

Write Your Life

A micro memoir writing project

Recall an ordinary day when nothing important happened—and yet, by the end of the day, you saw the world a little differently.

Nightfall

Out of nowhere Tizi says, “I think there is no f-sound in the Native American languages.”

Not exactly nowhere.

We’re coming from Detroit’s Eastern Market. Behind my seat are bags of zucchini, potatoes, and peaches. We passed on fresh figs this morning. “We should have bought corn,” I tell her now. “Do you think it’s too early?”

“Corn is your department,” she says.

What the F.

Why would she think that? How would she know that? When I ask she says Caniff made her think of it. On this stretch of freeway, of the roads we pass, her two favorites are Caniff and Cadieux.

“Cadieux is definitely French,” she says.

“Well, yes. But?”

“Like the Asian languages,” she says. “No F sound.”

This morning our speech is muffled by masks. It’s the smoke outside, blowing south from Canadian wildfires. Earlier, over coffee she pointed me to an article about First Nations up there. Where are they supposed to go?

Later in the day I have F on my mind again.

I’m riding the escalator up at Menards, looking for furnace filters. To my right are 50-pound bags of corn, stacks of them. Which makes me wonder about product placement. Who needs that much corn? What’s it for? At the top of the escalator, a grand piano. Down the road at Costco, the grand piano plays itself. Here there’s a young woman, playing something in a minor key that I don’t recognize.

I turn right, walk past cleaning supplies, past a whole wall of gloves, hanging on a display. I pause to look for a minute, the music stops, then starts again, in a major key.

It’s the ice skating waltz.

Write Your Life

A micro memoir writing project

It's what everyone needed. Outside it's early nightfall, given the smoke. I need filters for the ash. But in here just now, it's bright. I can't move. Her high notes are icy relief. The gloves hanging there, I think, like hundreds of detached hands, might suddenly start to applaud.

I wander to the next aisle, and the next aisle, and the next, still searching for filters.