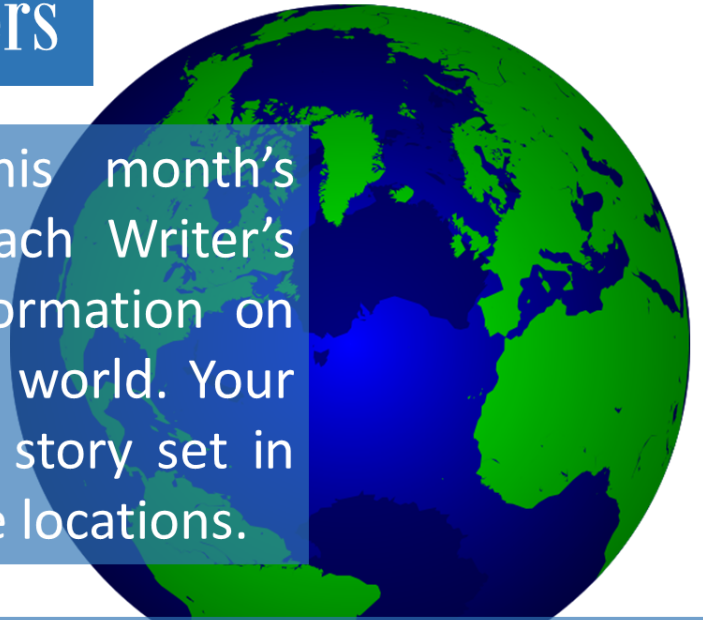


June 2015: Globetrotters

Travel the globe with this month's Writer's Station prompt! Each Writer's Station packet contains information on unique locations around the world. Your challenge? To write a short story set in and/or inspired by one of the locations.



Writer's Station packets can be picked up inside the Library, and will also be available online at rochesterlibrary.org/writers-station. Please turn-in completed works at the Circulation Desk, or email them to sara.k@rochesterlibrary.org. Completed works will be added to the Community Storybook and published online on our Writer's Station blog. You are not required to reveal your name!



The Writer's Station

NOTE: You are not required to do any background research for this month's Writer's Station prompt (unless you want to). This activity is meant to be a fun way of expanding your writing skills and inspiring you to write about new places and situations.

Location Name: Piazza della Signoria, Florence

Country: Italy

Continent: Europe

Main language: Italian

Interesting facts:

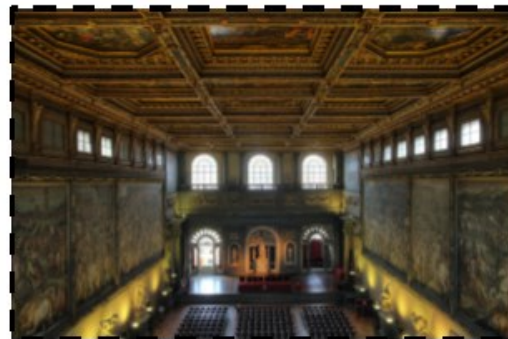
- The Piazza della Signoria served as the political hub of Florence during the Italian Renaissance, when the city was one of the main political, economic, and cultural centers of Europe.
- The Piazza is made up of several different buildings. Among these are the Palazzo Vecchio (Florence's town hall, famous for its massive clocktower and the dozens of artworks inside) and the Loggia dei Lanzi (an open-air building that houses several famous Renaissance statues under its arches).
- In May 1498, the Piazza was the site of the execution of Savonarola, a Dominican friar who had gained a cult following and ordered his followers to burn any items of a "sinful" or "frivolous" nature, including carnival masks, playing cards, and paintings by prominent Renaissance artists like Botticelli. Savonarola and 2 of his most devoted followers were hanged and burned.



Palazzo Vecchio, one of the famous buildings located in the Piazza della Signoria



The Fountain of Neptune in Piazza della Signoria



The Hall of 500 in Palazzo Vecchio. Leonardo da Vinci was originally supposed to paint the walls of the hall, but accidentally destroyed some of his own work by trying to dry the paint with a candle flame.



View of the square from Palazzo Vecchio

Statues inside the open-air gallery in Loggia dei Lanzi



Panoramic view of the Piazza della Signoria; famous buildings are labeled

Location Name: Centralia, Pennsylvania

Country: United States

Continent: North America

Main language: English

Interesting facts:

- The town of Centralia had a population close to 1,000 in the 1980s, but its current population is just 7 people
- This is due to a fire that broke out in the mines underneath the city in the 1960s; over the next few decades, the fire spread out underneath the town, leading to ground subsidence, building damage, and the generation of lethal amounts of carbon monoxide.
- The exact origins of the fire are unknown, but it may have resulted from garbage burning in the local dump; a hole was discovered in the garbage pit that may have allowed the fire to spread to the network of old mines under the town.
- The fire still burns to this day, and is estimated to continue burning for at least 250 more years.
- The town has been the inspiration for numerous works of fiction involving ghost towns
- The town's remaining residents filed a lawsuit to gain the right to remain in their homes despite the fire; in 2013, they won the right to stay in their homes for as long as they live



Aerial view of Centralia showing smoke and gas rising from cracks in the ground



The end of PA Route 61 in Centralia, which was cut off due to the mine fire.



