Rhetorical Strategies*. Mercer University Press.
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