

Nebraska landscape in my antonia

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



The Nebraska Landscape Humankind's relationship to its environment is one of the strongest bonds people can make. In Willa Cather's *My Antonia*, this relationship is shown through many of the characters want to return to their hometown of Black Hawk, Nebraska. What they find they miss is a lost setting, a vanished world of people, places, and natural surroundings. They all develop a strong attachment to the Nebraska landscape, which never seems to leave them. Part of the reason for this connection is that the novel is set in a time and place where the weather places limitations on the characters.

As a result, the characters are simply more in tune with the weather and the natural elements in general. The landscape gives their feelings and thoughts a physical form, and reveals the theme of human connection with its surroundings as a whole. Jim's relationship with the Nebraska landscape is important on its own terms, but it also comes to represent Jim's relationship with the people and culture of Nebraska as well as his inner self. The river, that Jim and Antonia enjoy swimming in, represents his free soul.

Jim always allows himself to enjoy the simple things in life and adventure with Antonia, but keeps his goals in mind. The wide open Nebraska plains represent his open-minded, romantic personality that develops as he grows up. When he starts college, he finds himself beginning a relationship with his old friend Lena, and does everything in his power to make her happy. The landscape seems to shape his life and personality, changing and developing as he does. It also mirrors Jim's feelings—it looks desolate when he is lonely—and also awakens feelings within him.

Another example of landscape description symbolizing the feeling of a situation is at the burial of Mr. Shimerda. Mr. Shimerda committed suicide after a particularly difficult winter, and his family is devastated regarding his loss and their economic situation. His funeral is also held in the dead of winter, the coldest time of year. The land is unyielding and unforgiving, just as it had been for the Shimerdas trying to make a living off of it when they moved to Nebraska. There seems to be a bitter feel at the funeral, almost as bitter as the cold air outside.

The plow, which Jim and Antonia see silhouetted against the enormous setting sun, also reveals the theme of the connection between human culture and the natural landscape. As the sun sets behind the plow, the two elements are combined in a single image of calmness, suggesting that man and nature also coexist harmoniously. However as the sun sinks lower on the horizon, the plow seems to grow smaller and smaller, ultimately reflecting the dominance of the landscape over those who inhabit it.