Smoke from the fire rises from cracks in the middle of a road in Centralia



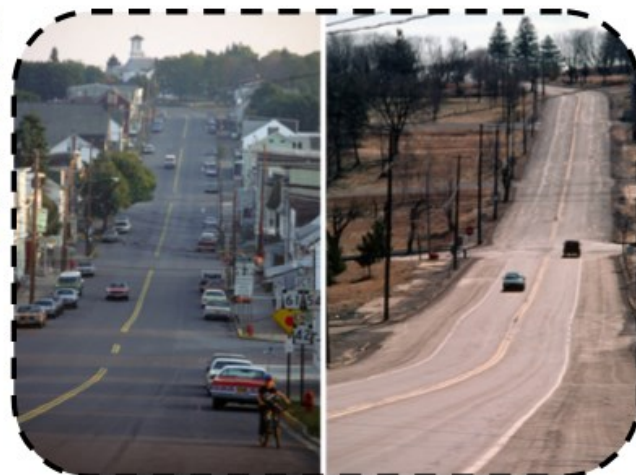
Sign posted by Centralia residents asking PA Governor Corbett to stop trying to evict them



Smoke billows in front of some of the remaining houses in Centralia



The abandoned highway in Centralia



Left: Main road in Centralia before the town was abandoned; right: afterwards. Many of the town's buildings were destroyed once the residents were evicted

Location Name: Chittorgarh Fort, Rajasthan

Country: India

Continent: Asia

Main language: Rajasthani

Interesting facts:

- One of the largest forts in India and a World Heritage site, the Chittorgarh Fort was built in the 7th century and has been occupied by numerous rulers throughout its long history
- The fort was originally designed to have a large enough water supply (in the form of ponds, wells, and step wells) to last for four years in case of a siege, but now only 22 of the 84 water bodies located in or near the fort still remain.
- The fort has been besieged several times in its history, but until the 14th century was considered impregnable. In 1303 the Sultan of Delhi launched an attack on the fort to capture Rani Padmini, the beautiful queen who lived at the fort, and add her to his harem. Rather than be captured, the queen burnt herself to death on a pyre. In revenge the Sultan killed 30,000 Hindus.
- The fort covers 700 square acres, and is composed of numerous reservoirs, 4 palace complexes, 19 temples, and 20 memorials (some of these structures are in ruins)



Chittorgarh Fort in Rajasthan



Kirti Stambha, a 72 feet high tower that is part of the fort. The tower is carved with holy figures from the Jain pantheon (Jainism is one of the four main religions practiced in Rajasthan).



The Gamukh Reservoir inside the fort. This spring-fed reservoir served as the fort's main water source during most of its sieges.



Two of the fort's gates. The fort has 7 gates in total, several of which were designed not only to withstand cannon fire and siege weapons, but also to fend off attack elephants..



The Meera Temple inside the fort. This temple was built for the saint-poet Mirabai, who worshipped the Hindu Lord Krishna and was supposedly able to survive a poisoning attempt on her life due to her devotion to him.

Rani Padmini's palace inside the force. Padmini, the queen who resided here, committed suicide to avoid being added to the Sultan of Dehli's harem in the 14th century.



Location Name: Hotel la Montana Magica, Huilo-Huilo

Country: Chile

Continent: South America

Main language: Spanish

Interesting facts:

- The hotel is built on the Huilo-Huilo Biological Reserve in Chile, a 232 sq mile nature preserve and natural rainforest built to generate ecotourism in Chile. Besides the Magic Mountain Hotel, the reserve is also home to the Huilo-Huilo Falls, the longest zip line in South America, and Pudu, an endangered species and the world's smallest deer.
- The Magic Mountain hotel is built to resemble a man-made volcano covered in rainforest growth and moss. The windows built into the sides of the hotel resemble mossy eyes, and the top of the building spews spa waters down the sides.
- The hotel is reached by walking along a treetop walkway into the hotel's lobby.
- Most of the materials used in constructing the hotel were locally sourced, including the giant tree trunks used to create the hotel's outdoor hot tubs.



Magic Mountain Hotel and the bridge leading to it



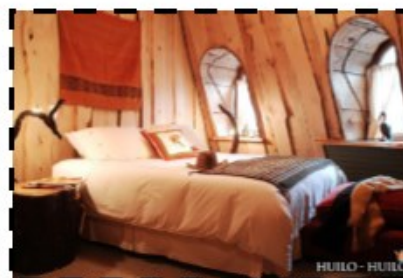
Top: The windows of the hotel; middle: water spurts from the top of the building



A Pudu, one of the tiny deer that live on the Huilo-Huilo preserve



The Magic Mountain Hotel in winter



Rooms inside the Magic Mountain Hotel

Location Name: Shakespeare and Company, Paris

Country: France

Continent: Europe

Main language: English

Interesting facts:

- Shakespeare and Company is a famous English language bookstore on the Left Bank in Paris
- The name actually refers to two different bookstores: the current bookstore, which opened in 1951, and the original Shakespeare and Co. bookstore, which operated from the 1920s until the German Occupation of Paris. The original bookstore was a hub of activity for American writers living in Paris, including Ernest Hemmingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ezra Pound. The store served as both a bookstore and a lending library for high-quality books, including books that had been banned in the U.S. and Britain
- The current store was renamed Shakespeare and Co. in tribute to the original store, and has had a similarly famous clientele, including writers Henry Miller and Richard Wright.
- The store has become a major tourist attraction in Paris, and has been featured in numerous movies and books, including Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris*.



Exterior of the Shakespeare and Company bookstore



Author James Joyce (at left) with Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monier inside the original Shakespeare and Company bookstore, 1920



Exterior of Shakespeare and Co at night



Photograph of George Whitman, original owner of the 2nd Shakespeare and Co, outside his store

Interior shots of Shakespeare and Co.

