

Writing Challenge 7.0: Sporting Chance

engl 281 / sec. B / autumn quarter 2011-12 / chang

John McPhee in *A Sense of Where You Are* exquisitely explicates the speed, grace, and power of basketball player Bill Bradley. He describes: “While some players are eccentric in their shooting, his shots, with only occasional exceptions, are straightforward and unexaggerated. Nonetheless, he does make something of a spectacle of himself when he moves in rapidly parallel to the baseline, glides through the air with his back to the basket, looks for a teammate he can pass to, and, finding none, tosses the ball into the basket over one shoulder, like a pinch of salt” (21). Week Seven’s writing challenge drills another kind of exposition: describing, dramatizing, and vivifying action. This is the art of sports writing. How do you take something done in four dimensions and transcribe it, transpose it to two dimensions? This week’s paper asks you to pick a single movement, a single action, a single play and turn it into living, breathing, moving prose. The action for your paper need not come from the realm of sports, but it should be something you can easily observe (preferably from different angles and over a period of time). The best sports writing captures not only what happened but how it happened, why it happened, and the drama of it all—it’s more than just a simple play-by-play. Remember that sports writing does more than simply describe. It animates. It motivates. It persuades. It puts the reader in the middle of the action.

Guidelines and Due Dates

Format: 3-4 pages, typed, no title page, double-spaced, proper heading

Due: Tuesday, November 15, at the start of class

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