

MAR 10 2005

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO USE W-DESIGNATION

LSC # 252
Action _____

COVER SHEET: Request for Approval to Use W-Designation

TYPE I. PROFESSOR COMMITMENT

- (x) Professor **Anthony Farrington** Phone: **H: (724) 349-9694**
O: (724) 357-0165
- (x) Writing Workshop? **IUP Writing Workshop, 19-20 May 2004**
- (x) Proposal for one W-course: **attached**
- (x) Agree to forward syllabi for subsequently offered W-courses? **yes**

SIGNATURES:

Professor Anthony Farrington / [Signature] 10 Mar 2005

Department Chairperson [Signature] 3/15/05

College Dean [Signature] 3/18/05

Director of Liberal Studies [Signature] 3/24/05

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Writing Summary for ENGL 221: Creative Writing

In addition to the current catalog description for Creative Writing—where students are “expected to produce a substantial body of written work”—ENGL 221 involves a great deal of reading, discussing, and thinking about writing.

In Creative Writing, students question aesthetics, poetics, and narrative forms. The class asks students to think about language and writing, to explore ideas of authorship and creativity, and to write using methods they may never have explored before. In addition, Creative Writing expects students to reflect on the processes of creation, revision, and reading of prose and poetry. Finally, this course investigates contemporary aesthetic expectations of creative writing—for example, the complex world of literary publication—and it encourages students to actively participate by submitting their own manuscripts for publication.

Seven types of writing will occur in this course:

1. POETRY (two “packets”; totaling approximately 10 pages)

Students are expected to recognize conventions and innovations in poetry through course readings and discussions in order to apply them in practice. Students are expected to produce and revise multiple drafts of their poetry with conscious attention to stylistic choices (such as audience, voice, structure, and appropriate syntax and grammar). Revision is expected throughout the semester. (Students are expected to hold one-on-one conferences with the instructor in order to discuss strategies for revision.) Each poetry packet accounts for approximately 10% of the overall grade; thus, the two poetry packets account for 20% of the overall grade. Poems are usually evaluated according to thematic focus, whether or not the form fits the content, sustained & original imagery, and conscious attention to revision (see “five learning letters” below).

2. PROSE (two “packets”; totaling approximately 10 pages)

Students are expected to recognize conventions and innovations in prose through course readings and discussions in order to apply them in practice. Students are expected to produce and revise multiple drafts of their prose with conscious attention to stylistic choices. Revision is expected throughout the semester. (Students are expected to hold one-on-one conferences with the instructor in order to discuss strategies for revision.) The two prose packets account for 20% of the overall grade. Prose is usually evaluated according to narrative as well as thematic focus, the appropriateness of form, scenic development & original imagery, and conscious attention to revision (see “five learning letters” below).

3. End-of-Semester PORTFOLIO (approximately 20 pages of polished work)

Each student will complete a professional-looking portfolio of revised prose and poetry. No additional revisions are allowed. This assignment accounts for approximately 30% of the overall grade. The prose and poetry is evaluated as above (& the learning letter is carefully considered); improvement and revisionist strategies are taken into account; submitted work is expected to be developed, sustained, and polished (i.e., well-proofed, use of appropriate grammar and syntax, etc).

4. FIVE LEARNING LETTERS (totaling approximately 7-12 pages)

Each major writing assignment (2 poetry packets, 2 prose packets, and the final portfolio) must be accompanied by a learning letter. The portfolio requires a three to four page “reflective” essay, and the poetry and prose assignments require a one to two page essay. The learning letter requires students to reflect upon their own writing processes, their struggles, and growth as writers. These mini essays can be explicative, exploratory, or critical. Learning letters are required but not, in themselves, graded. They demonstrate analytical depth and help determine the instructor’s approach to the given creative work.

5. JOURNAL ENTRIES (# of pages vary, usually, from 20 to 50 handwritten entries)

Students write in their journals daily—creative exercises, explorations, struggles, etc. Revision is encouraged and expected, but not required. Journals are not graded. Their sole purpose is to generate writing.

