

"a gap of sky" by
anna hope essay
sample



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“ A Gap of Sky” by Anna Hope Essay Sample

Youth is where you exceed your limits. You are no longer a child and you have the possibility of making your very own choices in life. Youth may very well include the coming of age, and also be the next step in life towards adulthood. Youth is a time warp, a borderland if you will, where everything can seem a bit blurred and exaggerated. You try to let go and you just want to live, whilst defying expectations from authorities. But this is not only where you experiment. It's also where you get to know yourself better. Much better. In the end, all that you have experienced, reflect who you are as an adult.

This story is about a young girl, like any other teenage girl, that finds herself in despair.

Ellie is 19 years old. She lives in a dorm room, not far from University College London. She finds herself lying in bed in the middle of the day, intoxicated and hungover from a night out involving cocaine and booze. In the midst of her physical misery, she remembers that she needs to hand in an essay the next morning at nine. Her sizzling brain is still mildly paralyzed from the drugs taken the night before. Ellie is considering her options about handing in the paper and exaggerated as she is, she convinces herself that she'll be kicked from the course or the like, if she doesn't hand in the paper. She needs to get this essay in, in time. And she needs to get ink for her thirsty printer. When getting to the student shop, realising it's closed, Ellie seems to take it all very lightly. She continues the search for a place to get her stuff, when she notices a sign on an iron railing:

" It is a glove, a black leather glove, rammed down over the top of one of the spikes, its middle finger raised up to the sky in glorious salute. Ellie giggles."
(p. 2, line 60-62)

Suddenly she feels delightful, but comes to think of her parents. She apparently feels like she has been forced into college. Forced to fulfill her parents' expectations. She feels kind of rebellious and remembers herself that she's young and independent. Why should any one dictate how she should live her life? She decides to follow her instinct by following two men, heading for the back entrance of the British Museum.

" Fuck Virginia Woolf. She's never been in there before, and so, why not?" (p. 2, line 74-75)

With this act, she will break up with her parents' expectations. Ellie wants freedom. Suddenly Ellie experiences some side effects from her drug use the night before. She imagines that she must die from these symptoms. But of course she won't. She's exaggerating. The side effects of some drugs, make you hallucinate. It gives her the feeling of indifference. She wants to give up. She can't go to a shop. She won't write the essay. She will never do coke again. While being on the verge of breaking down, Ellie notices that something in the townscape has changed. There is a gap of sky. A gap that reveals Ellie. Ellie needs to get back to nature, back to reality and find herself. To wash this horrid and dirty feeling clean. She hurries to the river and feels better. She realises that she will not die from this. She starts reflecting on why it has come to this. She tries to justify her actions to herself:

" She is only nineteen, only living, and if that was sometimes a little extreme, well, how should life be lived? That was the way she wished it, has always wished it, to dig, to the core, to get the...pith? Was it pith? To suck the pith of life..." (p. 3, line 98-100)

By pith, she means the very essence of life. Why have duties and obligations when you can just live your life and enjoy it?

A door opens and throws a light onto the street. She " sees the light", and follows it through the door and into the shop. She picks up a stone from a table and has a flashback. She knows this stone. Her mother gave one to her:

" Whatever, it was still an expression of something, a distilled expression of something, of her mother, of her love, and Ellie had just shoved it away, taken it for granted." (p. 3, line 110-112)

She realises that she forgets to appreciate the small, but important, things in life. She forgets being grateful. Now she knows. It all makes sense. She runs out of the store and feels great. Connected to the people walking by. Connected to mother Earth. Connected to love. She has obviously seen the light, but she still seems quite psychadelic. She metaphorically describes a clock above a building:

" It looks funny. What a strange and funny thing it is, slicing the day, serving it up; five forty it says. Five forty." (p. 4, line 123-124)

She snaps back to reality and realises that she has got to get ink in time, before the shop closes. But on her way there, she gets drawn to another gap,

showing the glimpsing river. She can't let go of the beautiful river. The beautiful night. Carpe diem.

She wants to seize the day, and alternates between reason and desire.

However, she comes to her senses and decides that she will buy ink, she will write her essay and everything will be good.

"A Gap of Sky" is a short story written by Anna Hope. The story is written from a 3rd person narrators view, limited to the main characters point of view. This is obvious from the way that the narrator describes the main character, Ellie, in 3rd person, like 'her', 'she' and 'Ellie'. (p. 1, line 1-3) The narrator is also sometimes letting us, the reader, inside Ellie's head. We think that we hear Ellie's voice, Ellies feelings, but it seems that it's always through the narrator:

"She's going to have to work through the night, but it's fine. This is fine. Coke. Does she have any left? Find the wrap, in the bra. The bra, in a tender little pile on the floor, curled around her knickers. Yessssss! Clever Ellie. (p. 1, line 29-35)

The underlined sentences are the ones I think seems like Ellie's direct thoughts and words. The narrator alternates between telling us the story about Ellie and making Ellie speak through the narrator. This makes the story more lively and very dynamic.

The author, Anna Hope, writes away in a very descriptive language.

Sometimes the verses almost feel and sound like poetry:

" The air is cold, makes her gasp, cold and hurting on her ragged lungs. The light is bright, searing light from the sun. Setting sun." (p. 2, line 42-43)

This short phrase is both poetic and descriptive. The text is very rhythmic with a nice mixture of long and short colorful sentences and extremely short two-word sentences. As I read it, my body started moving to the words, as if I were riding my bike with heavy heartbeating through urban streets full of traffic. It gave me the feeling of being a member of an audience at a poetry slam with a spoken word twist. This applies to both this phrase and most of the rest of the story in particular.

Anna Hope also uses quite a lot imagery:

" She feels rancid, as though the tide of her being has retreated and left her on the shore surrounded by plastic bottles and used sanitary towels and syringes and rusty cans." (p. 3, line 103-104)

Reading this, I see a beautiful picture of the body of a girl lying lifeless, surrounded by other empty shells of materialism.

The urban setting is very important to this story. Ellie is lost and this is shown best by placing her in a very dynamic setting. Ellie moves, but the world also moves around Ellie:

" There are people moving together, here in this part of London, moving with purpose, with meaning, and Ellie is one of them. (p. 2, line 57-58)

The city is also a massive contrast to nature, but still Ellie finds small gaps of freedom and nature through the urban setting. In this way, the author highlights the differences between city and nature.