

Write a travel/nature + science writing piece about with the following constraints:

The piece should be about a place special to you.

- Think about what makes or made the place special (even if the place is ordinary).
- Is it beautiful? Ugly? Lively? Did something important in your life happen there? Is it simply an important or popular place?
- The point is to communicate the location's "character" or "idea."

A total of four related scenes of about 500 words each.

- Each scene should have a title

Three of the four scenes should describe some sensory aspect of your location(s) (e.g., a forest, a park, a neighbourhood, etc.)

- Each sentence within these three scenes should contain some sensory detail.
 - Sensory details in descriptive writing are specific words and phrases that engage a reader's senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell) to create a vivid mental image of a person, place, or thing, effectively transporting the reader into the scene being described.

One of the four scenes should explain a subject related to science or tech that also relates to your chosen location(s) (e.g., hydroelectric power at Niagara Falls).

Your science/tech subject can be:

- a natural phenomenon, entity, or process (ex. a tornado, a frog, photosynthesis)
- health/medicine (ex. a disease)
- technology/mechanics (ex. self-driving cars)

Try Zinsser's pyramid approach (p. 150-153, *On Writing Well*)

You may not use the following pronouns for any of the scenes: I, me, you, she, he, him, her, us, or it

"The Tomb Where Joy Lived"

The Night That Felt Like Freedom

Shiraz never slept when music played at the tomb of Hafez, a famous Persian poet, resting in the Musalla Gardens. Even under the weight of rules and unspoken laws that pressed against every movement, the night found a way to breathe. The scent of bitter orange blossoms tangled with the soft breeze, drifting over families settling onto patterned picnic mats, cups of rose tea balanced in hands. The curved roof lit up from underneath, giving light to the night, and the moon shone brighter than ever in the starry, clear skies of Shiraz. Beneath that glow, figures moved as children chased each other in bursts of laughter, joy echoing like music. Elders poured tea with steady hands, each wrinkle telling a story steeped in tradition. Friends leaned in close to murmur over warm cups of stew or falafel from food trucks lining the edges of the gardens, vibrant colors contrasting beautifully against the darkening sky. An accordion hummed in the distance, the melody curling into the night, a sound that met ears familiar with the rhythm of longing and joy. A father whispered verses from Hafez, voice dipping and rising like the wind threading through the cypress trees that stood over the gathering. A mother clapped along to the beat just loud enough to pretend dancing was allowed, laughter mingling with the music. Rules forbade dancing, but feet still tapped, heads bopped and felt the music like a pulse in the air. The night pressed close, wrapped in poetry and song, each note carrying a defiance too subtle to be punished. People came alive in that moment, shedding daily burdens and the weight of societal expectations. The gardens transformed into a sanctuary where dreams intertwined with reality, where the poet's words echoed not just through the air but through the very hearts of those gathered. Couples embraced under the stars, silhouettes framed by soft light, while groups of friends shared jokes and stories, laughter weaving a rich connection among all. As the music swelled, an electric energy crackled in the atmosphere, inviting even the shyest among them to join in the revelry. The scene made one wonder what Hafezieh looked like before the regime took shape. Did joy come without caution? In this vibrant scene of humanity, everyone contributed to the artistry of the night, their individual stories melding into a collective narrative that honoured shared heritage. For those few hours, Hafez's tombstone became more than just a place where a corpse rested. The space became alive, resonating with laughter, whispered poetry, and the vibrant heartbeat of Shiraz. In this sacred atmosphere, boundaries that normally defined lives melted away, leaving only the beauty of the moment, a tribute to the resilience of the human spirit and the power of music and poetry to unite and uplift. As the final notes of the accordion faded into the cool night air, the crowd lingered a moment longer, savouring the echoes of joy and defiance that would carry through the days to come.

The Stones That Hold the Past

The cool surface of marble met fingertips; texture smoothed by the devotion of generations. Every inch of the tombstone breathed history, from the delicate blue tiles curling across the ceiling to the verses carved deep into the tomb's surface. The poetry lingered like an echo, wrapping around those who came to pay their respects. Some placed their hands over the inscriptions, lips moving in silent, like they're expecting for some magic to happen. Others pressed folded slips of paper against the stone, entrusting wishes, burdens, and secrets to a poet who had outlived his own time. Under the moon's glow, the calligraphy sharpened, casting

shadows into the grooves of each letter. Murmured recitations drifted through the night, voices layering, mixing, and dispersing like mist over the grave. Some sat cross-legged on the ground, fingers smudging on the thick glass that covered the tomb. A few lingered at the entrance, waiting for a sign they could not quite name. The past sat heavy here, wrapped around every crack in the floor and every flicker of candlelight. Even as footsteps faded into the distance, something of them always remained. A breeze carried the scent of damp earth and distant flowers, curling through the courtyard like an unseen hand turning the pages of history. The night air settled against skin, cool and featherlight, but the weight of the place pressed down, as if every moment ever lived here still hung in the air. Most visitors came to chat and picnic. The garden is so beautiful that people almost forgot a corpse is resting there. They came to eat, chat, and enjoy the nights of Shiraz, filled with stars and smell of delicious food. Somewhere near the edge of the courtyard, a child laughed. A sound so light and unburdened that seemed to belong to another world entirely. The soft lighting from beneath the roof cast a warm glow over the ancient stone, reflecting off the smooth surface like embers caught in a draft. The scent of roses lingered, mingling with the sharper tang of old books that some carried under their arms. Someone turned the pages of a well-worn poetry collection, the paper thin and fragile beneath careful fingers. Even in the quiet, there was movement, subtle shifts, breaths drawn in unison, the slow, rhythmic steps of those who came and went. The marble absorbed each moment, each sigh, each quiet prayer. Nothing was truly lost here. Even the past, held in stone and verse, refused to fade.

