

Guided Autobiography: Hamilton-Wenham Library

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Winter 2019 Guided Memoir Workshop Schedule*

- Jan. 10 -- SESSION 1. Major Branching Points
- Jan. 17 -- SESSION 2. Your Family - 2 pages
- Jan. 24 -- SESSION 3. Money in Your Life
- Jan. 31 -- SESSION 4. Major Life Work or Career
- Feb. 7 -- SESSION 5. Your Body, Your Health
- Feb. 14 -- SESSION 6. Love, Sex & Friendship
- Feb. 21 -- SESSION 7. Snow Day
- Feb. 28 -- SESSION 8. Snow Day

*Suggested

Goals and Guidelines for Workshop Participants

Goal 1: To refresh and recall the memories and events of our lives, to organize our histories and to share them with others

Be prepared each session to read two pages of your life story.

Goal 2: To listen actively when others are sharing

Listen attentively. You can learn from the stories of others.

Goal 3: To be supportive of others and accepting of individual differences

Avoid interpreting or analyzing what others read or say. Instead, be supportive, encouraging, and empathetic. Do not make judgmental statements about the choices other participants have made or about their feelings, beliefs, or opinions. For example, "It must have been difficult to feel so alone"; "You showed courage to try something new when you felt so unsure." Not, "You had a classic inferiority complex." Not, "Your father sounds like an alcoholic!"

Goal 4: To share time equally among participants

Help ensure that everyone has equal time to share his or her story. Avoid dominating the discussion, and do what you can to draw quieter members into the exchange.

Goal 5: To participate fully in writing, sharing, and discussion

What you get from the group is a reflection of what you give to it. Nevertheless, you have a right to share only what you feel comfortable sharing. If you prefer not to share part of what you have written, just skip it. Do not pressure other group members to share material they do not wish to share.

Goal 6: To limit distractions during discussion

Keep eating and other distracting noises to a minimum.

Goal 7: To respect the confidentiality of all shared information

Confidentiality is essential to trust within the group. Honor confidentiality absolutely.

Goal 8: To enjoy ourselves

Do all you can to enhance the enjoyment that comes naturally from writing and sharing your life stories.

James E. Birren. *Telling the Stories of Life through Guided Autobiography Groups*, revised by C. Filos

Agenda: Session One -- Life's Branching Points

Welcome & Introductions

Claudia Philos

Opening:

"When you come to a fork in the road, take it." – Yogi Berra

Interviewed
Sarah Snyder

At the Start:

What is guided memoir?

Goals

Confidentiality

needed to
G-A-B (Berra?)
Berra?

Exercise #1: I Am...

Exercise #2: Quick Draw: A Room from Your Childhood

Reading: A Hero's Branching Point: The Choice of Achilles, *Iliad* IX 410-416

My mother Thetis, goddess with silver steps, tells me that I carry the burden of two different fated ways leading to the final moment [*telos*] of death. If I stay here and fight at the walls of the city of the Trojans, then my homecoming [*nostos*] will be destroyed, but I will have a glory [*kleos*] that is imperishable. Whereas if I go back home, returning to the dear land of my forefathers, then it is my glory [*kleos*], genuine as it is, that will be destroyed, but my life will be long, and the final moment [*telos*] of death will not be swift in catching up with me.

– translated G. Nagy, revised C. Filos

① Fine
② 2nd grade "less"
③ Grad school dream -

Theme One: The Branching Points in Your Life

Exercise #3: Graphing Your Turning Points

Closing:

"It's such a gift for someone to tell you the truth, and it's such a gift for someone to create art with the mess and the chaos and the despair of life, to have turned it into a song, a poem, a novel. It's the hugest gift we have to offer one another." – Anne Lamott

Assignment:

Write two pages about a single branching point in your life OR write two pages on anything that comes up in response to this week's sensitizing questions.

1) List of turning points
- either an event you could not control
or
decision

2) write two pages: - one branch point
or
- a prompting point from below

Theme One: The Major Branching Points in Your Life

Branching points are the turning points in our lives—the events, experiences, or insights that significantly affected the direction or flow of our life journey. Branching points are the experiences that shape our lives in some important way. They may be big events, such as marriage, travel, a move to a new city, or retirement. Or they may be small events, such as reading a book or going on a hike. Big outcomes may have small beginnings. Think of your life as a branching tree. Your life has many points of juncture—branches that sprout after pruning, others that atrophy for lack of nourishment. Or think of your life as a river. Where is the source? Where did branches add volume, strength, or speed? What were the impacts of storms, flood, or drought? What dams or logjams caused you to change course? What are the events that caused the turning points?

SENSITIZING QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to prime or stimulate your memories and thoughts about your life. The questions are not meant to be answered in a literal manner. Read through them and react to the ones that open windows on your past. Each life is unique, and the priming questions do not have the same value to all persons.

1. What was the earliest branching point in your life? What happened, and why was it important? How old were you at the time?
2. Who influenced the direction of your life in a major way? Which people were involved with you at the branching points (e.g., family, friends, teachers, doctors, lawyers, a political or religious leader, or others)?

3. Tornadoes, fires, floods, and automobile accidents leave changed lives behind them. Were there any important happenings in your environment, either natural or societal crises, that changed the direction of your life?

