

### **Basic Recap – Time period, setting, etc.**

Sept. 2016

Weekend hike from Little Jimmy to Mt. Baden Powell in the San Gabriel Mountains

I join my son's Scout troop for this two-night hike. Our big accomplishment is to hike to the top of the 9400-ft peak of Mt. Baden Powell. I will describe what I did at the peak – walked around, ate lunch, observed nature. I will also describe the hike back down and the reflection of what this experience was like.

A secondary storyline will be the standing around on the final morning doing the "thorns and roses" recap of our experiences and how I had an epiphany there re: how much had changed and not changed since I had done this hike 30 years before

### **Specific Details**

ancient-looking Bristlecone Pine tree

Star Kist salmon

Angeles Crest Highway

Ritz crackers

Glendale Humane Society

Pacific Crest Trail

Jeffrey pine trees

Zip-Loc bag

pack of Spam

red-tailed hawk

### **My epiphany**

That while I really have had a love-hate relationship with Southern California my whole life, I realize there is such amazing beauty in this area – it just takes some effort to get out there and find it.

Also, that life has this interesting arc where one's past is never that far removed from one's present.

## Dialogue

“Amazing birds,” I finally said to David and his son, Jonathan. “Indeed,” said David. “Though after our encounter with an owl near our house this past month, I’m not sure how involved I’d want to be with a bird of that size again.” David then proceeded to tell me how a young, grey owl had somehow wedged itself between the posts in their front yard fence

“Okay, I think I got it,” one of the other adults in my Scout troop told me as he snapped a few photos with my phone.

“Everything tastes better when you’ve been hiking for a while,” said David, the Scout dad I sat with. How true, I thought.

## Imagery, similes, metaphors, figurative language

I carefully squeezed out some salmon on a Ritz cracker, took a bite, and looked up at an amazingly sparkling blue sky. A red-tailed hawk soared above us, surveying the small army of Scouts and their parents atop this peak.

Their fragility and tenacity impressed me, so I made a special effort to avoid trampling them, even as I knew they wouldn’t cry out at me should I falter in my footing and trample them.

## Interior monologue, reflection

So much had changed in my life since I was fourteen years old. My father, who was developing Parkinson’s Disease at that time, has now been dead for twenty years. Yet, I still felt his presence in that circle — imagining how annoyed I probably was by him when I was a teen just as my own son today, nearly 14 himself, is so often annoyed by me. At fourteen, I hadn’t even had a serious girlfriend. Now, thirty-five years later, I stood in the circle, so happily married to my partner in life for the past fifteen years . . . something I wouldn’t have imagined for myself having grown up in a household where my own parents didn’t get along well. Yet interestingly, I also thought about how little had changed in me and around me. I was still in Southern California despite my loathing of the congestion, the smog, the heat, the aridity of this area. I still found value in helping others — then as a fourteen year old who’d organize Red Cross fundraising efforts at his Burbank high school and now as a parent who volunteers in his son’s Scout troop and coaches at his son’s school. And I still found, somewhat to my surprise, that something in nature still energizes my soul. Perhaps it was the purity of the wind which crested at the top of each pass on the way up to Mt. Baden Powell. . . . Or perhaps it was the stillness of the Creation when one stopped to listen and to watch, as that red-tailed hawk reminded me as I sat on the log eating salmon on a Ritz.