Memories Matter: A Descriptive Memoir Project

Memoir writing is a compilation of snapshot memories, like those The Giver shares with Jonas. Snapshot memories are fairly short and very specific. Each memoir is rich in detail and description.

Writing a memoir differs from writing an autobiography, in which where you start with the day you were born and tell everything that has happened since then. It also differs from a biography in that the person telling the story of the event is the person who actually experienced it, rather than someone observing the action.

An important part of memoir writing is the author's stated or implied message about why a memory is important enough to share. In other words, an effective memoir answers the question, "What difference does it make?" We will be writing our own memoirs. The "snapshot" memory you choose must be important enough to be shared with our Giver, if we had one. This is a memory you would want to pass down to generations of Givers.

You will write about one (or more) of the memoir subjects listed below in descriptive mode: action verbs in the present tense, sensory detail, and figurative language. You will bring the memory to life by writing about it in "real time," as if you are in the moment. In addition, the style of each memoir should attempt to mirror that of Lowry.

Possible categories

- Name stories (How you got your name, why your name is significant.)
- Stories about where you grew up
- Love stories (first love, true love, end of a love, etc.)
- Pain stories (someone who hurt you, argument with best friend/family, etc.)
- First day of school stories
- Rites of passage/realizing you are growing up stories
- Weather stories (tornadoes, hurricanes, thunderstorms, etc.)
- Holiday stories (traditions, memorable holidays)
- Physical hurt stories (broken bones, stitches, surgeries, bee stings, etc.)
- First-time-I... stories
- Funny family stories
- Important people stories (events that show the influence someone had on you)

We will discuss where you should get information for your memoir…in addition to your own memory, of course!