

Creative Nonfiction

Being Creative with Memory-based Writing

In writing from memory, keep in mind that

you are not writing journalism

a recording of the petty details of daily life will likely bore your readers

memory remakes events but does not cause your past to be less real

your job is to engage your audience, to make them care about the people & events in your writing

memory is selective

you must be selective in choosing memories and in arrangement of memories.

Guidelines for writing memory-based creative nonfiction (CNF)

1. Use the techniques of the short story writer.
2. Focus the CNF story as you would focus a fictional story
3. Arrange your scenes for best effect. If you must rearrange time to achieve effect, do so.
4. Feel free to write conversation. Write what characters likely said if you cannot remember precise wording.
5. Open with a hook.
6. Think of the CNF story as one you will present in a series of scenes.
7. Avoid telling as much as possible; strive to show.
8. Present character in conflict.
9. Bring your CNF story to a satisfactory close.
10. Tell the truth.