

## WHAT WORKS

Here's a woman whose first ever trek is in Switzerland, which is interesting. I was glad you mentioned why this trek was difficult: not because it was physically daunting (as any reader would assume) but because it was psychologically challenging. You write that you struggled with being 'alone' and had to face your 'inner demons'. There is also a sentence about how you did not want to meet your 'real self' and that made me curious about the writer as a person. I found these sensory details interesting: the bobbing car (displays a sense of motion), the fogged windows (blurred vision), the suited men (that dot the picturesque landscape) and the cow not mooing (auditory) for you, which in itself set a hilarious tone. And, of course, the ending ('In that, I will hardly remember Switzerland as a cold place') was very well written and apt. It goes without saying you have a command over grammar and spellings. I could hardly find any errors in the first read.

A travel essay has so much potential: you can take readers to places to inform, educate, evoke either kindness or humor or surprise or shock. I am glad you got working on this and I hope you felt an immense sense of freedom and contentment while writing. Kudos Sumaa!

## WHAT DOESN'T WORK

Overall, the essay read quite flat. If it was about how your first trek made you overcome your inner demons, it was disappointing because the reader was not told what exactly those demons were and how they haunted you. This is why I likely did not feel the emotional impact. I also could not relate with the mentioned challenge even though it is imaginably relatable.

Although I said that there were interesting details, I felt that there were too many general descriptions as opposed to specific. Also, you could have used the details to *show* the unique challenges faced. In fact, most details were not used to any end (such as to establish or reinforce a theme or even to juxtapose).

That there were clichés about the place is not wrong but what you do with that kind of observation matters. For instance, you very well described a cow with a bell as a cliché in Switzerland. More so, when the cow doesn't moo is a good description of your expectation not being met. That it was a trivial expectation is what made it so FUNNY. Yet, most details felt like an end in itself when there was an immense scope to use them to a better end.

There were also some real time facts either placed too late or missing that would allow the reader to locate himself in the place. I also found myself wanting more of the place, and the sense of being there physically was missing.

Note that the travel essay is also a personal essay. While you mention that this trek meant you had to deal with your inner demons, I wonder if you also thought that you were not being fully

honest. Did you hold back some necessary information? Holding back means letting go of the chance of making real connections with your readers.

The essay could not help me relate with something I imagine many solo travelers would struggle with. You had mentioned earlier how the culture of traveling to discover the self is missing in India and yet I felt that you did not fully **SHOW** that the journey towards self discovery for you entailed acceptance (eg: of one's inner demons), which can be so *hard*. I believe a revised essay should allow any well travelled reader to relate with this struggle, as much as an aspiring or new solo traveler or even a lay reader.

Overall, I felt that you could have moved the reader by paying attention to these: honesty, theme, characterization and details (the 'what' and to what end you use them).