Writing in the Moment



*Today I am sitting beneath the shade of a Magnolia tree. The leaves are thick and green, but it does nothing to quell the stifling heat of the air around me. The dry yellowed grasses of weeks without rain crinkle between my toes, and the leaves above me twitch longingly for a breeze to ride upon. Though a hawk screeches overhead in search of prey, the critters below stay in shelter from the sun. The reign of the sun’s heat blazes to a suffocating level. Yet, there is a moisture that lingers, the promise of a storm in the days to come—a wash of cooling relief to quench the earth that sings with dryness.*

To all you creative thinkers out there, take the time to write in the moment! Today in the suburbs of New Jersey, it is a boiling end-of-the-summer kind of day. The great cool-down of autumn has yet to come, but we are all longing to taste the drops of that one big storm—the storm that will wash away the last dregs of summer heat. When you take the time to sit and write, even for a few minutes, you are exercising those creative veins running inside you. You begin to notice things, see things in the tiniest details, or even realize the bigger picture of the world around you. The scale at which you write is a limitless freedom. Take advantage of it.

You may begin to notice sounds or smells as your senses begin to take part in the exercise of experiencing the moment. What are you feeling? How is your environment affecting the way you feel? What do you see? Can you imagine beyond what you see using your other senses? How far can you go? Take in everything around you. The more you do this, the better you will become at fabricating your own settings.

Whether you prefer fiction or non-fiction, settings play a huge part in bringing the reader into the moment of a story. Could you imagine yourself in the midst of the sorting in the Great Hall of Hogwarts in *Harry Potter*? How about in the tumultuous highlands of Scotland in *Outlander*? Or even the ever-changing landscapes of Middle Earth as created by Tolkien in *Lord of the Rings*? Each of these fictional works has a setting that pulls readers into their worlds. Each one made us want to become a part of them. Each author behind these works had mastered the idea of writing in a moment.

For the non-fiction lovers, setting plays a role just as important for many of the same reasons. Authors strive to bring their readers along with them into the moment they are writing and want them to see the world from a similar perspective to share the thoughts they are experiencing. Transcendental writers like Emerson and Thoreau became masters of this method, starting with settings often in the natural world, and then using these to bounce off into greater thoughts and ideas.

Whatever your genre, whatever your style, keep in mind the time and place you want to capture. And practice. Write in the moment from time to time to keep those skills fresh and charged with energy. You never know when inspiration will grace you with her presence. She may nudge you with a new idea or angle that is just enough to tickle your story to life.