

There are two main reasons why I have chosen Summer: The Way to Highland Park as my essay. My first reason is I love the city. In the city there is an essence of the past, marred by the shameful present. Kazin captures this feeling of the city to the point you can almost smell the city. His scents and sights bring this story to life. This brings me to the other reason I chose this story. I find Alfred Kazin's view of the world as refreshing. I find the world to be a beautiful place and I think Kazin does too. His mind escapes the ordinary day and floats to another place, a more romantic place. Kazin is not only a superb writer, but better, a superb romantic. I admire this loftiness and am mesmerized by how accurately he can relay his thoughts to the reader. Never have I read an author who writes with such life.

Alfred Kazin is a man who not only lives life, he digests it into his soul. There is a "larger than life" aura which the city of New York emanates and Kazin sees this aura. Included in this aura are the roots of American history. Kazin with his flawless descriptions of his environment and emotions made it seem like you were inside his a head and thinking his thoughts. According to Mr. Kazin, New York is the Mecca of American history and Kazin is humbled as well as awed by the vastness of New York City. More importantly, Kazin brings to life how books can fill a void in the mind and entice curiosity.

Alfred Kazin, a man with a romantic mind, sets out on an aloof walk from his dinner table to a park across town and on his stroll he encounters many things that remind him of his love for history. As the sunlight was dimming Kazin passes a police station in the east side of New York. The police station signified the end of Brownsville, the town where Kazin resides. Upon Passing the police station he is enveloped by the smell of Italian cheese. The smell of Italian cheese signifies the entrance into the Italian part of town. Here Kazin reveals he is suspicious of the Italians. He thinks Italians are Fascists.

Toward the end of the Italian section of the city was a Catholic reformatory for girls. He thinks of the reformatory as a prison which supports the hypocritical Catholic religion. For a reason not mentioned in the essay, Kazin feels uneasy about and contempt toward the catholic religion.

Kazin proceeds with his walk to the library and passes under the Fulton Street El. On the other side of the El Kazin seems to be dreaming. He sees small town America during this part of his journey. The streets are lined with great trees, similar to quintessential small town America, and the brownstones stood proud, as if their posture was the grand American history behind them. Kazin greatly admires the architecture and history of the brownstones. Alfred made a discovery during this walk. This discovery was that walking in this part of town could take him into the past. Kazin loved American history and the walks helped him relive the past. He did not like the present and found comfort in the past.

Kazin was very humbled by the magnanimous past of America. He could not walk over the Brooklyn Bridge or stand on certain streets because he felt he did not deserve to be in the presence of Roebling or Whitman. Kazin, an immigrant, felt he was on the rim of America looking in and not an actual part of this country. Kazin, not being indigenous to America felt like an outsider, but when he read great immigrant authors, like Dickinson, he realized they were immigrants, but also Americans thus he too was American. Many nineteenth century authors are immigrants, like Kazin, but even though they are immigrants they still are a part of America.

I found myself genuinely loving this work. Kazin is an amazing writer. He put on paper things I can only think. He is a true artist. I never thought I was a big fan of history, but the way Kazin explains history I think I possibly have always loved history, but have not known it. History, in school, is taught to be boring and factual when in reality it is romantic and a part of everybody. Kazin helped me to realize this about history. I knew a lot about this story before I even read it. I too admire the brownstones and cherish a slow meaningful walk on a warm sunny day, but never could I place my thoughts and emotions on paper like

Alfred Kazin does. I have learned of a higher and different level of writing, a level that I find very deep and fulfilling.

Kazin, Alfred. "Summer: The Way to Highland Park." *Inventing America: Readings in Culture and Identity*. Ed. Gabriella Ibieta and Miles Orvell. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996. 330-336.

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