The Echo of a Forbidden Dance

Sound travels differently in spaces that were never meant to hold it. The tombstone was not built for concerts, for whispered recitations, or for the kind of music that makes feet itch to move. But the walls carried the melodies anyway, bouncing them off domed ceilings, curling them around the cypress trees, sending them back softer and warmer, as if they belonged there. The air swelled with song, with poetry, and with the quiet hum of voices merging into something greater than sound alone. The science of acoustics did not care for government rules. Vibrations, unseen and unstoppable, slipped through the gaps between stone and sky. The sound of the accordion, the crisp pluck of a setar string, and the heartbeat of a daf drum moved through the space, bending and stretching as they refused to be contained. Each note struck the walls and scattered, rippling outward and weaving defiance into every echo. The rhythms pulsed through the ground, rising through the soles of shoes, settling into the bones of those who gathered. The music became something felt rather than heard, an energy that lived in the breath between notes. No matter how often officials reminded the people that dancing was forbidden, the air vibrated with the truth. The human body knows music before the mind registers. A foot taps. A head sways. Fingers curl around the stem of a tea glass in time with the beat. Even those who sat still felt the tension in their muscles, the almost movement, the silent defiance. The tomb listened, and somewhere between the stone and the air, resistance took shape. Not loud, not obvious, but undeniable. A child clapped both hands to the rhythm, with a small but knowing smile. A group of friends leaned in close, their shoulders touching as they mouthed the words to an old song. An elderly man tapped his cane against the ground, a measured and steady beat, face turned toward the sky as if remembering something from long ago. The cypress trees stood tall around the shrine, their branches swaying just slightly, as if even they were caught in the music. The scent of orange blossoms drifted through the air, mixing with the distant aroma of chai and fruitful shishas from nearby picnics. The night breathed with the sound, each inhale pulling in melody,

each exhale releasing something unspoken into the open sky. Even as the last notes faded, the echoes clung to the stone, reluctant to disappear. People lingered, unwilling to break the spell. Some turned pages of poetry books, finding comfort in familiar verses. Others let the quiet settle over them, understanding that silence could never erase what had been sung. The music would return tomorrow and the next night and the night after that. The sound would travel again, slipping through barriers, bending around rules, and making way into the hearts of those who listened. Because sound, once released, is impossible to contain.

The Memory That Lingers

The past never truly fades. Memories settle into quiet spaces, carried by the scent of chai steeping in porcelain cups and the sweet smell of flowers drifting through the air. No grand gestures announce the presence of history, yet traces remain in the smallest details. The familiar clink of a spoon against glass, the warmth of candlelight stretching across a room, the echo of a poem spoken long ago. Laughter, music, and hushed conversations over picnic blankets continue to play on loop, like a song with no end. Across great distances and years, the resting place of Hafez calls out. The voice of the poet reaches beyond time, verses slipping into thoughts unbidden, weaving into conversations, and surfacing in quiet moments of reflection. Perhaps poetry demands remembrance. Perhaps the certainty remains that even now, melodies drift through the night, and the gathering of souls carries an unspoken defiance. One day, steps will once again follow the old stone paths. The smooth marble will greet fingertips tracing words that have endured beyond lifetimes. A gentle wind will stir the cypress trees, carrying whispers of old verses. The scent of orange blossoms will weave through the courtyard, wrapping around each presence as if offering a quiet welcome. A book of Hafez's poetry rests upon a wooden shelf in a distant city, pages worn from years of turning. With the arrival of Yalda Night, the longest night of the year, and again on the eve of the Persian New Year, passages are read aloud, the tradition holding steady through the passing of time. Verses first spoken beneath the Shiraz sky now find new life elsewhere. Candlelight flickers as voices give breath to words once carried through the shrine's open spaces. Though far from the resting place of the poet, a thread remains unbroken. Someday, footsteps will ascend the stairs leading toward the tombstone protected beneath thick glass. Gazes will lift to the blue mosaic tiles arching overhead, colors as deep and endless as the night sky. Palms will rest against polished stone, cool beneath the touch, bearing the weight of centuries. Echoes of countless visitors, those who once stood upon the same ground and recited the same verses, will hum softly through the air. Joy never truly departs. Fragments linger in laughter once shared beneath the cypress trees, in hands clapping to a rhythm no instrument played, in candlelight swaying against marble. The essence of poetry does not disappear, carried forward through generations, living in melodies that refuse to be silenced, waiting in the footsteps that return to well-worn paths. The past does not vanish. Every moment remains, ready to embrace those who come searching once more.