6. READING RESPONSES

After each assigned reading, there is an in-class reading response. The purpose of this is to show that students are critically engaged with the assigned readings. The evaluative criteria is interested solely in critical depth. (Approximately 10 handwritten entries.) No revision; approximately 10% of the overall grade.

7. PEER REVIEW

Each student is expected to give effective peer responses to other student works in progress. The evaluative criteria is interested solely in the critical awareness of the response. No revision. This accounts for approximately 5% of the overall grade.

Summary of Writing Assignments for ENGL 221: Creative Writing

A. Writing Assignments					
Assignment Title	# of Assignments	# of total pages	Graded (Yes/No)	Opportunity for Revision (Yes/No)	Written Assignment represents what % of final course grade
Poetry Packets	two assignments	ten pages	yes	yes	20% of overall grade
Prose Packets	two assignments	ten pages	yes	yes	20% of overall grade
End-of-Semester Portfolio	one assignment	twenty pages	yes	no	30% of overall grade
Learning Letters	five assignments	7-12 pages	req. but not graded	no	N/A
Journal Entries	daily	20-50 pages	req. but not graded	yes	N/A
Reading Responses	approx. 10	five pages	yes	no	10% of overall grade
Peer Review	approx. 10	approx. 10	req. but not graded	no	N/A
Totals	40-50 (plus)	80 (plus)	NA	NA	80% (plus)

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Department of English

Course Syllabus
for
Creative Writing

ENGL 221, section 001
Spring 2005

Anthony Farrington
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Office: 140 Keith Hall
Phone: (724) 357-0165 (or [724] 357-2262 to leave a message)

Office Hours:
M&W 10:30-11:30, 2-3; F 10:30-11:30
& by appointment

Prerequisite:

ENGL 202 (or permission from the instructor).

Texts and Supplies:

Doubletakes: Pairs of Contemporary Short Stories. Ed. T. Coraghessan Boyle. Boston, MA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2004.

Hugo, Richard. *Triggering Town: Lectures and Essays on Poetry and Writing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992.

"Poetry Daily" *366 Poems from the World's Most Popular Poetry Website*. Eds. Diane Boller, Don Selby, and Chryss Yost. Naperville, Illinois: Sourcebooks, Inc., 2003.

E-Reserve Course Materials; see IUP library WebPage (password: **farengl221**)

Bring relevant textbook(s) with you to each class.

Journal: You will write in your journal often. A *bound* 10 X 8 college ruled "journal" would be ideal for this class. Bring your journal to class each day.

A 9X12 envelope for manuscript submission.

Note: Set aside approximately \$10 to \$12 for photocopies.

Course Description:

In addition to the current catalog description—where you are "expected to produce a substantial body of written work" for his course—Creative Writing (ENGL 221) involves a great deal of reading, discussing, and thinking. This course is not intellectual recess. Rather, it is a course that will rigorously investigate creative and critical thought processes. Michel Foucault wrote that Creative "Writing unfolds like a game that invariably goes beyond its own rules and transgresses its limits."¹ This will be a theme for ENGL 221.

In Creative Writing, we will question aesthetics, poetics, and narrative forms. This class will ask you to think about language and writing, to explore ideas of authorship and creativity, and to write using methods you may never have explored before. Creative Writing will expect you to reflect on the processes of creation, revision, and reading of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, etc.

¹ Michel Foucault. "What is an Author?" *The Foucault Reader*. Ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984) 102.

Further, this course will investigate contemporary aesthetic expectations—for example, the complex world of literary publication—and it will encourage you (and give you the tools) to submit your own manuscripts for publication.

