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Connection and Loss

In his *Los Angeles Times* article, “Civilization’s Last Chance,” Bill McKibben quotes chief NASA climatologist James Hansen, who says that because of climate change, humanity is at risk of losing “a planet similar to that on which civilization developed and to which life on Earth is adapted ...” This should make us pause and consider what exactly this means to us personally — losing a planet that gave birth to civilization.

The only way we have to think about the future is in relation to things we’ve experienced in the past. Hansen’s warning raises issues about our relationship to places that we are connected to, and that mean a great deal to us. It also suggests the threat of enormous loss.

That’s what this writing assignment is about: connection and loss.

Assignment choices:

- Write a story about a special or “sacred” place. Describe an event or events that took place there that made this such an important place to you, that “rooted” you to this place.

- Write a story about a time in your life when something you cared deeply about was taken or stolen from you. This might be a precious possession, a place where you lived, a person you cared about, or something less physically tangible, like your innocence or your sense of hope.

To receive full credit, your stories must include:

Dialogue; and/or

Interior monologue;

And be a minimum of two pages in length.