

Now here's a thought to consider. Every twenty minutes on the Appalachian Trail, Katz and I walked further than the average American walks in a week. For 93 per cent of all trips outside the home, for whatever distance or whatever purpose, Americans now get in a car. That's ridiculous.

When we moved to the States one of the things we wanted was to live in a town, where we could walk to the shops and post office and library. We found such a place in Hanover, New Hampshire. It's a small, pleasant college town, with big green, leafy residential streets, an old-fashioned main street. Nearly everyone in town is within an easy level walk of the centre, and yet almost no-one walks anywhere, ever, for anything. I have a neighbour who drives 800 yards to work. I know another – a perfectly fit woman – who will drive 100 yards to pick up her child from a friend's house. When school lets out here, virtually every child gets picked up and driven from a few hundred yards to three-quarters of a mile home. (Those who live further away get a bus.) Most of the children sixteen years or older have their own cars. That's ridiculous too. On average the total walking of an American these days – that's walking of all types – adds up to 1.4 miles a week, barely 350 yards a day.

At least in Hanover we can walk. In many places in America now, it is not actually possible to be a pedestrian, even if you want to be. I had this brought home to me in Waynesboro [...] when I left Katz at a launderette [...] and set off to find some insect repellent for us. [...]

Waynesboro had a vaguely pleasant central business district but, as so often these days, most retail businesses have moved out of town leaving little but a sprinkling of dusty second hand shops in what was presumably once a thriving downtown.

Lots of shops were dark and bare, and there was nowhere I could find to get insect repellent, but a man outside the post office suggested I try K-mart.

'Where's your car?' he said, preparatory to giving directions.

'I don't have a car.'

That stopped him. 'Really? It's over a mile, I'm afraid.'

'That's OK.'

He gave his head a little dubious shake, as if disowning responsibility for what he was about to tell me. 'Well, then what you want to do is go up Broad Street, take a right at the Burger King and keep on going. But, you know, when I think about it, it's *well* over a mile – maybe a mile and a half, mile and three quarters. You walking back as well?'

'Yeah.'

Another shake. 'Long way.'

'I'll take emergency provisions.'

If he realised this was a joke he didn't show it.

'Well, good luck to you,' he said.

Text 2 (Locate and Retrieve)

The thick furs thudded softly to the ground as Professor Milward sat upright on the narrow bed. This time, he was sure, it had been no dream. The freezing air that rasped against his lungs seemed to echo with the sound that had come crashing out of the night.

All was quiet again. The world was utterly still. Even in the old days the city would have been silent on such a night, and it was doubly silent now. Professor Milward shuffled out of bed and made his way to the nearest window, pausing now and then to rest his hand lovingly on the books he had guarded all these years. He shielded his eyes from the brilliant moonlight and peered out into the night. The sky was cloudless: the sound had not been thunder, whatever it might have been. It had come from the north, and even as he waited it came again. Distance and the bulk of the hills that lay beyond London had softened it. It was like no natural sound that he had ever heard, and for a moment he dared to hope again. Only Man, he was sure could have made such a sound. Perhaps the dream that had kept him here for more than twenty years would seem to be a dream no longer. Men were returning to England, blasting their way through the ice and snow with the weapons science had given them before the coming of the Dust. It was strange that they should come by land, and from the north, but he thrust aside any thoughts that would quench his flame of hope.

Twenty years ago he had watched the last helicopters climbing heavily out of Hyde Park in the ceaselessly falling snow. Even then, when the silence had closed around him, he could not bring himself to believe that England had been abandoned forever. Yet already he had waited a whole generation among the books, the treasures of civilisation to which he had dedicated his life.

Now that the dome of St Paul's had collapsed beneath the weight of snow, only Battersea Power Station, its tall stacks glimmering like ghosts against the night sky, challenged the supremacy of the University building in which Professor Milward lived. He left the University building only through sheer necessity. Over the past twenty years he had collected everything he needed from the ships in the area, for in the final exodus vast supplies of stock had been left behind.

The setting of this story is London in the future. What evidence is there in these lines that it is in a future very different from now?

Text 3 (Locate and Retrieve)

Nowhere is safe from the effects of climate change, and we are seeing the first signs of change now. Glaciers are already melting in places as far apart as Switzerland and New Zealand, bringing with them avalanches, soil erosion and dramatic changes to river flows. While Mount Kenya's largest glacier has lost 92 per cent of its mass since the late 1800s, 2,000 glaciers in the eastern Himalayas have disappeared in the last century. These stark statistics speak for themselves.

Away from the mountains, the oceans and seas are warming, causing coral to die and putting many marine creatures at risk. Global warming has caused Arctic temperatures to rise by 5°C over the past 100 years, and the amount of sea ice – essential to the survival of the polar bear – has decreased by six per cent over the

past 20 years. Already, fewer than 44 per cent survive the ice-free season.

Cold kills germs and disease-bearing insects such as the mosquito. But as the planet warms up, germs, bacteria and other carriers will multiply. Longer and hotter heatwaves caused by climate change are already creating perfect breeding conditions for rats and other pests, and diseases such as plague and malaria are on the increase.

Scientists around the world are telling us urgently that climate change is real, it is here, and it is serious.

What evidence does this factsheet use to show that climate change is already a serious problem?

Text 4 (Thoughts and Feelings)

One of the dogs, Chief, was stretched out on the settee; the other, Monty, sat opposite him. Neither moved as Frank helped himself to gin and water. He was smoking a cigarette and, as Monty caught a whiff of the smoke, he sneezed.

“Bless you,” said Frank.

Better smoke the rest of it in the kitchen while he was getting their supper. It wasn't fair on Monty to start him coughing at his age. There was nothing Frank wouldn't have done for Monty's comfort. Both dogs were a hundred times better than any human being he'd ever known. When it was time for dinner both dogs sat still and silent, watching while he filled the bowls with steak and vitamin supplement.

Frank watched them feed. Monty's appetite, at fourteen, was as good as ever, though his teeth weren't what they had been. When the old dog had finished he came over to Frank and laid his grey muzzle in the palm of the outstretched hand. Frank fondled his ears.

“Good old dog,” Frank said. “You're a cracker, you are. I've to go out now but I'll be back by ten, so you get a bit of shut eye and when I come back we'll all have a good walk OK?”

What are your thoughts and feelings about Frank in these lines?

Text 5 (Impressions of Character)

I was glad to hear that Manny had fallen off the roof and that I could come out of hiding now. My mother got the whole story out of my sister, Frankie. “It's bad enough you won't wear skirts and you hang around with boys,” she said. “But to want to fight with them too! And you would pick the craziest one at that.” Manny was supposed to be crazy. To say you were bad put some people off. But to say you were crazy, well, you were definitely not to be messed with. On the other hand, after what I called *him* and after saying a few choice things about *his mother*, his face did go through some strange expressions. And I did kind of wonder if maybe he was nuts. I didn't wait to find out. I got running. And then he waited for me, outside my house, all day and all night. I shouted to him out of the kitchen window.

“You got no sense of humour, that's your trouble.” I told him. He looked up, but he didn't say anything. All at once I was real sorry about the whole thing. I should've settled for teasing the little girls in the schoolyard, or waited for Frankie so we could raise some kind of trouble downtown.

I don't know how Manny got on the roof. Maybe some slates lost all their cement and anyway the roof always did kind of slant downward. So Manny fell off the roof, and for the first time in days I dared to go outside again.

What impressions do you get of the girl who is telling the story?