Course Objectives. Students should demonstrate the ability to:

1. recognize conventions and innovations in prose and poetry through course readings in order to apply them in practice
2. produce, revise, and problematize multiple drafts of creative work in order to improve writing, editing, and critical skills
3. produce a polished portfolio of creative work with conscious attention to stylistic choices, such as audience, voice, structure, appropriate syntax, and grammar
4. give effective peer response to student works in progress
5. reflect on one's own learning and growth as a writer

Course Assignments:

Portfolio (with learning letter)	300 points
First Five Poems (with learning letter)	100 points
Second Five Poems (with learning letter)	100 points
First Prose Work (with learning letter)	100 points
Second Prose Work (with learning letter)	100 points
Participation	100 points
Reading Responses (for each assigned reading)	10 pts. each/@ 100 points
Miscellaneous (peer responses, in-class exercises, etc)	10 pts. each/@ 50 points
Drafts for each project (two or three each)	10 pts. each/@ 50 points
	<hr/>
approximate total:	1,000 points

General Requirements and Methods. Based upon readings, projects, and class lectures/discussions:

1. Each student will complete a professional-looking portfolio of prose and poetry. Your portfolio will contain one of the following:

2 works of prose and 10 poems

OR

1 work of prose and 15 poems

OR

3 works of prose and 5 poems

(where a work of prose is 5 pages minimum [fiction or nonfiction] and a poem is at least 15 lines)

(adjustments can be made with permission from the instructor)

This allows you to focus on either prose or poetry, but demands entries from each. (The course will be designed around the “2 works of prose and 10 poems” approach. Thus, during the course of this semester, you will turn in [at least] two works of prose and ten poem drafts.) Depending on time and class discussion and individual desire, the amount of workshoped material may vary for each student.

You should hold a conference with me after each draft has been graded and/or workshoped. At least two conferences are required. You may set up additional conferences if you wish. I expect (but do not require) to work one-on-one with you on subsequent prose and poem drafts. I consider “conferencing” to be part of your participation grade and indicative of “overall effort.”

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2. Each writing assignment must be accompanied by a learning letter. The portfolio requires a three to four page “reflective” essay, and the poetry and prose assignments require a one to two page essay. Basically, the learning letter requires you to reflect upon your own writing processes. These essays can be explicative, exploratory, or critical. We will talk about the learning letter in greater depth at a later date.
3. Each student will use *constructive* criticism to offer advice to colleagues (which in turn helps each reviewer to write better). This is an extremely important part of class. And it will be part of your class participation grade.
4. Each student will read aloud from his/her own works (selected journal entries, scenes of short stories, and/or poems).
5. Each student will prepare a “manuscript” packet to submit to a literary magazine, publisher, editor, or agent. You are not required, but encouraged, to mail the packet.
6. As a class, we will read and discuss contemporary literature and theories of prose, poetry, and aesthetics. This might include any relevant contemporary issue (or archaic issue) which may enhance or affect creative output.
7. Instructional strategies will include workshop instruction. Workshop discussions will rely heavily on the contribution of students. (I will detail the “rules” later.) There will be varied exercises designed by the instructor *and* the students. These exercises will vary from class to class, and can vary from individual to individual. (Student input is *strongly* encouraged.)

Grading:

1. Graded writing assignments include two works of prose, two packets of poems, and your final portfolio. The portfolio is worth 200 points; other writing assignments are worth 100 points each. You will be primarily graded on form, content, and originality. Form and content—which includes (but is not limited to) organization, focus, thematic development, scenic development, imagery, analytical depth, and style—accounts for the majority of each writing assignment grade. Originality is more difficult to quantify, but it can be done. We will discuss this topic at great length within the class. You should also understand that improvement *will likely* factor into your grade. Basically, if you work hard for the whole term, you will be rewarded. Note: Late assignments are usually penalized 10 points each weekday they are late. (Additional note: This is certainly not a course in basic grammar. I will expect grammatically and syntactically “clean” assignments. Otherwise, your grade will be negatively affected.) [And a final note: Submitted assignments without a learning letter will be penalized one full grade.]
2. Reading Responses: Expect an in-class, reading response after *each* assigned reading. The purpose of this is to show that you are critically engaged with the assigned readings. These responses will be 10 points apiece. Generally speaking, if you do not score 75% or higher on your total response score by the end of the semester, you should expect your final grade to drop a full grade. Students scoring less than 60% should not expect to pass the class. Note: Reading responses can *not* be made up. However, on occasion, I allow a student to take a reading response “early.” Additional note: Graded reading responses will be returned (in batches) only two or three times during the semester. Your own common sense should dictate how well you are performing.
3. Unless otherwise stated, all other assignments are worth 10 points apiece and will be graded as part of your total “reading response” score. For example, you will be expected to critically respond, in writing, to your colleagues’ creative work. These peer-editing comments will be evaluated (10 points each). Note: Late assignments receive half credit or less depending on how

late the assignment is.

