Discussion

“Sense of Place”

1. According to Simone Weil “To be rooted is perhaps the most important but least understood need of the human soul”

Do you feel this need? If so, is the feeling pronounced or something that comes up from time to time?

Is Weil’s statement relevant in a modern society?

2. Wendell Berry says “If you don’t know where you are, you don’t know who you are.” Has a place helped to shape your personal identity?

3. Stegner says we have tendencies to be a “placed” person and a “displaced person.” Which tendency is the strongest in you?

4. Do people in the U.S tend to be more restless and rootless than those in other societies? If so, why? Have you been influenced by these forces?

5. What are your feelings about living in one place for the rest of your life?

6. For your next vacation (if cost were not an issue), would you choose to spend time in a foreign country of your choice, or time in your bioregion? Why?

7. Davis suggests that indigenous people possess a unique spiritual connection with the place they inhabit. What does he mean? Can a non-indigenous person hope to achieve such a connection?

8. Davis describes rituals of the Quechua honoring their connection with place through ritual. What are your thoughts about such ritual? Has ritual been part of your experience of place?

9. “With our state, the trick is knowing how to find its beauty” Describe a special place near you that a visitor might overlook.

Exercise for Sense of place

Choose a spot in nature to sit for time during the semester. Record your observations.

When you are familiar with your place, make a map of your place and describe what kind of tress, plants, birds, smells, colors, etc you see in it.

Without describing your place, write what the place makes you feel, think, etc