

The Sound of Wyoming County

As graduation gets closer, people keep asking what comes next. They ask where I want to go, what I want to study, and what kind of future I want to build. I answer them the best I can, because that is what you are supposed to do at this point in life. You are supposed to be looking forward. You are supposed to be ready. But lately, I have been thinking about something else too. I have been thinking about Wyoming County, and what it has meant to me in ways I am only now starting to understand.

The sound of Wyoming County has always been there, even when I did not notice it. It is not one single sound, and it is not something loud or dramatic that stands out all at once. It is made up of small things that blend together until they become familiar enough to feel like silence. It is gravel under tires on backroads, car doors closing in driveways where people wave even if they just saw each other yesterday, and the steady hum of everyday life in small places where people recognize each other without needing introductions. It is school hallways filled with voices I have heard for years, and conversations that carry from one person to another like everyone is connected in some quiet, unspoken way.

For most of my life, I did not think much about it. It was just normal. It was just the way things were. But now, as graduation gets closer, I am realizing that what I thought was normal was actually something that shaped me. Wyoming County did not just surround my life—it helped form it. It influenced how I see people, how I understand community, and how I define what it means to belong somewhere.

Growing up here taught me what it feels like to be known. Not in a way that is overwhelming, but in a way that is steady and real. It is walking into a place and being recognized without having to explain who you are. It is hearing your name in passing conversations. It is teachers who remember more than just your grades, and neighbors who notice when something is different without needing to be told. At the time, I never thought of that as unusual. I thought that was how every place worked. Now I understand it is something rare, something I may not fully realize the value of until I am somewhere that does not feel the same.

The sound of Wyoming County also carries something deeper for me now. It carries a sense of connection that I did not fully appreciate while I was living it. There is a kind of comfort in a place where life feels familiar, where you see the same faces over time and grow up alongside them without realizing how much that matters. It teaches you that relationships are not built in big moments, but in small ones that repeat themselves until they become part of your life without you noticing.

As I get closer to leaving, I find myself paying more attention to those small moments. The way people talk to each other in stores like they have known each other forever, even if they are just acquaintances. The way life moves at a steady pace instead of rushing past everything. The way even silence here does not feel empty, because it is filled with something unspoken but understood. I am starting to realize that Wyoming County is not just where I grew up. It is part of how I learned to move through the world.

There is also something about the land itself that feels connected to that sound. The hills that seem to stretch on without needing to be explained. The backroads that curve in ways you

memorize without trying. The small towns that feel close enough to each other that nothing ever feels completely far away. Even the quiet moments—early mornings, late evenings, long stretches of nothing happening—carry a kind of meaning that I never paid attention to before. It all blends together into something that feels familiar in a way I cannot quite put into words, but I know I will recognize anywhere.

Nothing about the place itself has changed. The roads are still the same. The hills still rise in the distance the way they always have. The towns still feel familiar, and life still moves in its own steady rhythm. The difference is me. I am the one who is noticing now. I am the one who understands that these sounds, these routines, and these quiet patterns have been shaping me all along, even when I was not aware of it.

That realization makes leaving harder than I expected. Not because I do not want to move forward, but because I am beginning to understand what I am carrying with me. Wyoming County is not something I will leave behind completely. It is something that will stay with me in the way I understand people, in the way I value connection, and in the way I see what it means to have a place that feels like home without having to question it.

As graduation approaches, I keep thinking about how strange it is that something so familiar can become something you realize you love only when you are about to leave it. I do not think I ever had to search for belonging here. It was just part of life. But now I see how much that shaped me, how much it taught me without ever saying a word. It taught me patience, familiarity, and the quiet importance of people who stay present in each other's lives even in the smallest ways.

The sound of Wyoming County is still made of gravel roads, familiar voices, and quiet routines that repeat themselves every day. But now I understand that those sounds are not just background noise. They are part of my story. They are part of what built me into who I am becoming, even if I did not realize it while it was happening.

And even as I move forward into something new, I know I will still hear it. Not in the same way, not every day, but in the way certain places stay with you long after you leave them. Wyoming County will always be part of that for me—not just where I came from, but part of who I am, and part of how I will always understand what it means to belong somewhere.

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