4. Much of the class will be participation/discussion. This is an extremely important part of class. And it might retroactively affect your overall grade. If you are a non-participant, your grade will not be affected; but you cannot help your grade either. On the other hand, if you positively contribute to the class, your grade might be positively affected. The reverse is also true. (Note: Attendance is also considered a part of this grade. See my attendance policy under "Unexcused Absences" below.)

5. Final grades will be based primarily on the quality of submitted assignments (drafts, revisions, etc), reading responses, class participation (including attendance), written and spoken criticism, and overall course "effort." I give scores (from 1 to 10) on reading responses. And I tend to give letter-grades on written assignments. Unless otherwise indicated, a 'B+' is worth 87 points. A 'B' is worth 85 points. And a 'B-' is worth 82 points. The 'C's (77, 75, & 72 points) and 'D's (67, 65, & 62 points) are broken down similarly. Finally, an 'A' is worth 100 points, an 'A-' is worth 95 points, and an 'F' is worth anywhere from zero to 50 points, depending on factors determined by the instructor.

6. Only assignments and grades given by the instructor of record (or a replacement by the English Department chair) will be considered valid in figuring the final course grades.

Unexcused Absences and Disruptions:

I will take attendance every day. You are expected to be at *each* class. *All* absences (regardless of excuse) are absences and will be counted as such. (This includes absences caused by school functions such as field trips, special assignments, and athletic related activity). However, you have three free days (a week's worth of class) before absences affect your grade. You will be penalized ten points for each absence beyond three days. Your grade will drop a full grade if you miss six days. You will not pass this course if you miss more than three weeks of class (six days, nine class-hours) regardless of excuse.

Further, if you are more than ten minutes late without a valid excuse, you are automatically considered absent for that day. You are also considered absent if you leave class more than ten minutes early without prior approval. Periodic tardiness is considered a disruption, and you should expect to be dropped from the course, regardless of excuse.

An absence is no excuse for not doing homework. You are expected to get homework assignments from fellow colleagues, and you are expected to hand assignments in on time. You are also expected to be prepared for every class regardless of circumstance.

If you choose to disrupt class, I will ask you to leave. You will be counted absent for the entire class. If I ever again have to ask you to leave the class, you will be dismissed from class permanently.

Other Policies:

1. All written assignments and workshopped material are to be typed or word processed. No exceptions. Prose should be double spaced, left justified, and should use no "fancy" fonts. Also, I would like to see each page numbered. Poetry should be single spaced with a double space between stanzas.

2. Workshopped material must be handed to the class at least two days (and preferably five days) before it is to be workshopped. Students are financially and otherwise responsible for providing copies for the whole class. I will clarify this process further in class.

3. I am not responsible for misplaced assignments regardless of circumstances. I will be lenient about deadlines if the "loss" is my fault. But I do expect the assignment to be redone. It is wise to

make copies of all major assignments, or save them on computer disk.

Accommodations for students with disabilities:

IUP is committed to providing equal opportunities for all students. Students with disabilities who require special accommodations should discuss their needs with the Disability Support Services (a unit of the Advising and Testing Center). Further information may be obtained by calling 724-357-4067.

Academic Honesty:

Students are expected to conduct themselves in an honest and ethical manner, to do their own work, and not to misrepresent someone else's work or ideas as their own. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. This often means simply that students must properly attribute ideas to their sources, whether the sources are other students, class discussion, publications, or whatever. Students are encouraged to study together, discuss ideas, and comment on drafts of writing assignments for each other; but all assignments are finally the responsibility of the student handing them in. Academic dishonesty will be dealt with severely. In such a case, expect to be dropped from the course; further sanctions affecting your status at IUP may be taken.

