Journal Entry #2

This is an assignment in the ancient art of stylistic imitation. Here is what you do:

1. Read and “hand – copy” the following excerpt from Mark Twain’s “Life on the Mississippi.”

2. Use the same sentence structure Twain used in Life on the Mississippi, but change the words to fit a description of your choice. If you wish, you may retain some of Twain’s words. Follow the sample on the next page.
Sample Descriptive Essay

After all these years, I can picture the old home place to myself just as it was when my Grandmother was there:

the open breezeway
deserted in the hot Louisiana sunshine
except for the old blue-tick hound
drowsing by the redwood stained picnic table
with its benches built on each side;
the white stucco walls of the house and carport,
that hurt to look at in the bright summer sunshine;
one or both of the 1962 Ford Sedans
sitting on the dirt floor of the carport,
the old two-by-fours running across its ceiling,
piled high with old bicycle fenders,
pump parts,
dusty boxes,
empty coke bottles and oil cans,
covered by the black shingled roof;
the old orange iron gate at the end of the sidewalk
swinging slowly from its rusty hinges,
where the Ramons Brownie Pills thermometer sign hung;
the long flower beds separating the breezeway from the
with the white snails that bothered my Grandmother so;
quite a few lizards racing across the sidewalk,
their shining bright eyes darting this way and that
in search of forthcoming danger;
always just beyond the white framed screen door
the smell of cherry pies cooling,
mixing with the wet, earthy smell
of Louisiana in summer;
the great oaks,
grey moss hanging down from their limbs
like so many beards of old men;
the feeling of love,
always the love,
radiating
from my Grandmother
and her house.
“Excerpt from “Life on the Mississippi”

After all these years I can picture that old time
to myself now, just as it was then:

the white town
drowsing in the sunshine
of a summer's morning;
the streets empty, or pretty nearly so;
one or two clerks sitting in front of the Water Street stores,
with their splint-bottomed chairs tilted back against the wall,
chins on breasts,
hats slouched over their faces, asleep--
with shingle-shavings enough around to show what broke them down;
a sow and a litter of pigs loafing along the sidewalk,
doing a good business in watermelon rinds and seeds;
two or three lonely little freight piles scattered about the 'levee,'
a pile of 'skids' on the slope of the stone-paved wharf,
and the fragrant town drunkard asleep in the shadow of them;
two or three wood flats at the head of the wharf, but nobody
to listen to the peaceful lapping of the wavelets against them;
the great Mississippi, the majestic, the magnificent Mississippi,
rolling its mile-wide tide along, shining in the sun;
the dense forest away on the other side;
the 'point' above the town,
and the 'point' below,
bounding the river-glimpse and turning
it into a sort of sea,
and withal a very still and brilliant
and lonely one.

Mark Twain