Looked down
made me travel unusual
day long, lonely, narrow
hours in bed.
my first books that my
Buddhism many months later

Some family friends asked "why?"
For example, I wanted a
Sun like for my design. Rather than just
getting it

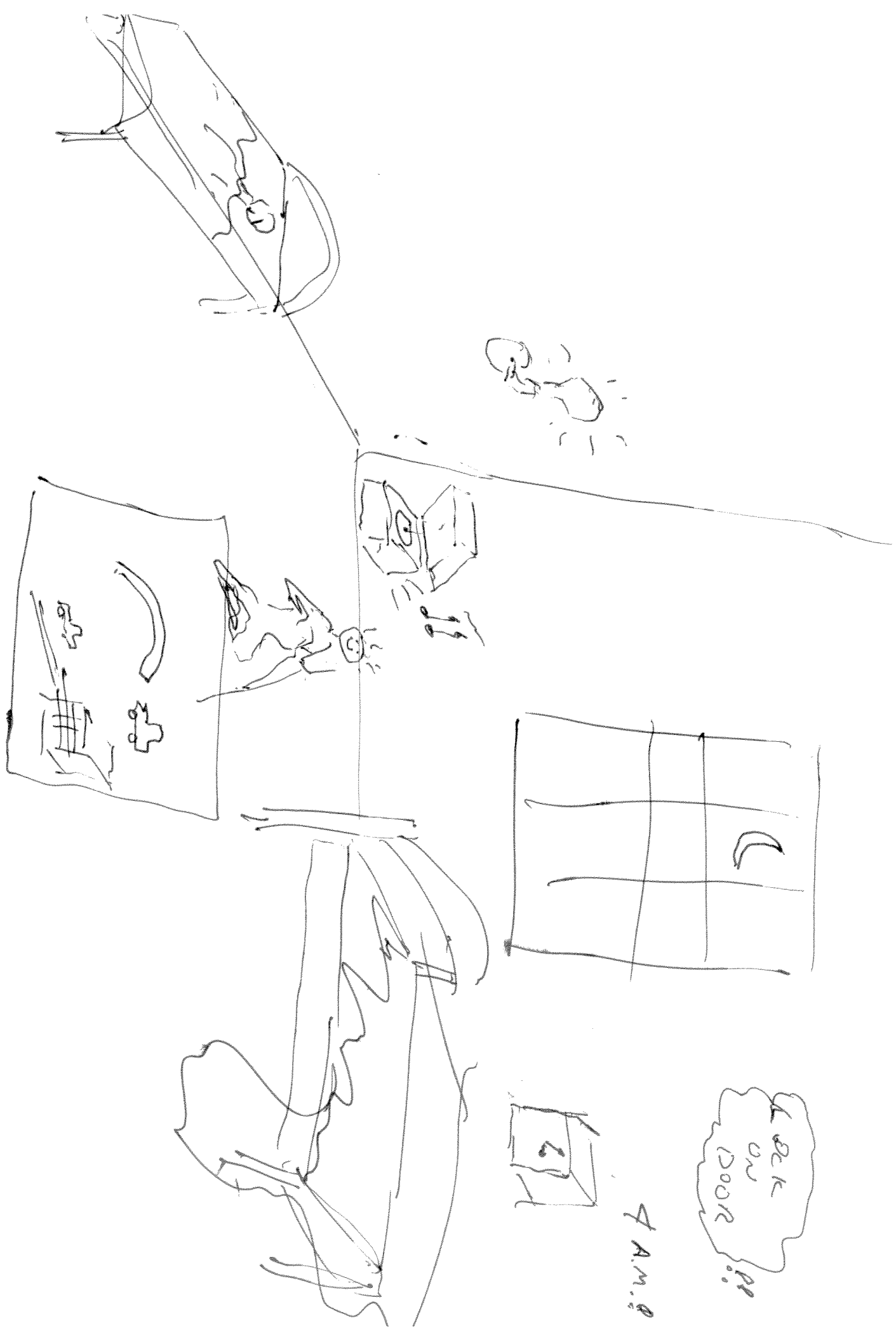
Leadership
Lem

made me
specifically exactly
what I needed,
model etc.

But he
helped me see
the world as
it is. I did not want to be a
man, I was a woman

Looked but I really
he could not just get
over a like when
suddenly a couple of

4. Were there any lucky events in your life, such as winning a lottery, getting a new job, or falling in love with the right person, that had a positive influence on the direction your life took?
5. Were there any bad events, such as divorce, death, or illness, that influenced your life or caused it to branch?
6. Did your ethnic, religious, or cultural background or your social or financial status have an influence on the branching points of your life? Has your background been an advantage or a disadvantage to you?
7. Did a family change of residence or a change of school have an important impact on your life?
8. Did changing a job have lasting positive or negative effects on the flow of your life?
9. What branching points in your life were you responsible for, in contrast to branching points caused by outside events or other people?
10. Have there been any branching points in your life about which you have changed your views over time? For example, events you were angry about then and feel contented about now?
11. Do you think the flow of your life is typical of most people's lives, or is it unusual? In what ways is it unusual?



LOCK
ON
DOOR !!

4 A.M. 0

1/15/2019

Dandelion Wine Excerpt
Statues -- John Huff leaves Douglas Spalding

Douglas looked at John for a long moment. "Start running," he cried.

The boys scattered, yelling. John backed away, then turned and began to lope. Douglas counted slowly. He let them run far, spread out, separate each to his own small world. When they had got their momentum up and were almost out of sight he took a deep breath.

"Statues!"

Everyone froze.

Very quietly Douglas moved across the lawn to where John Huff stood like an iron deer in the twilight.

Far away, the other boys stood hands up, faces grimaced, eyes bright as stuffed squirrels. But here was John, alone and motionless and no one rushing or making a great outcry to spoil this moment.

Douglas walked around the statue one way, walked around the statue the other way. The statue did not move. It did not speak. It looked at the horizon, its mouth half smiling.

It was like that time years ago in Chicago when they had visited a big place where the carved marble figures were, and his walking around them in the silence. So here was John Huff with grass stains on his knees and the seat of his pants, and cuts on his fingers and scabs on his elbows. Here was John Huff with the quiet tennis shoes, his feet sheathed in silence. There was the mouth that had chewed many an apricot pie come summer, and said many a quiet thing or two about life and the lay of the land. And there were the eyes, not blind like statues' eyes, but filled with molten green-gold. And there the dark hair blowing now north now south or any direction in the little breeze there was. And there the hands with all the town on them, dirt from roads and bark-slivers from trees, the fingers that smelled of hemp and vine and green apple, old coins or pickle-green frogs. There were the ears with the sunlight shining through them like bright warm peach wax and here, invisible, his spearmint-breath upon the air.

uses 5 senses

Bradbury, Ray. Dandelion Wine (Greentown Book 1) (pp. 121-122). Harper Collins. Kindle Edition.

