

The Curse of the Dump

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Student Essay

My wife and I were cleaning up our attic this weekend, and in the process I found all sorts of old junk that I had forgotten about. Of course, I wanted to keep everything I saw; otherwise, I would not have stashed it there in the first place. But after standing over me and prying my hands off of every item that I encountered, my wife finally convinced me to haul all of my broken treasures to the Dump. I wince at the thought of having to brave the ever-present gloom that reigns there. The Dump is a strange and repulsive place, where people tend to bury the human spirit along with their refuse.

From the main road, the Dump looked like a prison. The perimeter was surrounded by an eight-foot chain-link with barbed-wire stretched tightly around the top of it. As I followed the slow procession of vehicles through the front gate, I noticed a man peeking through the blinds of a dirty office building. The building's tan exterior was peeling away, probably as a result of prolonged exposure to the toxic environment. Up on a hill overshadowing the recycling bins, there was another unsightly tan building. This one was twenty-five feet tall and draped with rusty sheet-metal. Trucks full of old furniture, brush, and tree limbs were unloaded inside of this building, for it contained the largest crushing machine on the premises. When activated, it made torturous scraping noises accompanied by splintering crackles. The old building looked like it had been rammed into at least a hundred times, and if it happened one more time, it would collapse taking every thing in it straight to hell.

The stench was unbearable. I pulled my shirt up over my nose to try and filter the bitter air. Moments later, I saw a rat fumbling around with a Mac Donald's bag. Weeds bordering the fence were littered with plastic wrappers, styrofoam cups, and other non-biodegradable materials. Polluted water that was seeping out of the dumpsters had formed stagnate puddles that were infested with thousands of tiny spasmodic worms. I wondered how that anyone could work in this foul environment and remain healthy, either physically or mentally.

People at the Dump all had the same blank expression on their faces, void of any emotion. They came in like robots, emptied their trash, and sped away as fast as possible without running someone over. A man with his pants not completely pulled up was crawling through a dumpster full of old washers and dryers. At one point he surfaced, paced back and forth furiously, and then dove back in. No one seemed to care, or even notice for that matter. A young man at the next bin over was throwing away black plastic bags full of roofing shingles. The reason I knew this is because one of the bags ripped open while he was hurling it into the dumpster. And the shingles caught my attention after just reading a sign that said, Absolutely no contractor or construction debris. Within minutes, a man wearing a coffee stained T-shirt and a hat bearing the Dump's company logo

approached the young offender. He said, "Son, whatcha got in them bags?" The young man replied, "Just some old garbage." Knowing that the young man was lying, the employee with a sinister yellow grin said, "Them bags look awful heavy son. Are you sure you don't have any body parts in there?" I decided to leave the two men alone; after all, my task was finished.

The Dump is an eerie and malodorous place, where we tend to bury our spirit--our very humanity, along with our refuse. The Dump is a metaphor for death, a graveyard laden with the excess of society. The repulsive nature of the dump reminds us that one day we too will decompose and be recycled back into nature. Because we find this distasteful, we bury our true feelings behind a robotic nature. And after finally realizing that the curse of the Dump is creeping upon us, we run away to escape its infectious melancholy.