

NAME: _____

PER: _____

Wisdom Sits in Places Quotes

#1 *"Place is the first of all beings, since everything that exists is in a place and cannot exist without a place."* (3)

#2 *"American Indians hold their lands-places-as having the highest possible meaning, and their statements are made with this reference point in mind."* (37)

#3 *"What we call landscape is generally considered to be something 'out there.' But, while some aspects of the landscape are clearly external to both our bodies and our minds, what each of us actually experiences is selected, shaped, and colored by what we know."* (71)

#4 *"To know who you are, you have to have a place to come from."* (105)

Basso, Keith H. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape & Language Among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1996. Print.

Keep these quotes in mind while we read *Looking for Alaska* and *Catcher in the Rye*. Your final paper for this unit will revolve around the idea of "place" and how places affect who we become as people in addition to how setting (aka "place") affects how characters evolve in a novel.

On the back of this sheet of paper, write about a place you hold very close to your heart and why. Think about what this place looks like, smells like, and feels like. Where is it located? Why is it special? Why does it stick in your memory? Did something happen there? Or maybe not happen there? Your response should be 7-10 sentences. Write neatly...if I can't read it, I can't grade it ☺

Tuesday, October 18, 2016 11:39 AM

H. Basso
with the
the two
and

Preface

the
from

What do people make of places? The question is as old as people and places themselves, as old as human attachments to portions of the earth. As old, perhaps, as the idea of home, of "our territory" as opposed to "their territory," of entire regions and local landscapes where groups of men and women have invested themselves (their thoughts, their values, their collective sensibilities) and to which they feel they belong. The question is as old as a strong sense of place—and the answer, if there is one, is every bit as complex.

* wonder
for

Sense of place complex? We tend not to think so, mainly because our attachments to places, like the ease with which we usually sustain them, are unthinkingly taken for granted. As normally experienced, sense of place quite simply is, as natural and straightforward as our fondness for certain colors and culinary tastes, and the thought that it might be complicated, or even very interesting, seldom crosses our minds. Until, as sometimes happens, we are deprived of these attachments and find ourselves adrift, literally dislocated, in unfamiliar surroundings we do not comprehend and care for even less. On these unnerving occasions, sense of place may assert itself in pressing and powerful ways, and its often subtle components—as subtle, perhaps, as absent smells in the air or not enough visible sky—come surging into awareness. It is then we come to see that attachments to places may be nothing less than profound, and that when these attachments are threatened we may feel threatened as

well. Places, we realize, are as much a part of us as we are part of them, and senses of place—yours, mine, and everyone else's—partake complexly of both.

time to time when he is thinking serious thoughts. He rolls a cigarette and lights it with a battered Zippo he has carried for years. *Vmmnn!* Spinning and smoking at the same time—his thoughts must be serious indeed. Several minutes pass before he speaks. When he does, he tells me that he has not forgotten my question: "What is wisdom?" He now intends to address it. He will use his own language, and to help me understand he will try to keep things simple. He stubs out his cigarette, rolls and lights another one, and then goes to work. *Vmmnn!* What follows is poetry and a great deal more about wisdom.

The trail of wisdom—that is what I'm going to talk about. I'm going to speak as the old people do, as my grandmother spoke to me when I was still a boy. We were living then at Ták'eh Godzigé (Rotten Field).

"Do you want a long life?" she said. "Well, you will need to have wisdom. You will need to think about your own mind. You will need to work on it. You should start doing this now. You must make your mind smooth. You must make your mind steady. You must make your mind resilient.

"Your life is like a trail. You must be watchful as you go. Wherever you go there is some kind of danger waiting to happen. You must be able to see it before it happens. You must always be watchful and alert. You must see danger in your mind before it happens.

"If your mind is not smooth you will fail to see danger. You will trust your eyes but they will deceive you. You will be easily tricked and fooled. Then there will be nothing but trouble for you. You must make your mind smooth.

"If your mind is not resilient you will be easily startled. You will be easily frightened. You will try to think quickly but you won't think clearly. You yourself will stand in the way of your own mind. You yourself will block it. Then there will be trouble for you. You must make your mind resilient.

"If your mind is not steady you will be easily angered and upset. You will be arrogant and proud. You will look down on other people. You will envy them and desire their possessions. You will speak about them without thinking.

You will complain about them, gossip about them, criticize them. You will lust after their women. People will come to despise you. They will pay someone to use his power on you. They will want to kill you. Then there will be nothing but trouble for you. You must make your mind steady. You must learn to forget about yourself.

"If you make your mind smooth, you will have a long life. Your trail will extend a long way. You will be prepared for danger wherever you go. You will see it in your mind before it happens.

"How will you walk along this trail of wisdom? Well, you will go to many places. You must look at them closely. You must remember all of them. Your relatives will talk to you about them. You must remember everything they tell you. You must think about it, and keep on thinking about it, and keep on thinking about it. You must do this because no one can help you but yourself. If you do this your mind will become smooth. It will become steady and resilient. You will stay away from trouble. You will walk a long way and live a long time.

"Wisdom sits in places. It's like water that never dries up. You need to drink water to stay alive, don't you? Well, you also need to drink from places. You must remember everything about them. You must learn their names. You must remember what happened at them long ago. You must think about it and keep on thinking about it. Then your mind will become smoother and smoother. Then you will see danger before it happens. You will walk a long way and live a long time. You will be wise. People will respect you."

Vmmnn! Rising to his feet without another word, Dudley walks away in the direction of his outhouse. His suspicions were correct; I have had trouble grasping his statement on wisdom. No one from Cibecue has broached this subject with me before, and few have spoken with such eloquence and grace. I am moved by what I have heard but uncertain of what to make of it. And understandably so. Dudley delivered his comments in a distinctive verbal register characterized