Stroupe

WRIT 4250

Sample Narrative Passage for “Borne Ceaselessly”

**Location 1: On the sidewalk directly across the London Road from the National Guard Armory, between the 13th and 14th Avenue entrances to the Leif Erikson Park parking lot.**

[I need to figure out how to begin, how to address the audience and get them settled into the idea and flow of this walk.] The narrator directs the audience to start by looking at the Duluth National Guard Amory building across the street:

“You’ve probably heard that it was here at the Armory that a young Bob Dylan saw the ‘50s rock-and-roller Buddy Holly play, three days before Holly and the Big Bopper and a lot of other touring musicians were killed in a plane crash in Iowa.  That was in January 1959, a long, long time ago.  Dylan went by his real name Robert Zimmerman then—just a high-school kid down from Hibbing where he fronted a band of his own that played around town.  He was just another face in the crowd to Holly, but for Dylan, well, Dylan told the story almost 40 years later when he accepted a Grammy Award for album of the year: 'And I just want to say that when I was sixteen or seventeen years old,’ Dylan said, 'I went to see Buddy Holly play at Duluth National Guard Armory and I was three feet away from him...and he looked at me. And I just have some sort of feeling that he was — I don't know how or why — but I know he was with us all the time we were making this record in some kind of way.’

“He looked at me.’  ‘Three feet away.’  It was like the passing of a baton for Dylan.  Where would he take it?  Where would he go from here?  Who would he be?” [Need to do more Cardiff stuff in here: comment on the experience of the place, the way she talks about the noise of the city at the beginning of “Her Long Dark Hair”]

[Maybe this is where I use a bit of a Dylan song, possibly “Something There is About You” which mentions “walking the hills of old Duluth."] The audience turns and walks southeast along the sidewalk, past where there is a storm drain by the curb.  “Talk about 'the hills of old Duluth.'  That storm drain drops right into Chester Creek, which tumbles down so steeply here in town that it runs under the Armory and London Road and to the lake.  We’ll see the mouth of the creek at the end of our walk .” [I’ll make much more of this buried creek later, so I wanted to just mention it here since it’s right under the audience’s feet.]

“Just a couple years later Zimmerman was moving out and moving on, playing solo gigs in the coffee houses in Dinkytown down in Minneapolis, in the very direction we’re walking right now.” [Notice the “we” there--I kind of like that!]  "A year or so later he was in New York City's Greenwich Village, the Mecca of folk music.

“Stop and look left, towards the East.  Over the big lake.  Far beyond Wisconsin across the water.  Imagine you're  Robert Zimmerman—your ears ringing with Buddy Holly music, exhilarated—spilling out of the Armory, across London Road, and onto the sidewalk with the crowds of kids, but thinking you’re different—you’re supposed to be somewhere else—not back here, but out there, to the East.

If you were young, and smart, and serious in the early ‘60s, you were into folk.  It was authentic.  It was politically aware.  The folk scene in Greenwich Village was where you wanted to be.

That’s where 'baby-faced,' Robert Zimmerman from Hibbing changed his name to Bob Dylan, who was from nowhere and everywhere.  ‘If you asked him anything [about himself], you would get no where,” remembers someone who knew him in those days.  ‘You could not talk to him personally… He’d always joke or tell you something like he used to be a miner.’

“Start walking again toward the same direction toward the Leif Erikson Statue in the gardens on the left.  Dylan biographer David Hajdu puts it this way: ‘Dylan mustered a parade of colorful fantasies: he was an orphan, born in Chicago or raised in a New Mexico orphanage on in various foster homes; his Semitic features were the mark of Sioux Indian blood in the family; one of his uncles was a gambler, another a thief; he had lived in Oklahoma, Iowa, South Dakota, North Dakota, Kansas, and on the Mississippi River; he joined a carnival at age thirteen and traveled with it around the Southwest; he played the piano on Elvis Presley’s early records.’  Hajdu sums it up this way: ‘Performers had always changed their names and adopted professional images that diverged from their biographies.  Indeed, transformation has always been part of the American idea: in the New World, anyone can become a new person.  The irony of Robert Zimmerman’s metamorphosis into Bob Dylan lies in the application of so much elusion and artifice in the name of truth and authenticity.’

“All this elusion to deny you’re from here, from ‘old Duluth.'  But Zimmerman’s denial of home didn’t make him a phony. It made him all the more real.  Hajdu repeats a good line about Dylan then: ‘The cowboy singer and sculptor Harry Jackson told folksinger Gil Turner when he saw young Dylan perform, “He’s so goddamned real, it’s unbelievable.”’"