Agenda: Session Two -- Family & Friends

Welcome & Introductions

Reviewing & Recommitting to Goals and Guidelines

Opening:

"All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."

— Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*

Exercise #1: Life Graph

27 items !!

Reading #1: Billy Collins, "On Turning Ten"

The whole idea of it makes me feel
like I'm coming down with something,
something worse than any stomach ache
or the headaches I get from reading in bad light--
a kind of measles of the spirit, *fairly 80's*
a mumps of the psyche,
a disfiguring chicken pox of the soul.

words that author used
- what - felt like to be < 10?
- small
- 5 yr old

You tell me it is too early to be looking back,
but that is because you have forgotten
the perfect simplicity of being one
and the beautiful complexity introduced by two.
But I can lie on my bed and remember every digit.
At four I was an Arabian wizard.
I could make myself invisible
by drinking a glass of milk a certain way.
At seven I was a soldier, at nine a prince.

But now I am mostly at the window
watching the late afternoon light.
Back then it never fell so solemnly
against the side of my tree house,
and my bicycle never leaned against the garage
as it does today,
all the dark blue speed drained out of it.

This is the beginning of sadness, I say to myself,
as I walk through the universe in my sneakers.
It is time to say good-bye to my imaginary friends,
time to turn the first big number.

It seems only yesterday I used to believe
there was nothing under my skin but light.
If you cut me I could shine.
But now when I fall upon the sidewalks of life,
I skin my knees. I bleed.

Introducing Theme Two: Friends and Family

Excerpt: *Dandelion Wine*: Statues

Exercise #2: Cluster Mapping a Person

Closing: translation by G. Nagy, slightly revised C. Filos

This is how we learned it, the glories [klea] of men of an earlier time, who were heroes [hērōes], whenever one of them was overcome by tempestuous anger. They could be persuaded by way of gifts and could be swayed by words. I totally recall how this was done (it happened a long time ago, it is not something new). Recalling exactly how it was, I will tell it in your company - since you are all near and dear [philoī].

Iliad IX 524-528

Assignment:

Write two pages on anything that comes up in response to this week's sensitizing questions.

Guided Memoir: Goals and Guidelines

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Each session we will explore our life stories using a flexible theme such as family, money, health & wellness, or our life's work. During the first hour we will engage with poems, prose excerpts, and quick write assignments, as well as prompting questions proven to facilitate both writing and thinking on that week's theme. During the second hour of our session, participants who wrote on last week's theme will read two pages as works-in-progress and receive supportive feedback from other members. Group feedback will be focused on what is working, as opposed to judgments or criticism.

Stephen Chaparran

9-11-83

smell?
task?

I ~~was~~ ate down
at his home - could

beer - music - popular
sing

He had an
older brother
that introduced
us to music

met vs Yankees

Dark complexion - always reminds
me of his heritage

Baseball
fan -

I wonder why he
never played football
with us

soft-soled shoes
("soft-soled" shoes)
says so much
about him

Sadly I moved to Wyo and he moved to Maine and we lost touch.

I looked for him at work but not find him

Theme 2: Family & Friends

Our family histories include both our families of origin (parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins) and the family or families of our adult lives (spouses, children, grandchildren, and in-laws). Perhaps a friend or another person has been close to you and your family and has been important in your life. For many of us, our friends become our chosen family, with connections as deep and rich as any biological bond.

What were the origins of the branches of your family and friends group? Did these histories have any impact on the directions your life took? Which family members and friends were important in shaping your life? Some may have been important to you in positive ways and some in negative ways. Why did these family members and friends have more impact on your life than did others?

SENSITIZING QUESTIONS

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from
Bernin

1. Who held the power in your family and made the major decisions? How do you know?
Father followed his nose
2. Which family members have you felt closest to, and which ones felt most distant? Why? Were or are any family members your models in life?
Grandmother - really helped me
Distant: mother, father, brother, sister
3. Did you like your family and feel supported and loved?
No
4. Were there any family members you were afraid of?
No
5. What were the rules in your family about eating, cleaning up, dressing, and so forth? When you sat down to dinner, where did you sit?
we always ate ~6 pm. ~~around 1~~ Dad at head
Grandmother like as chair. Dishes were
always at breakfast punishment
6. Did your family have any hero figures who had stories told about them?
My father was "out there" for anybody to see, good/bad. Fred Stone -
famously optimistic
7. Did your family have any odd figures who were ridiculed, such as a miser or a spendthrift, thrift, a noisy or talkative person or a silent one?
me

Did I spend much of my life trying to escape my family
- "Do" or "Be"

~~Suck it up~~

Future Feed

Family serving of home
very strong personality
is not easy to find
to find his kind of
personality

8. What were the strengths and weaknesses in your family? How did they affect you?
alcoholic. I became a loner. Extra busy taking care of everybody or nobody else understood my situation
9. Were there any events that made your family stronger or tore it apart?
- Business. Mother's parent available

10. What is the history of your family? What were its origins, and who were its major figures?
Both sides migrated from Prussia (Germany) Middle 1850s. Large families. After 1st gen began to intermarry Welsh, Irish, English

11. Did your family have a philosophy about life that was discussed and that you were expected to adopt? What were the "shoulds" and "oughts" in your family?
- Expected to find a path & explain it.
- ought to have fun
- Ourselves
- Girls house & boys
- No work.

G Gpa/6m
life rest to
Ref.
- Bank
- Spouse
- Aspiration

12. What favorite sayings illustrate your family's philosophy of life? Is there anything about your family that seems unusual to you?
- Do the right thing even when it hurts real it will!
- Become wealthy in America & small town own in a small town
- more when appropriate. Do not stay behind the
13. Who were/are the most important friends in your young life? How did you meet? What did you like about that person? What activities did you do together? How did their friendship change you? Are you connected now? How?
Stephen
Welded hammer back to steel hammer.

14. Did you ever lose a near and dear friend as a child or teenager? How did that friendship end? How did that impact your beliefs about friendship?
Day 1. Reached out to me after I moved to Wyo. Good friends - traded gifts, did things. One time playing kick-the-can. I was under a tree - startled me & I accidentally threw the stick at him. I was embarrassed of the home. We were real together. Never got over it.

