**Creative writing by Lauren Morley**

The objective of writing exercises was to get participants engaged with their senses, guiding them through a broad brainstorming of memories that would eventually become a single, complete story. The timing of these exercises was participant-led; I had a rough guideline of how much time should be allotted to each exercise, but if participants needed more or less time, it would be accommodated.

The participants were asked to brainstorm, rapidly, 5 things that came to mind when thinking of home for each of the 5 senses. They were then asked to choose one idea that jumped out to them for each sense.   
  
Next, the participants were asked to brainstorm ten family legends --stories from home that are told around the dinner table, these anecdotes that get passed on and told to friends and partners and younger family members.   
  
In the discussion, we began to connect these legends to food. Did many of them involve food? Did they not? What was the significance if so?  
  
We then moved on to brainstorming what I like to call "Ratatouille" moments --tasting a food that brings you immediately into a memory, like when the curmudgeonly critic Anton Ego is transported to his childhood by a taste of Confit Biyaldi in the film Ratatouille. We discussed crossover between any of these moments and any food-related family legends.   
  
The purpose of these warmup exercises was to connect sense memory with story. At this point I gave the participants ten minutes to choose one of their family legends to write out in long form. Some of them had been discussed around the table beforehand. Participants were encouraged to share their stories, and we helped identify a beginning, a middle and an end.   
  
The stories were then ready for dramatisation and dramaturgy. For my part, I encouraged participants to find the structure they wanted for their story. I asked where the conflicts were, who else was involved? What did things look like? Smell like? Sound like? When people they know tell the story, what do they focus on? Again, this process was participant-led, as I wanted to encourage the participants to find the story that they wanted to tell, and find the words that best suited what they wanted to express.