

February 24 Make-up Class for Memoir Writing F402

Yes, we're meeting, same time, same place, and no, it will not snow.

Books discussed in class:

Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir by William Zinsser, the Columbia journalism professor whose lecture to new students I gave you in my last posting. He has written many books on writing one's personal story but this one is my favorite. The book is more or less a series of chapters by famous writers such as Russell Baker, Jill Ker Conway and Ian Frazier on how they wrestled with the structure and organization of their books which can be the most difficult barrier to beginning writers of memoir. For example, Annie Dillard writes a chapter on "how writing *An American Childhood* made her confront the memoirist's central dilemma: what to put in and what to leave out."

The Lost Continent by Bill Bryson. This is the story of Bryson, born and raised in Des Moines, Iowa, re-tracing his various childhood vacations in the family car throughout 38 states. *Newsweek* called it, "...paradoxically touching—a melancholy memoir in the form of snide travelogue." The *Detroit Free Press* called it, "Funny, biting, outrageous, and more truthful than we may care to admit."

Unrooted Childhoods: Memoirs of Growing Up Global, co-edited by Faith Eidse and Nina Sichel (a speaker at my "Writing Your Personal Symposium" in May 2009). This book is also a collection of chapters by writers such as Isabel Allende, Pat Conroy, Carlos Fuentes and Ariel Dorfman, among others, all writing about their childhoods during periods they were raised outside their own countries and cultures. We discussed in class the idea of keeping in mind the point of view of an "outsider" as you are writing your own memoir.

Bring your Six Word Memoirs and Snow Stories to class 2/24

Also, you are invited to the 10th Annual Writing Your Personal History Symposium, Thursday, 10-2, May 6, 2010 @ Vienna Community Center. Box lunches available.

Four 45 minute workshops with novelist, journalist and Johns Hopkins writing teacher Tim Wendel, memoirist and essayist Cheryl Aubin, storyteller Nadine James and Dr. Deborah Ross

You may register on the Town of Vienna's website if you have a user ID. Log onto www.viennava.gov and look for the *WebTrac* icon. Click on the icon. **Or** you may download a form from the website and mail it to 120 Cherry St. S.E. Vienna Va. 22180. When paying by check make it payable to the Town of Vienna. For **description** of Personal History Writing Symposium, you can write in the Search box: "Writing Symposium." Write Course #442484A1 on your registration form. For further details you may call Cheryl at 703-255-7801.