Easy with
family
No family
body.

15. As a child did you find it easy or hard to make friends? If it was generally easy, can you remember an instance when it was hard to make a connection you wanted? If it was generally hard, can you remember a time when you managed to "click" with someone easily?
The good next door - we can talk still talk about anything & everything. She had a way to sit in her. I was naturally quiet. & => others did not trust me.

We had
much to
for friends
opposites

Today, if somebody shows their fault I trust back. That relation was a model for what I want. Men are mostly known. Today it's wrong that I open up to.

Oddly successful, high school politics

- President of Spanish class
- Speaker of Home @ Boys Show (My dad's home)
- Known club officer
- Student council

High school prom: both qualified out of town

Excerpt — Bruce Springsteen, *Born to Run*, Chapter 1: "My Street"

I am ten years old and I know every crack, bone and crevice in the crumbling sidewalk running up and down Randolph Street, my street. Here, on passing afternoons I am Hannibal crossing the Alps, GIs locked in vicious mountain combat and countless cowboy heroes traversing the rocky trails of the Sierra Nevada. With my belly to the stone, alongside the tiny anthills that pop up volcanically where dirt and concrete meet, my world sprawls on into infinity, or at least to Peter McDermott's house on the corner of Lincoln and Randolph, one block up.

On these streets I have been rolled in my baby carriage, learned to walk, been taught by my grandfather to ride a bike, and fought and run from some of my first fights. I learned the depth and comfort of real friendships, felt my early sexual stirrings and, on the evenings before air-conditioning, watched the porches fill with neighbors seeking conversation and respite from the summer heat.

Here, in epic "gutter ball" tournaments, I slammed the first of a hundred Pinky rubber balls into my sidewalk's finely shaped curb. I climbed upon piles of dirty snow, swept high by midnight plows, walking corner to corner, the Edmund Hillary of New Jersey. My sister and I regularly stood like sideshow gawkers peering in through the huge wooden doors of our corner church, witnessing an eternal parade of baptisms, weddings and funerals. I followed my handsome, raggedly elegant grandfather as he tottered precariously around the block, left arm paralyzed against his chest, getting his "exercise" after a debilitating stroke he never came back from.

In our front yard, only feet from our porch, stands the grandest tree in town, a towering copper beech. Its province over our home is such that one bolt of well-placed lightning and we'd all be dead as snails crushed beneath God's little finger. On nights when thunder rolls and lightning turns our family bedroom cobalt blue, I watch its arms move and come to life in the wind and white flashes as I lie awake worrying about my friend the monster outside. On sunny days, its roots are a fort for my soldiers, a corral for my horses and my second home. I hold the honor of being the first on our block to climb into its upper reaches. Here I find my escape from all below. I wander for hours amongst its branches, the sound of my buddies' muted voices drifting up from the sidewalk below as they try to track my progress. Beneath its slumbering arms, on slow summer nights we sit, my pals and I, the cavalry at dusk, waiting for the evening bells of the ice-cream man and bed. I hear my grandmother's voice calling me in, the last sound of the long day. I step up onto our front porch, our windows glowing in the summer twilight; I let the heavy front door open and then close behind me, and for an hour or so in front of the kerosene stove, with my grandfather in his big chair, we watch the small black-and-white television screen light up the room, throwing its specters upon the walls and ceiling. Then, I drift to sleep tucked inside the greatest and saddest sanctuary I have ever known, my grandparents' house.

I live here with my sister, Virginia, one year younger; my parents, Adele and Douglas Springsteen; my grandparents, Fred and Alice; and my dog Saddle. We live, literally, in the bosom of the Catholic Church, with the priest's rectory, the nuns' convent, the St. Rose of Lima Church and grammar school all just a football's toss away across a field of wild grass.

123

tense
past

present
past

tree
metaphor

Though he towers above us, here God is surrounded by man— crazy men, to be exact. My family has five houses branching out in an L shape, anchored on the corner by the redbrick church. We are four houses of old-school Irish, the people who have raised me— McNicholases, O'Hagans, Farrells— and across the street, one lonely outpost of Italians, who peppered my upbringing. These are the Sorrentinos and the Zerillis, hailing from Sorrento, Italy, via Brooklyn via Ellis Island. Here dwell my mother's mother, Adelina Rosa Zerilli; my mother's older sister, Dora; Dora's husband, Warren (an Irishman of course); and their daughter, my older cousin Margaret. Margaret and my cousin Frank are championship jitterbug dancers, winning contests and trophies up and down the Jersey Shore.

Though not unfriendly, the clans do not often cross the street to socialize with one another.

The house I live in with my grandparents is owned by my great-grandmother "Nana" McNicholas, my grandmother's mother, alive and kicking just up the street. I've been told our town's first church service and first funeral were held in our living room. We live here beneath the lingering eyes of my father's older sister, my aunt Virginia, dead at five, killed by a truck while riding her tricycle past the corner gas station. Her portrait hovers, breathing a ghostly air into the room and shining her ill-fated destiny over our family gatherings.

Hers is a sepia-toned formal portrait of a little girl in an old-fashioned child's white linen dress. Her seemingly benign gaze, in the light of events, now communicates, "Watch out! The world is a dangerous and unforgiving place that will knock your ass off your tricycle and into the dead black unknown and only these poor, misguided and unfortunate souls will miss you." Her mother, my grandma, heard that message loud and clear. She spent two years in bed after her daughter's death and sent my father, neglected, with rickets, off to the outskirts of town to live with other relatives while she recovered.

Time passed; my father quit school at sixteen, working as a floor boy in the Karagheusian Rug Mill, a clanging factory of looms and deafening machinery that stretched across both sides of Center Street in a part of town called "Texas." At eighteen, he went to war, sailing on the Queen Mary out of New York City. He served as a truck driver at the Battle of the Bulge, saw what little of the world he was going to see and returned home. He played pool, very well, for money. He met and fell in love with my mother, promising that if she'd marry him, he'd get a real job (red flag!). He worked with his cousin, David "Dim" Cashion, on the line at the Ford Motor plant in Edison and I came along.

