

Nature Writing Workshop at Lewis & Clark Caverns

Julia Smith, Park Ranger, Saturday, April 13, 2019

Writing Prompts

Prompt #1: Using Cliches

Unfortunately, nature writing lends itself to many clichés. Write a paragraph about nature in which you include as many of the following clichés as possible:

A blot on the landscape
Breathtaking view
Sun-drenched
Bird's eye view
Hushed tones
As the crow flies
Bright

Sweeping vistas
Crack of dawn
Crystal clear
Eagle eye
Majestic mountains
Teaming with life
Vivid sunset

Tranquil brook
Babbling brook
Rushing waters
Regal (whatever)
Awesome mountains
Trilling birds
Caught my eye

Prompt #2: Eliminating Cliches

Re-write your paragraph that you wrote above, eliminating each cliché you used and substituting words that make it more specific and meaningful. Ask yourself: "What am I really trying to say here?" "How can I make my writing more specific and interesting?"

Prompt #3: Using All of Your Senses

Write a passage describing something in nature – a view, an animal, a plant, a scene, etc., using all of your five senses in your text: sight, touch, hearing, taste, and touch.

Prompt #4: Animal Encounter

Think of an encounter you have had with a wild animal that you have found personally meaningful. Free-write on this moment, considering the following questions:

- How can this creature work as a metaphor for you?
- How has your encounter with this animal marked you, changed you, or caused you to see yourself differently?
- How do this creature's actions mirror yours?
- How are you fundamentally different?
- What finally haunts you about this moment?

Recommended books on writing: "Short Takes" and "Tell It Slant"