Miscellaneous:

Each student is expected to be respectful to others in class.

I do not accept electronic work—computer disks, e-mail attachments, or the like. Further, because I cannot type, I like to keep my emailing to a minimum. Please keep this in mind.

Please don't bring guests to class.

Turn off all cellular phones and "noise"-inclined technology (including headphones, beeping watches, etc). As an added incentive, you may be docked 10 points each time your "technology" interrupts my class. (This includes text messaging.)

Fair Warning

Expect to work hard and be challenged. This course requires plenty of reading, frequent writing, class participation, and substantial questioning and re-thinking.

Additionally, we might occasionally read about and discuss sexuality and cultural boundaries (including political violence and religious extremes). Individual belief systems might be challenged.

This syllabus is subject to change at any point in the semester.

ENGL 221 Student Outcomes Assessment Matrix

Goals or Objectives	Assignments Assessed	Program Objective	NCTE Standards	INTASC Standards
1	Journal Reading responses Class Discussion	1a, 2c, 2e, 2f, 2g 1b, 2a, 2c, 2e, 2f, 2g 1b, 2a, 2c, 2e, 2f, 2g, 2h	2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 3.1.2, 3.2.2, 3.2.5, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.4.2 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 3.1.2., 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.1.8, 3.2.5, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.4.2 2.4, 2.7, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.1.8, 3.2.5, 3.3.3	1, 3, 4
2	Journal Creative Writing #1 (first 5 poems) *Creative Writing #2 (first prose work) Creative Writing #3 (second prose work) Creative Writing #4 (second 5 poems)	1a, 2c, 2e, 2f, 2g 2g	2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 3.1.2, 3.2.2, 3.2.5, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.4.2 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 3.1.2, 3.1.6, 3.1.7, 3.1.8, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.5, 3.4.1, 3.4.2	1, 3, 4
3	Final Portfolio	2g	2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 3.1.2, 3.1.6, 3.1.7, 3.1.8, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.5, 3.4.1, 3.4.2	1, 3, 4
4	Class Discussion Peer responses (written and in workshop)	1b, 2a, 2c, 2h 1b, 1g, 2c, 2e, 2f, 2g, 2h	2.1, 2.7, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.1.8, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.5, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.1.8, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.5, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
5	*Learning Letter End-of-semester learning letter Class Discussion	1g 1g 1b, 2a, 2h	2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 3.1.2, 3.1.8, 3.2.2, 3.2.5, 3.4.2 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 3.1.2, 3.1.8, 3.2.2, 3.2.5, 3.4.2 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.1.8, 3.2.2, 3.2.5	1, 3, 5

The two assignments I will collect are indicated above by asterisks (*):

1. End-of-semester learning letter
2. Sample of creative writing

Schedule for ENGL 221: Creative Writing (Spring 2005)

WEEK ONE

- Jan 10: course syllabus
- Jan 12: introductions to class.
- Jan 14: In-class reading &/or writing exercise.

WEEK TWO

- Jan 17: Martin Luther King Day—No classes
- Jan 19: “How to Become a Writer” (*fiction 462*).
- Jan 21: In-class reading &/or writing exercise.

WEEK THREE

- Jan 24: New poem **draft due**. Read poetry: Jan 2, Jan 3, Jan 4, Sept 13.
- Jan 26: In-class reading &/or writing exercise.
- Jan 28: New poem **draft due**. Read poetry: Jan 5, Jan 8, Jan 9, Sept 15. Bring a line of poetry from class text, read, & defend. In-class reading &/or writing exercise.

WEEK FOUR

- Jan 31: New poem **draft due**. In-class reading &/or writing exercise. Triggering Town assignment (TBA).
- Feb 2: New poem **draft due**. Read poetry: Jan 13, Jan 15, Jan 18, Sept 20.
- Feb 4: In-class reading &/or writing exercise.

