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Frozen Moments Serves as Reference in a Timeless Land

People always take picture to capture places they have visited. Emil Sher captures his memories of Bobonong in his mind and through his story he is sending a message to his audience Bobonong is a place to visit.

Emil begins his story with details, vibrant descriptions, if one has been to South Africa and or Zimbabwe he or she would be able to visualize the little village about which Emil is talking. Africa was not somewhere he has been and he says so in the pre reading: " Africa you were just a name to me." And he goes on to say it belongs to Abioseh Nicol, the poet. Obviously Nicol has written about Botswana in details; however he confuses his audience by calling the place Bobonong and Botswana, Bobonong must be a village in the state of Botswana. Emil describes the land and he uses the right diction, words like " tucked," " dry, and sprawling," to conjure up images for his reader. It is as if he is showing the land to a blind person who used to see. Emil wants his reader to share his life in Africa, he leaves nothing out, by the time he is done the reader will have been in Africa with him. Baboloki and Sam the reader knows them but Emil forgets to tell if they are short or tall. He races through to line seven; probably this is a memory of significance. The picture of the old man is like he says when there is no name use imagery. The old man beating on a chain with a stone must be one of his favorite memories, it is thorough and an artist could paint a picture with these minutiae. The scene of the old man is important enough to take up three whole sentences (8-10). Emil thinks it is also important to talk about Bessie Head, like him, she enjoys their village life. She said it was her habit to walk through the village and observe village life. " It was my habit to walk

slowly through the village and observe the flow of everyday life--newly cut thatch glowing like a golden haystack on a round mud hut, children racing around absorbed in their eternal games: a woman busy pounding corn for the evening meal" (11). Using imagination, Emil takes his readers to Africa. Despite its lack of civilization, Emil loves his little village inserted in a corner away from outsiders. He becomes very graphic in the next paragraph. He brings planting season to life with figurative language. He "watched the tired mules coax ploughs through stubborn soil;" he personifies ploughs and soil. He makes the process of plugging a tedious job, as if the mules are saying to the ploughs, "come on, you can do it," The land is arid the mules are just dragging, trying their best to pull the ploughs. The fact that the soil is dry does not help; they have to give all they have to penetrate the soil. In the next sentence Emil continues his account of planting season. It is a hot day, "hazy" the "cart swayed to the rhythm of the rutted road." The road has no rhythm but the road is so uneven the cart rocks back and forth giving it the appearance of a waltz. The children carrying the firewood on their heads is the image of wearing a crown. Clearly, Emil appreciates his little village.

One can assume that there are not much trees big enough to create a shade in Emil's village; he personifies the sun, "the watchful eye of the sun," the sun does not see but because it could be seen from anywhere in the village, it was a "watchful eye" (14). Like most villages that lack modern commodities, the sun is used as a clock, they tell the time by the position of the sun. He says the sun rises slowly and uses a simile as he compares the rising of the sun, to an old man, "a village elder." The village elder is usually

the oldest man in the village, and it goes without saying that he is slow. By noontime the sun is over the whole village, it is in the middle of the sky and encompasses the whole village. Emil enjoys his little village; it has beautiful sunsets, colors blends into each other. Beautiful sunsets are a novelty to Emil but to the villagers, this happens every day, it is a glorious sight to Emil, the only spectator. Emil sees beauty in everything that this little village offers.

The adage, one man's trash is another man's treasure. applies to Emil and his villagers. The things that Emil admires is just another day in the life of the villagers; and it amuses them when he goes to sit on the roof of his outhouse to admire a sunset. It is entertaining to them as they watch him bathe with a bucket and a basin. Emil is coming from a place where he is used to taking a shower with water running on him from above, the villagers do not have a clue what a shower looks like. Whereas someone from the developed world would admire his ingenuity, someone from the developing world finds it funny. Emil is used to buying eggs and finding freshly laid eggs is exhilarating for him. Like he said he has his moments on stage; pushing water in a wheelbarrow is unheard of in the village, everyone carries water in a bucket on his or her head. And they do not need a fire at nights not when they have the stars; these people do not even have books to read, yet here comes Emil reading in the night with a candle. At some point they probably thought that Emil is mad.

As Emil seeks refuge in his hut from the sun he feels a bit of nostalgia and the picture that someone gives him as a going away present reminds him of home. He uses the picture to visit; he remembers where everything is and he

reflects on the favorite pastime of his and his family. In the beginning of the story Emil says he calls Botswana his home now and after he has given full descriptions of his new home he returns to the where he spends most of his life and made his first memories. Like he does with Botswana, he takes the reader to his home in Quebec and even though he says he only become homesick when his mother sent him a leaf, it appears that he longed form home when he uses more than half of the page to describe it. As the story ends Emil says he could stay forever but the death of his chicken, his garden being destroy by goats, and the plant that is beginning to grow in his hut, are signs telling him that his stay has come to an end.

Clearly, Emil enjoys Botswana as much as he enjoys his life in Quebec. These two places are dear to him, and he uses the right adjectives and figurative language to illustrate the images he has imprinted on his mind. Whenever he wants to reminisce he does not need a photo album because his pictures are already in his head drawn with indelible ink.