

Describe the scene from your position on the bank of a river

Mauve light breaks through the solitary clouds hanging in the windless sky, reflecting off the calm water. Ripples radiate through the water from the dark silhouette of a duck moving in slow motion. The water carefully parts around the buttress of a bridge; above, the glowing white eyeballs of cars steadily shuffle across the bridge. A dim, ancient lamppost illuminates the pavement with orange-tinted light. An eddy spun on the flawless surface like the carefree strokes of a painter's brush, gradually appears in the morning light.

The roar of an engine and the splash of oars shatter the icy mirror of water. Silence again, until the wake reaches the bank. Suddenly the spiral of a wave crumbles on the pebble beach, interrupting the conversations of the birds.

As the tide creeps out and the shore widens, the putrid smell of mud and rotting leaves fills the air. Shopping trolleys, plastic bags and wet wipes, stained brown by their time served underwater, tuck themselves away between the slippery, moss-covered stones. A dark, viscous fluid weaves its way between the rubbish and the rocks.

The other bank is littered with colour: the willows, dragging their yellow-green branches through the water, the deep green pines hide a brick building from view, a blue boat makes its way through the descending mist. A seagull, scared, bolts away with squawking and retreats to its treetop nest. The grass is always greener on the other side. This bank is lined with rusted barges at awkward angles. A washing machine, a pair of tyres, some sienna scraps of metal rest here. The sickly creamy yellow houseboat, covered in green streaks of fungus, can only dream as it watches the rowers speed past, to and fro like the everchanging tide.

An armada of rowing boats assemble, each nervously waiting its turn to race. Despite the shouts of the marshals and the chaotic commotion, nature continues undisturbed. The river's current continues to flow, the ducks waddle about, indifferent to the people. The last boat rows away into the orange setting sun. Tranquillity returns as the river takes back its mirrorlike appearance.