

Small-town atmosphere has harmony Sept 6, 98



Katya Tsetura

● Other voices

We never can be happy enough. We miss something all the time. We miss the place that we've never been or the place we just visited during vacations.

We miss the time in the past and our grandma's cookies. We miss all stuff that we don't have in any particular period of life. It is not a solution just to do something else or move somewhere else.

Sometimes it helps you. Sometimes it doesn't. And in this case we just have to look at things around us with different eyes. To see a real life.

The real American life is not in the capital

or in millions-of-people cities. To feel it you have to go to the country. To a small town. To Hays for instance. Why? Because real life is the life in harmony with nature and with you yourself.

And Hays people live in that way. The atmosphere itself of this small town that is somewhere between Kansas City and Denver is created by two things: the citizens' style of life and its environment.

First of all, I was impressed by the almost wild nature around. Trees, grass, bushes.

Everything is so picture perfect that sometimes you think that is not a town — it is a decoration for an old-time movie.

And it is not only nature. Buildings in Hays, bars and shops in downtown — everything is saturated with a spirit of nostalgia. Some is added to this picture by animals you can see here. Rabbits jump everywhere like in an ordinary forest.

As for squirrels, there are a lot of them, like

cats in the Russian streets. Actually we have no squirrels in the towns. It is a big success to see a squirrel in the suburbs. Cats — however many you want. Squirrels — never.

Then — and this is the greatest thing — the style of local people's lives. I tell everybody about nice old women who are always ready to help you in anything, about unknown men and women who say "Hi" in the streets, about dozens of boys whose admiring stares follow students' cars.

Hays people live simply, unpretentiously. A typical Hays house is pretty and small, like a miniature drawing come to life. It wallows in verdure, has nice flower beds and is decorated with many small countryside trinkets which were bought on sale a long time ago.

A quite measured life in Hays helps you to think about your existence in the Earth a little bit more than people of big cities do. This conditions hearts and minds to open to others and tempts you to share your innermost thoughts

with anyone you meet. Because you see they can understand you. They feel this nature and they also can go out and touch this tree any time.

And they do it more often than city people, maybe just because it is easier to do here and maybe because such countryside style of life is closer to ancient philosophy's apprehension of everything around.

Of course, you can be tired of this idyll and maybe even you are ready to go to another place to live already.

But stop, look around and think once again about what things are really important in life and what is this "real life"? Maybe here it appears more evidently and maybe that is why we start to miss countryside after we leave it.

Because all of us are from the countryside by birth, and everyone is a child of it.

— Katya Tsetura is a student at FHSU from Voronezh, Russia

● Where to Write

In a charming mist of fate DICKENS a DOSE of his own MEDICINE