

Songs for a Teenage Nomad by Kim Culbertson

Song Journal Project

In the novel, Calle keeps a song journal. She titles each entry with a song title, and in the entry records the memory the song gives her. In the first chapter, she tells Mr. Hyatt that: "Last year, I started writing down memories I get from songs. I hear one, mostly older songs, and I write down the memory it brings. Like glimpses of my life as I remember it. Snapshots."

The pieces of Calle's journal entries that begin each chapter center around her mother, some of them are arguments or places, and some of them are small details that help paint a picture of their relationship. For example, chapter two begins following journal entry:

SMALL TOWN

...my mother turns the radio up because she has always been in love with John Cougar Mellencamp, insists on the Cougar part of his name, even if the singer has dropped it. We sprawl on the sloping lawn of the park, my mother letting her lunch break run way long. Light glints off her silver rimmed sunglasses as she hands me half a tuna sandwich with extra pickles...

Many people have songs that make them think of a place or experience in their lives. Perhaps the song reminds them of a trip they took, or of a sport they played, or of a friend who is important to them. Music is an important part of our culture, and one that is also deeply personal.

In this project, each student will create a song journal. For the journal, each student will do the following:

1. Select ten songs that have significance to you somehow. At the beginning of your journal, include a list of your songs (including the name of the artist or band) that you selected.
2. Each journal entry will be approximately ½ page long (around 150 words) and will use the song as the title to the entry. Each entry should be typed.
3. In each entry, describe a scene/memory in your life that this song brings to you. Focus on using specific detail and sensory description to "show" the reader the memory rather than just tell the memory (look closely at what Calle does in her journals).
4. At the end of the song journal, include the following self-reflection: Explain/discuss why you choose the songs you did and what you feel they say about you and what's important to you in your life. This should be one page typed and double-spaced (around 300 words).
5. Design a creative cover for your song journal.