For my grandmother, I was the firstborn child of her only son and the first baby in the house since the death of her daughter. My birth returned to her a life of purpose. She seized on me with a vengeance. Her mission became my ultimate protection from the world within and without. Sadly, her blind single-minded devotion would lead to hard feelings with my father and enormous family confusion. It would drag all of us down.

When it rains, the moisture in the humid air blankets our town with the smell of damp coffee grounds wafting in from the Nescafé factory at the town's eastern edge. I don't like coffee but I like that smell. It's comforting; it unites the town in a common sensory experience; it's good industry, like the roaring rug mill that fills our ears, brings work and signals our town's vitality. There is a

place here— you can hear it, smell it— where people make lives, suffer pain, enjoy small pleasures, play baseball, die, make love, have kids, drink themselves drunk on spring nights and do their best to hold off the demons that seek to destroy us, our homes, our families, our town.

Here we live in the shadow of the steeple, where the holy rubber meets the road, all crookedly blessed in God's mercy, in the heart-stopping, pants-dropping, race-riot-creating, oddball-hating, soul-shaking, love-and-fear-making, heartbreaking town of Freehold, New Jersey.

Let the service begin.

Springsteen, Bruce. *Born to Run* (Kindle Locations 123-177). Simon & Schuster. Kindle Edition.

Agenda: Session Three -- The Role of Money, Scarcity and Abundance

Welcome & Introductions

Reviewing & Recommitting to Goals and Guidelines

Opening:

"Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!" — Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*

Check-in: Successes and challenges in last week's writing

This Week's Theme: The Role of Money, Abundance & Scarcity

Reading #1: Images of Scarcity

Timothy Donnelly, "To His Debt," from *The Cloud Corporation*

Exercise #1: Quick Write—Three Keepers, Three Losers, OR Thematic Question of Choice

Reading #2: Images of Abundance

Bruce Springsteen, "My Street," excerpt from *Born to Run*

Exercise #2: Unexpected Thank You

Closing: Brené Brown

"I think abundance and scarcity are two sides of the same coin... The opposite of 'never enough' isn't abundance or 'more that you could ever imagine.' The opposite of scarcity is enough."

Assignment:

Write two pages on anything that comes up in response to this week's readings and sensitizing questions.

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TO HIS DEBT

T. Donnelly
"Cloud Corp"

Where would I be without you, massive shadow
dressed in numbers, when without you there

behind me, I wouldn't be myself. What wealth
could ever offer loyalty like yours, my measurement,

my history, my backdrop against which every
coffee and kerplunk, when all the giddy whoring

around abroad and after the more money money
wants is among the first things you prevent.

My phantom, my crevasse—my emphatically
unfunny hippopotamus, you take my last red cent

and drag it down into the muck of you, my
sassafras, my Timbuktu, you who put the kibosh

on fine dining and home theater, dentistry and work
my head into a lather, throw my ever-beaten

back against a mattress of intractable topography ✓
and chew. Make death with me: my sugar |

boat set loose on caustic indigo, my circumstance
dissolving, even then—how could solvency

inAsily

hope to come between us, when even when I dream

I awaken in an unmarked pocket of the earth

without you there—there you are, supernaturally
redoubling over my shoulder like the living

wage I never make, but whose image I will always
cling to in the negative, hanged up by the feet

among the mineral about me famished like a bat
whose custom it is to make much of my neck.

like dirt
under fingernails
never washed
fair

Theme 3: The Role of Money, Scarcity, and Abundance

Abundance and scarcity—every life offers a mix of these two states. The realities of scarcity and abundance can have a powerful influence on the course of our lives. For many of us, money is a prime source of these feelings. Financial gifts or stresses can touch many aspects of our lives, including family life, where we live, education, health, relationships with others, and self-esteem. The history of how we have dealt with money and our ideas about money are important aspects of our life stories. But our feelings of abundance and scarcity may also be driven by factors beyond our financial history. Our primary experiences of abundance and scarcity may be grounded in other aspects of our lives--friendships, parental affection, our physical surroundings, confidence, and so much more. This week you are invited to explore these aspects of your life story.

SENSITIZING QUESTIONS

The following questions are designed to prime or stimulate your memories and thoughts about your life. The questions are not meant to be answered in a literal manner. Read through them and react to the ones that open windows on your past. Each life is unique, and the priming questions do not have the same value to all persons.

1. What role did money play in your family? Was money scarce or plentiful? How did your family's financial situation compare with that of other people you knew? Did your family think of itself as being well-off or poor?
2. What were you taught about money? Who gave you most of your ideas about money? *you get two from your parents*
3. Did money have any relationship to affection and love in your family?
People definitely showed love with money
4. What was the first time you earned any money? How did it influence your later ideas?
5. In your life, how important has it been to make money?
money = security
6. How much do you think about money or worry about it?
7. What have been your greatest successes with money? Your worst mistakes? Are you a good or poor manager of money? *People of security have your good habits of attitudes*
8. Have you ever had to borrow money? How did you feel about it? Have other people helped you when you needed money?
*My parents
OK I'm*

There's a switch inside of me.
If no money - go into DIY mode &
get excited by it

9. Does money have any relation to your self-regard or self-esteem?

10. Do you regard yourself as generous or stingy? Do you give money away? How do you feel about it? Were there any spendthrifts or misers in your family?

11. What has money come to mean to you-power, position, comfort, security, or something thing else?

12. If finances were not a source of scarcity and abundance, what aspect of your life made you feel the greatest sense of abundance? What left you feeling the greatest sense of scarcity?

No shortage of things to think about
egress like things apart in them how

Example of
House Burn

I just don't understand what's blues. ^{When you}
a scarcity of ideas? I feel of the spirit? ^{I don't}
Love of self esteem? Over the time stop ^{stop}
working? Is it anxiety?

At his peak
there's not a day
in my house +
I've not my hand

I just don't understand
why why people are happy or sad
due to money never I've from security
Why Alex is great. Need a study book

Explain to myself what I mean.

It's all in your head.