WEEK FIVE

- Feb 7: **FIRST FIVE POEMS due**. In-class reading &/or writing exercise. Triggering Town assignment (TBA).
- Feb 9: Read poetry: Feb 18, Mar 9, April 27, Sept 29.
- Feb 11: *New Growth Arts Review*—practice workshop (poetry).

WEEK SIX

- Feb 14: In-class reading &/or writing exercise. Bring a poem from class text, read, & defend.
- Feb 16: Read poetry: June 28, Aug 10, Sept 1, Oct 4.
- Feb 18: In-class reading &/or writing exercise.

WEEK SEVEN

- Feb 21: “The Rememberer” (*fiction 38*).
- Feb 23: In-class reading &/or writing exercise.
- Feb 25: “The Things They Carried” (*fiction 478*).

WEEK EIGHT

- Feb 28: **PROSE #1 due**. Peer edit.
- Mar 2: In-class reading &/or writing exercise.
- Mar 4: A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings (*fiction 332*).

WEEK NINE

Mar 7: **Spring Break**

Mar 9: **Spring Break**

Mar 11: **Spring Break**

WEEK TEN

Mar 14: *New Growth Arts Review*—practice workshop (fiction).

Mar 16: *New Growth Arts Review*—practice workshop (fiction) continued.

Mar 18: In-class reading &/or writing exercise.

WEEK ELEVEN

Mar 21: *In the Cemetery Where Al Jolson Is Buried* (fiction 374).

Mar 23: **Dept. mini-conference. No classes. Course withdrawal deadline.**

Mar 25: *People Like That Are the Only People Here* (fiction 434).

WEEK TWELVE

Mar 28: **PROSE #2 due.** *Bullet In the Brain* (fiction 650). Talking PUBLICATIONS (intro).

Mar 30: Talking PUBLICATIONS continued. In-class reading &/or writing exercise.

Apr 1: New poem **draft due.** Workshop.

WEEK THIRTEEN

Apr 4: **MSS SUBMISSION LETTER due.** New poem **draft due.**

Apr 6: Workshop.

Apr 8: Workshop.

WEEK FOURTEEN

Apr 11: New poem **draft due.** Workshop.

Apr 13: **PUBLICATION LETTER & Packet due.** New poem **draft due.** Workshop.

Apr 15: Workshop.

WEEK FIFTEEN

Apr 18: **SECOND FIVE POEMS due.** Workshop.

Apr 20: Workshop.

Apr 22: Workshop.

WEEK SIXTEEN

Apr 25: Course wrap-up; **PORTFOLIO due.** Workshop.

FINAL EXAMS: We will have a final exam. It will take place in our usual classroom. Bring paper and pen/cil. (For the time of the exam, see the final exam schedule)

This syllabus is subject to change at any point in the semester.

SAMPLE of an IN-CLASS WRITING EXERCISE

This exercise revolves around loss and memory: The entire purpose of this exercise is to generate writing. To students: While I read the following, I want you to note the scope of lost things.

DAY SEVEN (from "The Ten Day Cat")

One reason I hate pets is that they always die. And, call me cowardly, I don't want my children to go through that. *I* don't want to go through it again. As a child, I lost all my pets. A few dogs ran away. Another was run over; I still see her blonde legs kicking in the heavy grass; I still hear my little cousin screaming. I still hear the single shot of the twenty-two pistol my uncle carried with him. "She was hurting," he said, which made me, even then, catch my breath. I've also lost three parakeets—a blue one who died from constipation in my hands—two parrots, and somewhere around eight cats. Generations of cats: Zax and Pumpty and especially Jinx, who finally died beneath our house at twelve-years-old while I was away at college. My father, who never cried, cried. My mother sent me a card. She couldn't bear to tell me over the phone. It read, *Honey, your father found Jinx under the house today. We buried her behind the garden.* There were also Trix and Hal and Mortimer, the glamour-puss. And there were Gilligan and Mary Ann, who bred more like rabbits than cats. I also lost a pet raccoon. He died in a box in the back seat of my parents' car. My mother said he died of loneliness. She was mad that I'd taken the raccoon away from its siblings, and she thought that this would teach me a lesson. It did.

