

# Reading, Writing, Reflecting...Memoir

## Getting Started by hearing:

Julie Platt, Mrs. Harrell's former student

Dostoevsky quote/Cole comments

Green Gulch by Loren Easley

Murder She Wrote by Carolyn Harrell

The Pie by Gary Soto

10 minute video on Gary Soto's comments about memoir writing (take notes on key points)

## Continuing in Reading Workshop:

\*Continue reading silently from the folders of memoirs provided. Please take only one or two pieces at a time and return them to the correct folder when you finish. Feel free to advertise memoirs you especially like so your peers can read them too.

\*As you read,(or after you read) please jot down on your own paper a one sentence summary of the memoir, a word or two about a lesson learned from the memoir, and a one word comment on the tone or voice of the piece (humorous, sarcastic, thoughtful, sad, reflective, et. al.) These notes will be looked at as part of your work ethic grade. Try to set them up as column notes from Essential 6.

\*You will also find interesting memoirs in the many text anthologies in our classroom. Please let me know when you come across good ones there. *Thoughts and Feelings* and *Mirage* also contain interesting student produced memoir as well as prize-winning personal narratives. *Reader's Digest* is another super source for memoir and personal narrative.

\*Since many of these memoirs are in "rough" shape I would suggest borrowing and retyping any pieces you want to use in your Antholio.

## (Cloth memories-- blue folder)

My Mother Pieced Quilts by Teresa Palma Acosta

Excerpts from students' cloth memory memoirs

Cloth Memories (Red Blanket) by David Houser

Mothball Memories by Carolyn Harrell

Mustard and Mayo on Muslin by Tammy Roe

Quilt Song by Mark Vinz

White Cloth by David Sheng

The Quilt Remembers by Tina Kilgore

Smock by Kevin Kendall

## (Places-- orange folder)

Porsche by Bailey White

Summer of the Yellow House by Linda Gunsaulies

Middle Georgia by Jill Smith

Long-Legged House by Wendell Berry

607 East University Avenue by Carolyn Harrell

To Dad by Carolyn Harrell

Backyard by Kevin Lehner

Bobo's House by Danielle Kiel (FYI later married PKY's Travis McGriff)

**(Revelations and Philosophy--red folder)**

Santa by Allison Cravey  
Crayons by Robert Fulgum  
Three Letters from Teddy by Elizabeth S. Ballad  
Discovery by Cathy David  
A Child's Life by Carolyn Harrell  
What is Under My Bed? by BHS student  
Mermaids by Robert Fulghum  
Larry Walters by Robert Fulghum

**(Childhood adventures--yellow folder)**

Rabid Alligators and the Dreaded Cotton Mouth Python by Alex Wayne  
The Cornbread Calamity by Jimmy Galindo  
Daydreamer by Catherine Quaimbo  
Farley Mowat's Catfish memoir  
"Get em" by Matt Stone  
Car Graveyard by John Cadwalleder  
Our car boiled...excerpt by Tobias Wolff

**(Manila folder -trauma and tear jerkers))**

The Kindness of Strangers by Chris Morris (former PKY principal)  
Eleven by Sandra Cisneros  
Murderer by Brent Dean  
Charlie by Sandi Ryals  
Deliverance by Dorothy Coar  
The Guilty Conscience by BHS student  
from Pilgrim at Tinker Creek by Annie Dillard  
"Ken" by a U of F student  
A Discovery by Erin Pearson  
The Art of Living Simply by Richard Wolkomir  
The Doe by Ian Richard  
An experience that changed your life (Camp Wingaroo) by Laura Bullock

**Writing Memoir**

One of the required pieces for your Wanna Piece of Me (#13) is a Memoir or Personal Narrative, which you may begin now. You will see some suggested prompts for memoir writing on the back of this page. Next to some of the prompts, I have written the names of pieces you may have read that fit them (most written by students). Many suggestions are also in the journal section of your notebook (questions to write about, 7 positives/7 negatives, etc.) and on your Specific and Concrete/Sensory Details handout in the class work and handouts section of your notebook. Let me hear your voice in your memoir! Use strong verbs and concrete details. Don't forget to "Have a Writing Conference with Yourself" before typing your final piece to turn in.

N.B. The Simple Essay (explained on your handout) is a fabulous format to use for memoir writing. Use it if you need a pattern to follow for your writing. Have fun.

### So many ideas...so little time:

1. Write about a pet you once had but don't have anymore (Farley Mowat's catfish)
2. Did you ever try to cook something that didn't turn out right? (Cornbread Calamity)
3. Can you recall a time you got in trouble or broke something? (The Pie)
4. Can you remember a trip you would not want to take again? (A Discovery)
5. Can you remember a birthday or holiday you wouldn't want to live over? (Eleven)
6. A time you got lost...
7. A first impression that turned out to be wrong... (Three Letters from Teddy)
8. A time you learned something from a child... (Mermaids, Crayons)
9. Can you remember a time you were tricked or lied to? (Kindness of Strangers)
10. When you were little, what was it like going to the movies? (Mexican Movies)
11. A place you would like to go back to... (Summer of My Yellow House, To Dad, 607 East Univ.)
12. Recall the neighborhood bully... (Green Gulch)
13. Recall a great fort, exploring cool places or devising childhood games or clubs...(Car Graveyard, Get 'Em)
14. Stray animals you brought home...
15. A difficult decision you had to make...(Deliverance)
16. Write about a time you found out something about yourself. (Murder She Wrote, The Art of Living Simply)
17. A time you had to communicate with someone you couldn't understand (My Fourteenth Summer)
18. Did you ever see a ghost?
19. Running away from home...
20. Were you ever accused of something you didn't do? (Mrs. Williams, Ducks Don't Drown, Murderer)
21. Sand castles or mud pies (A Child's Life)
22. Write about feeling like a misfit. (Ken, Falling Asleep)
23. Write about nightmares. (What's Under My Bed?)
24. Having to wait for something you wanted...
25. Finding out the truth about Santa, Easter Bunny, Tooth Fairy, et. al.  
What are you implying, Mrs. Harrell!?
26. A movie or book that made a huge impression on you...
27. Describe the best time you ever had in your life. (The Power of Being There, Rabid Alligators)
28. The funniest thing that you ever saw or that ever happened to you... (Larry Waters)
29. Did you ever feel really sorry for someone? (Charlie)
30. Do you remember a special cloth doll, toy, costume or piece of clothing from your childhood? (Mothball Memories, Red Blanket)

"We do not know what we will say until we say it, and so we discover...by writing what we have seen, what we have learned, what we have lived and what it means. Each draft is new, filled with surprise."

~Donald Murray in *A Writer Teaches Writing*