Why mention it

ⓐ) say you can't help but learn you really like to do

ⓑ) - "Muddle" - make stuff. Let's put on our thinking caps
- ultimately we want to be home

ⓐ) - "Cash power" - the ground of all my money. - ^{Boys get good from}
- just don't let us

Alex: People tell me things. I can tell when you're lying.

- you can't fool me
- this is important, revealing

- I don't have to go to doctors

Point of view
of Mrs

Excerpt from Hertmans, Stefan. *War and Turpentine: A novel*

My grandfather so often told me how his passion for painting was born. But only after reading his memoirs did I understand how palpably that love was etched into his soul in childhood. He describes in detail how his father—seated on a wooden stool, with his paintbrush and a cotton swab on a wooden handle in his right hand, his palette with its carefully applied dots of paint on a small stand next to him, one eye half shut, back bent—retouches the fingernails of the Angel of the Annunciation in the Chapel of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows. Then he goes on to restore the color of a faded leaf on a clumsily painted date tree in the sixth Station of the Cross. He leans back for a moment to evaluate the result, half turns toward his son, and asks for a finer brush to fix a contour. He mixes most of his paint himself, since he cannot afford to buy it readymade in tubes. In the open pear-wood box are clumps of pigment, toxic cobalt powder, and sweet-smelling sienna, sepia, and sinopia; flasks of refined linseed oil, turpentine, methylated spirits, and siccative; thin knives and palettes; old brushes made of rare squirrel hair; round brushes, flat hog-bristle brushes, and a pair of soft hair brushes made from sable marten, for which he had scrimped and saved for months; cloths of diverse fabrics, from coarse to fine; pencils, charcoal, and asphaltum—the appurtenances of the endless, silent hours that Urbain spends with his father. He sits obediently in a church pew all afternoon, watching Papa's hands in motion. Sometimes his father stands at the top of a ladder and performs death-defying feats: removing the candle soot from the cloud on which the Virgin Mother stands in a tricky corner above a side altar; accentuating the plague sore on St. Roch's thigh with a swipe of brownish-red, adding a new set of eyelets to St. Crispin's old-fashioned shoes, sprucing up St.

Eloy's flaking emerald-green jacket, and brightening the three lilies in the desert sands by St. Giles's feet with a thin layer of deadly poisonous white lead.

High on the converging lines of the ladder, he sees his father's legs, his ragged trousers, his worn "mules"—old-fashioned slippers—and it's as if his father has joined the Oriental figures in the background of the frescoes on the wall. He hears the soft sweep of the brushes, which occasionally grows more intense—the eternal blue sky of faith is sometimes large and requires broad strokes. Tinted rays of sunlight descend from the stained-glass windows, casting patches of color on the black marble tiles. He watches dust motes dance in those transparent columns of light. His father asks him for a size-five brush; Urbain digs down into the box, retrieves the brush, carefully climbs halfway up the ladder, and hands it to his father, who leans forward perilously to grasp it. Then Urbain climbs back down and returns to the hard pew, where he sits with his hands between his knees. Franciscus awkwardly straightens his back, clears his throat and wipes his chin on his sleeve, dips the brush into the iron bowl attached to his belt, and adds a few strokes of light yellow to a pale cloud from which the angel of the Annunciation is descending. Silent, endless days. At noon, he and his father share the sandwiches his mother made for them: lard and fatty sausage when they can get it, hard aged goat's cheese at the end of the month. They chew and swallow, passing a dented flask of water back and forth. The church is locked; no one can walk in on them. This is Urbain's little heaven. Noises from outside are muted. When the clock strikes the hour, they hear the creak of the swinging beams and the flapping of wings as the birds in the peak of the roof take flight.

Clattering home on their cheap willow clogs, they sang silly tunes the whole way, like the merry tramps they were. The quaking aspens and white poplars along the ash-covered road

rattled their leaves, and the father said to his son that the leaves in the wind were like a crowd of tiny ballerinas. My grandfather looked up in surprise and saw that the trees, which until then had formed one whole, were now fragmented into innumerable unknown forms that were waving at him, a stage with unimaginable scenes. He gulped and felt the warmth of his hand clasped in his father's.

Hertmans, Stefan. *War and Turpentine: A novel* (p. 29-31). Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Agenda: Session Four -- Your Life Work & Flow

1. Welcome & Introductions

2. Reviewing & Recommitting to Goals and Guidelines

3. Opening

"The mystique of rock climbing is climbing; you get to the top of a rock glad it's over but really wish it would go on forever. The justification of climbing is climbing, like the justification of poetry is writing; you don't conquer anything except things in yourself.... The act of writing justifies poetry. Climbing is the same: recognizing that you are a flow. The purpose of the flow is to keep on flowing, not looking for a peak or utopia but staying in the flow. It is not a moving up but a continuous flowing; you move up to keep the flow going. There is no possible reason for climbing except the climbing itself; it is a self-communication."



— Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*

overdrive?

4. Check-in

Successes and challenges in last week's writing

5. Handout

This Week's Theme—Your Major Life Work

6. Reading #1: Mary Oliver, "Summer Day"

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean--
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down --
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
With your one wild and precious life?

7. Quick Write

An Idle and Blessed Day

8. Reading #2 Handout:

Excerpt from Hertmans, Stefan. *War and Turpentine: A novel*

9. Quick Write

Letter: Advice to your Younger Self about Work

BREAK

10. Readings & Feedback

11. Extra Time

(Help!) Wanted: Bad Jobs

12. Closing: Mary Oliver, "Wild Geese"

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

Theme 4: Your Major Life Work or Career

Our life work includes the activities that have occupied most of our time, energy, or concerns. It can take many forms. The history of our life work may include work as a parent, spouse, or homemaker. It can be the history of a career or lifetime job. Also, it can be a lifetime of service in religion, community work, or politics. Some people devote their lives to art or literature. We may have several careers or life work activities in sequence or at the same time. What has been the pattern or the sequence of your life work?

SENSITIZING QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to prime or stimulate your memories and thoughts about your life. The questions are not meant to be answered in a literal manner. Read through them and react to the ones that open windows on your past. Each life is unique, and the priming questions do not have the same value to all persons.

