

Name: _____

Writer's Palette

Verbs	Dialogue Tags
Descriptive Words	Other

Elizabeth Hall wakes in a strange bed in a strange room with the strange feeling that her sheets are trying to smother her.

List (who is Elizabeth to her teachers; Lizzie at home, except when she's in trouble; and just plain Liz everywhere else in the world) sits up in bed, bumping her head on an unforeseen upper bunk. From above, a voice she does not recognize protests, "Aw hell!"

Liz peers into the top bunk, where a girl she has never seen before is sleeping, or at least trying to. The sleeping girl, who is near Liz's own age, wears a white nightgown and has long dark hair arranged in a thatch of intricately beaded braids. To Liz, she looks exactly like a queen.

"Excuse me," Liz asks, "but would you happen to know where we are?"

The girl yawns and rubs the sleep out of her eyes. She glances from Liz to the ceiling to the floor to the window and then to Liz again. She touches her braids and sighs. "On a boat," she answers, stifling another yawn.

"What do you mean 'on a boat'?"

"There's water, lots and lots of it. Just look out the window," she replies before cocooning herself in the bedclothes. "Of course, you might have thought to do that without waking me."

"Sorry," Liz whispers.

Liz looks out the porthole that is parallel to her bed. Sure enough, she sees hundreds of miles of early-morning darkness and ocean in all directions, blanketed by a healthy coating of fog. If she squints, Liz can make out a boardwalk. There, she sees the forms of her parents and her little brother, Alvy. Ghostly and becoming smaller by the second, her father is crying and her mother is holding him. Despite the apparent distance, Alvy seems to be looking at Liz and waving. Ten second later, the fog swallows her family entirely.

Elsewhere by Gabrielle Zevin

Sixty seconds. That's how long we're required to stand on our metal circles before the sound of a gong releases us. Step off before the minute is up, and the landmines blow your legs off. Sixty seconds to take in the ring of tributes all equidistant from the Cornucopia, a giant golden horn shaped like a cone with a curved tail, the mouth of which is at least twenty feet high, spilling over with the things that will give us life here in the arena. Food, containers of water, weapons, medicine, garments, fire starters. Strewn around the Cornucopia are other supplies, their value decreasing the farther they are from the horn. For instance, only a few steps from my feet lies a three-foot square of plastic. Certainly it could be of some use in a downpour. But there in the mouth, I can see a tent pack that would protect from almost any sort of weather. If I had the guts to go in a fight for it against the other twenty-three tributes. Which I have been instructed not to do.

We're on a flat, open stretch of ground. A plain of hard packed dirt. Behind the tributes across from me, I can see nothing, indicating either a steep downward slope or even a cliff. To my right lies a lake. To my left and back, sparse piney woods. This is where Haymitch would want me to go. Immediately.

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

Grandmother Lacy Thornton parked her Buick by the Underbird and strolled to a table by the window. Grandmother Lacy Thornton always wears a navy-blue suit and shoes. Their

color offsets her white-blue hair, which she sweeps up in a halo around her heart-shaped face. She stands just a little taller than me, but somehow looms above everyone in the room.

Tinks Williams darted in next to grab a sandwich, leaving his John Deere tractor idling in a patch of shade. Then came slow-talking Sam Quinerly, Lavender's racing partner and mechanic. He already had grease on his hands. Before Dale could make Sam's sandwich, in strolled Reverend Thompson and his boy, Thessalonians.

"Hey, Thes," I said, sliding him a glass of water. "How's summer school?"

He grinned, his carrot-colored hair glistening. "Wouldn't know. I ain't going."

Like me, Thes doesn't over-study. Unlike me, he's F-prone. I keep my borderline straight A's to myself, preferring to spring my brainpower on others when they least expect it. I take after Miss Lana that way. "How'd you wiggle out of that?" I asked.

"Makeup test, and prayer," Reverend Thompson muttered.

Thes beamed. "Hey Mo, we got three potential hurricanes off Africa this morning. I figure we got a thirty percent chance one will make it all the way to us." Thes is a weather freak. He dreams of being a TV weatherman, and updates for practice. As far as I know, there's no way to stop him.

"A couple of specials, please, Mo," Reverend Thompson said.

"Coming up."

Three Times Lucky by Sheila Turnage

We were able to reaffirm our findings on the catheads each Sunday that Reverend Thomas spent with us. Naturally enough, he was asked to bless the table. We would all stand; my uncle, leaning his walking stick against the wall, would lean his weight on the table. Then Reverend Thomas would begin. "Blessed Father, we thank you this morning..." and on and on and on. I'd stop listening after a while until Bailey kicked me and then I cracked my lids to see what had promised to be a meal that would make any Sunday proud. But as the Reverend droned on and on and on to a God who I thought must be bored to hear the same things over and over again, I saw that the ham grease had turned while on the tomatoes. The eggs had withdrawn from the edge of the platter to bunch in the center like children left out in the cold. And the catheads had sat down on themselves with the conclusiveness of a fat woman sitting in an easy chair. And still he talked on. When he finally stopped, our appetites were gone, but he feasted on the cold food with a non-talking but still noisy relish.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou