Person/Place Narrative Essay

Based on “La Tortillera”

**Directions:** After reading the story “La Tortillera”, write a descriptive essay about a person in your life. Use indirect characterization through setting to convey the personality of this person.

**Prewriting:**

1. Make a t-chart in your notebook. On one side write “person”, on the other write “places”. List 3-4 people that you could write about; make sure you know the person well and have several memories about them. For “places”, list each person’s “domain”. Like the mother in her kitchen in “La Tortillera”, connect the person in your life to a specific place. For example, consider this person’s passion or hobby, ie: the baseball field, working in the garage, the garden, etc.
2. Circle the person/place you want to write about.
3. List 3-5 adjectives (descriptive words) for the person AND the place.
4. List 3 memories you’ve had about that person in their “domain”.
5. Choose one memory to focus on (you can write about more than one in the paper). Brainstorm sensory details for this memory. Choose at least 3 of the senses (feel, hear, taste, touch, see) and write several descriptive phrases for that memory.

**Drafting:**

1. Action Introduction: think about the particular memory you will focus on. Think about the “high point” of this memory, ( the most humorous, exciting, tragic, dramatic part) and start writing in the middle of this action. This intro works best if there is slight mystery—you’re reader will be intrigued by the dramatic first sentence and want to read on.
2. Character description: describe this person’s physical and personality traits. Include their likes/dislikes, their hobbies, and their idiosyncrasies. Perhaps include some dialogue to let the reader “hear” their voice. Feel free to borrow this line: “There are a few things I should/need to tell you about my \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”
3. Setting description: describe the “domain” of this person using sensory details. When you are in this place, what do you see, hear, feel, taste, and touch? Consider including details that reveal your person.
4. Rules of the domain: create a list of “rules” (they don’t really have to be rules) that this person always follows (and perhaps expects others to follow) while in their domain. For example, when I ride in the car with my brother, the #1 rule is that he will always play some obscure song from our childhood.
5. The memory: if you haven’t already described the memory, take 5-10 min. to draft your strongest memory of this person in their domain. Feel free to include several small memories if this works better. Include dialogue if you haven’t yet. Stick with the big picture and avoid repetitive transitions such as, “and then”, “and then”, etc.
6. Conclusion: state what is expected of the story/description. Why does this event stand out in your mind? What is the main idea? What do you want this piece to tell the reader? Why is this person important to you?

What has this person taught you about: loss, love, learning, friendship, sorrow, growing up, heart break, competition, admiration, etc.