Creative Writing

Day 21
October 26th

• Daily Description: Think of a person in your life. Describe how that person talks.

• Agenda:
  – Character
  – Dialogue
  – Setting
  – Bad Things
  – Overcoming Fears
  – Work Time
Today’s Objectives

• I will understand how narrative, character, dialogue, and setting can impact my creative nonfiction.

• I will understand how overcoming fears or bad things can lead to powerful writing.
Memoir

• Write your story in first person from your own point of view.
• Incorporate elements of story telling: characters, dialogue, setting, action
• “Think small” and focus in on one event or theme.
• Think about the events and share your insights into what you’ve experienced.
Character

• Think about yourself at the time of the events of your story.

• **Show** your reader details about your characters (including yourself).
  – More than just physical descriptions; voice, gestures, any eccentricities; “small but unique details”
Practice

- Choose one character in your memoir. Describe that character in as much detail as possible.
Dialogue

• The problem: Few people can remember exactly what was said. Therefore, dialogue in creative nonfiction “is not literally true; instead the author attempts to recreate it as accurately as possible.”

• Short snippets of dialogue are more believable when writing about events that occurred a while ago.

• Paraphrase or summarize instead of using direct dialogue to avoid using direct quotes.
The Mechanics of Dialogue
“Where do you place the quotation marks?” the class asks.

• Use quotation marks to enclose a direct quotation, a person’s exact words.
  – “I’m really hungry,” John said.

• A direct quotation begins with a capital letter.
  – Sherlock responded haughtily, “Revenge.”
“What about punctuation?” the class retorted.

• When a quoted sentence is divided into two parts by an interrupting expression such as *he said* or *Mother asked*, the second part starts with a lowercase letter.
  – “You can go to the show,” Mom said, “if you have all of your homework done.”

• A direct quotation is set off from the rest of the sentence by commas, a question mark, or an exclamation point.
  – “Stop that!” shouted Lois.
“When will these notes end?” asked the bored student.

• Commas and periods are always placed inside the closing quotation marks.
  – “You need help,” remarked the doctor.
  – The doctor remarked, “You need help.”

• Question marks and exclamation points are placed inside the closing marks if the closing quotation is a question or an exclamation.
  – Janet whispered, “Is that a light?”
  – “No, it’s a ghost!” gasped Tony.
“How about when the person is quoting another person?” they ask.

- If a quotation appears within a quoted conversation, single quotation marks are used.
- When the single quotation appears at the end of the sentence, use only one end punctuation mark.
  - Marie asked, “Did Miss Stuart say, ‘Turn in your papers today’?”
  - Marie asked, “Did Miss Stuart say, ‘Where are your papers?’”
  - Terry yelled, “I heard my brother scream, ‘I’m drowning!’”
Quotation Mark Practice

• Insert quotation marks, capitals, and other required punctuation.
  – Do you think Miss Muren asked that you can be ready by noon
  – He asked how old I was
  – How dare you she exclaimed
  – You can’t fool me giggled Bonnie
  – The witness said I heard him say I’ll kill you if you leave me
Paragraphing Dialogue

• When you write dialogue, begin a new paragraph every time the speaker changes.

  “Oh, Bernard,” gasped Helen as she ran down the stairs, “you’ll never guess what happened!”
  “What?” asked Bernard.
  “We’ve won the lottery! We’re rich! Now, we can get rid of that old car,” she shouted.
  “I wonder,” said Bernard as he sat down on the tattered sofa. “Maybe our problems are only beginning.”
Paragraphing Practice

• Properly separate the following into paragraphs.

Suzanne and Jodi timidly approached the coach’s office. “Jodi,” said Suzanne, “you can’t chicken out on me now.” “But, I’m not so sure I want to go through with this,” Jodi whined. Suzanne put her hands on her hips and said in an angry voice, “Look, you and I both know that we need more help if we’re going to be good basketball players next year. There isn’t any basketball camp for girls around here, so we’re just going to have to sign up for the boys’ camp.” “I know, I know,” said Jodi. “I don’t like the idea either,” Suzanne said, “but…” Coach Mason opened his door. “Hi, girls, what can I do for you?”
Suzanne and Jodi timidly approached the coach’s office. “Jodi,” said Suzanne, “you can’t chicken out on me now.”

“But, I’m not so sure I want to go through with this,” Jodi whined. Suzanne put her hands on her hips and said in an angry voice, “Look, you and I both know that we need more help if we’re going to be good basketball players next year. There isn’t any basketball camp for girls around here, so we’re just going to have to sign up for the boys’ camp.”

“I know, I know,” said Jodi.

“I don’t like the idea either,” Suzanne said, “but…”

Coach Mason opened his door. “Hi, girls, what can I do for you?”
Setting

• Use concrete and specific details to help your reader know the setting.
• Remember that setting includes place and time.
Practice

• Choose one location/place in your memoir and describe it using concrete imagery and details.
Bad Things

• The what of bad things is obvious.
• Writing about a bad thing that has happened to you or a close friend/relative can be a liberating situation.
• This writing should not be a plea for sympathy, but instead should show the growth of the writer through the power of words.
Writing about Bad Things

• In your notebook, write about a time when something bad happened to you or someone you’re close to.
  – You don’t have to write the absolute most terrible thing ever. You can choose to write about something less dramatic if you want.

• You should write 1-2 well developed paragraphs.
Overcoming a Fear

• Fears are obvious – some are ridiculous
  – Oneirophobia – Fear of Dreams
  – Octophobia – Fear of the Number 8
  – Kathisophobia – Fear of Sitting Down
  – Cyclophobia – Fear of Bicycles

• Writing about overcoming a fear should include:
  – The origin of your fear
  – Why you think it went from scare to fear
  – A random recurrence
  – Why you chose to finally get over the fear
  – The actions it took to get past the fear
Writing about Overcoming Fears

• In your notebook, write about a fear that you had or still have.
• Why do you have this fear?
• How did you overcome it?
  • If you haven’t overcome it yet, how might you go about getting over this particular fear?

• You should write 1-2 well developed paragraphs.
Wrapping Up

• Draft due on 10/30 for peer review.

Final draft due 11/1.