Chapter 7
The second day I was in Texas. I was traveling through the part where the flat-footed, bilious, frog-sticker-toting Baptist biscuit-eaters live. Then I was traveling through the part where the crook-legged, high-heeled, gun-wearing, spick-killing, callous-rumped sons of the range life and crowd the drugstore on Saturday night and then all go round the corner to see episode three of “Vengeance on Vinegar Creek,” starring Gene Autry as Borax Pete. But over both parts, the sky was tall hot brass by day and black velvet by night, and Coca Cola is all a man needs to live on. Then I was traveling through New Mexico, which a land of total and magnificent emptiness with a little white filling station flung down on the sand like a sun-bleached cow skill by the trail, with far to the north a valiant remnant of the heroes of the Battle of Montmartre in a last Bivouac wearing huaraches and hammered silver and trying to strike up conversations with Hopis on street corners. Then Arizona, which is grandeur and the slow incredulous stare of sheep, until you hit the Mojave. You cross the Mojave at night and even at night your breath rasps your gullet as though you were a sword swallower who had got hold of a hack-saw blade by mistake, and in the darkness the hunched rock and towering cactus loom at you with the shapes of a visceral, Freudian nightmare.

1. syntax: lengthy sentences → his almost endless driving through these Southwestern states; has nothing to do but observe the scenery
   fragments → bits and pieces of his observations as he recollects the trip

2. diction: numerous examples of hyphenated adjectives, some of which he created,
especially in first two sentences. These convey descriptive detail and reveal
his apparent contempt for the people he’s describing
colorful nouns → bivouac, huraraches, gullet, hack-saw blade
unusual adjectives → visceral, hunched, Freudian
Concrete details → movie title, movie star, CocaCola, Hopis

3. imagery: Texans with negative image → eat frogs and biscuits…is that all?
   Cowboys → almost a parody of a movie cowboy and then these cowboys
   GO to a cowboy movie!
   Sky was “tall hot brass” → height, heat, color
   “black velvet” night → color, texture
   “like a sun-bleached cow skull” → expected image in SW but he uses it to
describe a filling station, usually seen as an oasis in the desert but now
death
   “heroes….bivouac” → references to war?
   Breath rasping like sword swallower with hack-saw → vivid image of
   harsh air
   “hunched” rock and “towering cactus” → seem threatening
   “Freudian nightmare” → air of unreality about trip

4. tone: flippant, superior yet appreciative of some of the beauty of the SW landscape

Question: How does Warren use style to create setting? Write a topic sentence or two for practice.