1. How did you get into your major life work? Did you seem destined to follow it, or did you stumble into it? Did other persons urge you to pursue this work, or was chance a factor? Did any childhood interests or experiences influence your path?
2. When did you develop the goals of your life? How much choice did you have?
3. What events or persons influenced your path?
4. Were family models important in the life work you chose? Who influenced you the most?
5. What role did being a man or woman play in your choices about your life work?
6. Has your life work been one continuous path, or have there been changes and discontinuities? Have there been peaks and valleys?
7. Were you provided many options, or did you have only one or two prospects?
8. Are you satisfied with your life work? Is there anything you would like to change? What personal strengths or weaknesses have you brought to your life work?
9. If you have had more than one life work, which has been most important to you?
10. What have you liked most and least about your life work?

RICHARD JONES

SCARS

This hollow of dead skin
the size of a coin
centered on my shin
exactly between my left foot and knee,
was a gift from the ocean—
the sharp blade of a shell
tore my leg open
to show the bone that carries me.
This ragged scar on my arm,
I earned for being introspective
in the woods—
rusted barbed wire
ripped through my shirt to awaken me.
And the small white arc?
this tiny moon over my left eye?
—appeared from nowhere one day in the mirror.

My body reveals its history.
I would show you
the invisible tokens
of sorrow and joy—
grief-scars and love-scars.
I remember crying all day
when my mother
was dying. I remember
my Aunt Ruby, who took me in,
lifted me
and covered my face with kisses.
I ran to the bathroom
and saw in the mirror
the bee-stings of her lipstick.
When I was a boy
I dreamed I could fly.
It was wonderful to soar

over the house
with its locked doors and shuttered windows!
Dreaming taught me
the body is nothing—
less than nothing—
less than a dream.

Last night I caught a fish
to eat this morning for breakfast.
I laid the fish on the kitchen counter—
an old, grandfather fish,
a huge ugly battered fish,
scales torn and dangling,
the rainbow of its flesh gone gray with age.
With a knife I cut off the head,
slit open the belly.
With my fingers I removed
the brown and green entrails,
the tiny heart.
From the sink, the ancient eye watched
as I ran the knife over the body,
the silver scales leaping in air.
I cooked the fish in an old iron skillet,
my grandfather's skillet,
battered and scratched from the years.
The oil got hot; the fish sizzled in the pan.
I love my body in the morning—
hunger raging inside me.
The body's hunger is beautiful.
I fill it with the wisdom of fish.
If I could fly, I'd visit my mother
in heaven. I'd hold her angel-hands
in my scarred mortal hands, and thank her
for giving me to the world.

Agenda: Session Five -- Health, Wellness & Your Body

- 1) **Opening:** The body never lies. —Martha Graham
- 2) **Goals and Guidelines** —
- 3) **Check-in**
- 4) **Handout:** Excerpt from *Tell Me Everything You Don't Remember*, Christine Hyung-Oak Jones
- 5) **Exercise:** List 12 things your body is telling you right now.
- 6) **Handout:** Theme 5—Your Health & Body
- 7) **Reading:** Anya Silver, “Leaving the Hospital”

As the doors glide shut behind me,
the world flares back into being—
I exist again, recover myself,
sunlight undimmed by dark panes,
the heat on my arms the earth's breath.
The wind tongues me to my feet
like a doe licking clean her newborn fawn.
At my back, days measured by vital signs,
my mouth opened and arm extended,
the nighttime cries of a man withered
child-size by cancer, and the bells
of emptied IVs tolling through hallways.
Before me, life—mysterious, ordinary—
holding off pain with its muscular wings.
As I step to the curb, an orange moth
dives into the basket of roses
that lately stood on my sickroom table,
and the petals yield to its persistent
nudge, opening manifold and golden.

symmetry
"tactile"

everyday language

- 8) **Reading:** Handout—"Scars," Richard Jones

9) **Quick Write:**

Leaving the Hospital: Write about a time you left out of a hospital.

OR

History of the Body: Write a brief history of your body—including triumphs and tragedies, big and small—using scars, birthmarks, etc. as the inspiration.

10) Break

11) Readings & Feedback

12) Extra Time:

Sticks and Stones: Were you ever teased as a child for something related to your health, wellness, and/or physical attributes? Write about your experience. OR Write about your first broken bone.

13) Assignment:

Write two pages on anything that comes up in response to this week's readings, discussions, and sensitizing questions.

14) Closing: Rumi

Your grief for what you've lost lifts a mirror
up to where you're bravely working.
Expecting the worst, you look, and instead
here's the joyful face you've been wanting to see.
Your hand opens and closes and opens and closes.
If it were always a fist or always stretched open,
you'd be paralyzed.
Your deepest presence is in every small contracting
and expanding,
the two as beautifully balanced and coordinated
as bird wings.

Guided Memoir: Goals and Guidelines

Guided Memoir provides a structured, thematic curriculum designed to facilitate memory recall and storytelling in a supportive, small group environment. Our mission is to help each other explore and share our life stories. During the course of our program, our interactions will be guided by the principles of mutual respect, mutual sharing and strict confidentiality. Given this foundation, new writers and storytellers can create powerful narratives about the most meaningful experiences in their lives.

Each session we will explore our life stories using a flexible theme such as family, money, health & wellness, or our life's work. During the first hour we will engage with poems, prose excerpts, and quick write assignments, as well as prompting questions proven to facilitate both writing and thinking on that week's theme. During the second hour of our session, participants who wrote on last week's theme will read two pages as works-in-progress and receive supportive feedback from other members. Group feedback will be focused on what is working, as opposed to judgments or criticism.

Excerpt Christine Hyung-Oak Lee
Tell Me Everything You Don't Remember: The Stroke That Changed My Life

For thirty-three years I had a hole in my heart and I did not know it.

There was the actual hole in my heart, an undiagnosed birth defect, with which I lived.

