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Introductory Workshops in Creative Writing: Writing Prompt Phase 1 - Understanding the Self

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Understanding the self

Throughout the semester, you will continue to harness your current skills as a writer. However, this course will be more focused on the idea of *self*. What is this idea of “self?” How do we define it or more specifically how do we represent ourselves (as the writer) on page and to what extent can we make our own voice visible? Anyone can write a story, but where do you as the author exist within your own work?

For this assignment, you will be required to write a **memoir** (a personal narrative) **or a short piece of fiction** that depicts some aspect of yourself or an attribute of it, present within your own life. You can either focus on a specific moment of time, place, person, or even an object that reveals at least some perception of who you are NOT what other people perceive you to be. (My suggestion though would be to pick **ONE** of these things, then use it as a place marker to begin your story or memoir).

Think of this as an experimental piece of writing: a self-reflection or a *deeper understanding* of how you perceive life or the world around you. ***Remember: this course will always value the idea of comfortability** – how much you are willing to express yourself on page. Don’t feel the need to restrain yourself or hold back! You are not writing for the masses or with the intention of wanting to please me or an audience. Be comfortable and confident in your skills as a writer!

General requirements

- Your short story or a memoir must be at least **3 pages at minimum**
- Times New Roman, double-spaced, and 12-point font (1” margins)
- Please include your heading (your name, course title, and my name) on the top left corner of the page
- Titles or no titles are welcomed!

Pertinent Information and Dates

- This piece is worth **25%** of your course grade.
- A full draft will be due on **Thursday, February 20th** for student conferences.
- The final version is due on **Tuesday, March 3rd**

Still stuck? Here are some helpful examples to brainstorm or work from:

1. **A Person:** write about yourself from your point of view or even as character
Whether you write about a real person or a fictional one, show them *doing* something, even it’s them going to the store or walking down their block. Talking/arguing with someone else is always a way to show a person's nature, attitude, or thought process.
2. **A Thing:** we are all tempted to write about the big topics: life, love, death, the past, the

future, good, evil, the nature of God and the nature of man. However, because these are such popular themes, much has been written about them, and it can be very easy to resort to cliché when attempting to write something about them. If you want to write about something "big" like "love" or "death," the trick is to "go small" – write about a very specific situation or person. If you write a sentence or phrase that looks or sounds familiar, "love at first sight" or "dead as a doornail," CUT or rewrite such phrases. Avoid clichés like the plague (as they saying goes).

Things can also be objects, and very often these things can be fascinating and worthy of scrutiny. You might find it more interesting to write about an object with personal meaning to you. Write a detailed description of an object that was owned or used by someone who is gone.