

Writing Fiction About the Coast of Maine

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This summer I had the opportunity to explore the coast of Maine through fiction. I set out to further my understating of the coast through research and travel, and to produce short stories that provide an accurate and authentic representation of Maine. I began my research by reading short stories and novels set in Maine, such as “*The State We're In*” by Ann Beattie, and “*Empire Falls*” by Richard Russo. I also read non-fiction works, such as “*Salt in Their Veins*,” a collection of interviews with coastal inhabitants. These readings gave me an excellent overview of how Maine has been portrayed in the literature of the past century, and also helped me identify reoccurring character types, themes, and settings. Additionally, these works managed to take me where my travels around the coast could not and provided many differing perspective on Maine. As well as reading books set on the coast, I read stories and novels from authors whose style I wanted to emulate within my own works. My selections included “*Vampire in the Lemon Groves*” by Karen Russell, “*Get into Trouble*” by Kelly Link and “*Civil Warland in Bad Decline*” by George Saunders. Some works, such as “*Officer Friendly*” by Lewis Robinson managed to both provide me with stylistic models and an examination of coastal Maine. I paid attention to word usage, plot, sentence structure, and tone and thought about how I could marry an energetic, sharp and witty voice, like those of Saunder's, Link's and Russell's, with a coastal setting.

Before this summer, I had visited only a few places in Maine, and, thus travel was a