And then there was the hole in my heart that I tried to dam up with other people's needs and then filled with resentment. The resentment spilled out as anger, as a need for control, as an obsession with perfection, as an obsession with cleanliness and disinfecting doorknobs and wearing latex examination gloves while typing, as compulsion, as picking the cuticles on my nails and my feet and collecting empty milk bottles and hiding them in all the cabinets of my kitchen and under the bathroom sinks until my husband found them months later and as he threw them away I wept for the lost bottles, even though my sadness was not about the lost bottles but about something unfulfilled that I had yet to identify or acknowledge.

There was the hole in my heart that made it hard for me to breathe.

There was the hole in my heart that made it impossible for me to be whole.

And then I had a stroke.

* * *

Simple

repeat
simple
problem

Theme 5: Your Health & Body

(John
Bierman)

Health is an important influence in shaping our lives. Acute or chronic illnesses, whether experienced by ourselves or by another person in our lives, can lead to major changes in the way we live. Our views of our health and body have many aspects, including both the history of our own health and physical characteristics and our feelings about them. In part, our views involve comparisons with other persons—are we healthy or unhealthy, strong or weak, coordinated or clumsy, attractive or unattractive, compared with others? What is the history of your health and body?

SENSITIZING QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to prime or stimulate your memories and thoughts about your life. The questions are not meant to be answered in a literal manner. Read through them and react to the ones that open windows on your past. Each life is unique, and the priming questions do not have the same value to all persons.

1. How was your health when you were a baby, child, and adult? Have any serious illnesses or accidents changed the way you lived? In what ways?
secretly
2. What health problems have you experienced over the course of your life? How did they influence you?
Alphie 1 + then dx - pneumonia 2x
3. Were you considered a well child or a sickly child? Did it make any difference to you?
4. Were you fast- or slow-developing as a child? Were you ahead of or behind your peers in growth and development as an adolescent? How did this affect your image of yourself?
slow
5. How would you describe yourself as a child, adolescent, or adult? Were you short or tall, thin or fat, poised or awkward? Would you regard yourself as attractive or unattractive?

6. How has your body reacted to sports and exercise?

7. How has your body reacted to stress? Has this changed during your life? What signals in your body indicate that you are under stress? Have you been exposed to high stress? If so, how have you responded to it?
7th grade + skiing
part of workout for school
begin working out


8. What have you done during your life to help or hurt your health?

drinking with liver disease

45yrs stuck on ski pole

wristed in a dentist's office

Discussion
improvement
close eyes
on side
-spit on grill
7th grade
talk down
45yrs



9. What aspects or parts of your body do you like best or least? If you could change your body in any way, how would you like it to be different?

10. What have you done to alter or improve your health and body during your life?

Agenda Final Session: Homecoming

Opening: excerpt, last stanza from Tennyson's "Ulysses"

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

*Nostos
Homecoming*

Sharing & Feedback: on writing from last week on goals and ambitions

Readings: *Odyssey* Book 1, lines 1-5

|1 That man, tell me O Muse the song of that man, that versatile [*polu-tropos*]
man, who in very many ways |2 veered from his path and wandered off far
and wide, after he had destroyed the sacred citadel of Troy. |3 Many different
cities of many different people did he see, getting to know different ways of
thinking [*noos*]. |4 Many were the pains he suffered in his heart while crossing
the sea |5 struggling to merit the saving of his own life and his own
homecoming [*nostos*] as well as the homecoming of his comrades.

Translation by Gregory Nagy

Excerpt Center for Hellenic Studies interview with Douglas Frame [<https://kleos.chs.harvard.edu/?p=1016>]

CHS: ... Your first book, *The Myth of Return in Early Greek Epic*, was
published in 1978, and examines the relationship between *noos*, "mind" and
nostos, "return home". Through careful analysis focused on the root **nes-*
you show that *nostos* in Homer conveys the latent meaning "return to light

*"Blind" website
self publishing*

and life." Why is this meaning so crucial to our understanding of the character of Odysseus, his wanderings, and the *Odyssey* in general.

Frame: Odysseus of course returns home; it's the story of the *Odyssey*, and there isn't any question about that. Nor is Odysseus the only hero who returns home from Troy. But Odysseus leaves the real world in the course of his *nostos*, and his experiences beyond the real world have the quality of an initiation. They set the hero apart, at least in the *Odyssey's* own terms... In the case of the *Odyssey* there is much that points to a deep tradition of solar myth as the context that sets the solitary hero apart in terms of initiation and enlightenment. As for the nature of the hero's enlightenment, perhaps it's enough to say that, having been where he's been, and having been able to return from there to the real world and home, the hero has a wider than normal view of human existence. He knows something about the ultimate mystery of human existence, namely death.

cycle

applies to writing

Quick write: Wandering Far and Wide

Write about a journey you've taken that had an impact on your life. This can be a trip to a far away destination, a trip across town to your grandmother's house, or a fateful trip to the doctor.

Reading: excerpt from *Venture to the Interior*, by Laurens van der Post

A voyage to a destination, wherever it may be, is also a voyage inside oneself; even as a cyclone carries along with it the center in which it must ultimately come to rest. At these moments I think not only of the places I have been to, but also of the distances I have traveled within myself without a friend or ship; and of the long way yet to go before I come home within myself and within the journey.

Exercise: I am...

see later



homework 1-2 sentences to share

Quick write: How has this 10-week journey changed your ideas about yourself and your life journey?

Closing Reading: C. P. Cavafy, "Ithaka"

I was swindled.

IT

I started across what I ~~thought~~ seemed a great opportunity. Travel to Kuwait, teach about the FIV word again. I got teaching experience, money, all that. We all got a happy customer. I go.

127°F, black camels, sandstorms, souks,

evil glances, butcher's porter gets taken in in dark grey hooded cloak. Can't say where. Usually this is training. They were bombing me to Jemen.

not a homecoming

houkas,

*Egyptian poet
Cavafy, Ithaca*

Cavafy, Ithaca

As you set out for Ithaka
hope your road is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope your road is a long one.
May there be many summer mornings when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you enter harbors you're seeing for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to learn and go on learning from their scholars.

Keep Ithaca always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you're destined for.

But don't hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you're old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you've gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you wouldn't have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.