I've lost a little of everything: billfolds, uncountable keys. My marbles. My temper. I regularly lose my initiative. I lost my three-year-old cousin in a cornfield for three days once. It was on the local news. There was an extravagant manhunt and ugly speculations. I've also lost one wife. One mother. And I've lost four grandparents. I've also lost eight *great* grandparents and sixteen *great-great* grandparents. Thirty-two. Sixty-four. Ad infinitum. I've lost two uncles. No aunts yet—though one has cancer and another was nearly killed in a car accident. She had to have a frontal lobotomy. She lost much of her brain. Officially, my family says, "She's never been the same." When I was a boy, my mother always told me to pray to Saint Anthony when I lost something. I was always praying back then. Then, my father's mother died from Alzheimer's on Christmas day. She had forgotten everyone and everything she had ever known. She had lost memory itself.

When we were married, Jenny, my wife, had a miscarriage. We said, "She lost her baby." She used to get sympathy for it. But it was really unremarkable. She had been leaving me again. But also coming back. When she returned the last time, it was with resolve. She realized, now, what she had been missing. "You," she said. And she

laughed. A few months later, she was pregnant again. We didn't lose that baby. I raised her by myself for almost her entire life. And when my daughter finally re-located the Persian cat on the seventh day, she terrorized it. She carried it everywhere, sometimes upside down. She fed it pretend food. She expected it to meow on cue. When she was done with it, my daughter didn't drop the kitten so much as thrust it down; *Go away now*. And the kitten walked off: "I am *done* with human pigs." Her tail quivered in the air. And I wouldn't say, officially, that my daughter has lost her mother. But it's damn close.

To students: Now, I want you to write a list of things you've lost. Don't worry about connections. Don't worry about finishing anything. Don't worry about spelling or grammar or making sense, just write ... I strongly urge you to take this lightly. Have fun. Consider a favorite toy you lost, a list of old friends. Consider the big losses, as well (but don't dwell on them). (WRITING TIME.)

Now, what I want you to do is to think about someone you've lost (by whatever means). I am not interested in background of any kind. There's plenty of time for that later. Feel free to ignore me. Others, I want you to listen to me when it serves your work and to ignore me otherwise. I'll interrupt you occasionally. Remember, don't worry about finishing. you can always come back to this. I hope you do.

—describe something unique about this person. His face. The smell of cologne at his neck. The voice of a little brother. The taste in your mouth.

—describe something unique about the setting. An open closet. A car running with its doors open.

—INTERLUDE: describe a favorite place where you felt safe as a child. Maybe somewhere quiet.

—If you could say something to this person (anything) what would it be. Keep it cryptic enough to be interesting.

—Describe a "leaving" ... gravel spitting? Your leaving him/her? The simple turning off of a light?

A THREE PART, TAKE-HOME WRITING ASSIGNMENT:

Part I. Look again at your list of lost *things*. Consider a minor item (or two) that surprised you. Underline this section. Jot down a note in the margin. At home, develop this "minor" loss.

Part II. Consider someone you've lost. A mother. A boyfriend. A high school friend with whom you were very close. Now, write notes about *that* story. Jot down a highlight or two. Strongly consider the themes that arise in common.

Part III. Ultimately, I want you to write an essay/story/what-have-you about memory and loss. But I'm not interested in any type of victimization or self justification. For the last part of this assignment, I want you to consider your own agency in these losses. Really, what I'm hoping for is a confession. An admission of guilt. Consider the following:

After she died, without explanation, my father burned my mother's diaries. I peeked at them before they mattered: *December six—Snowed. December seven—Bad roads. Boys can't come home.* There were a thousand pages. Then everything turned to fire.

Here are some things I've destroyed without sufficient reason: a marriage, a beautiful picture of a beautiful lover, the trust of an old friend who already distrusted the world enough, two luna moths in a mayonnaise jar for no reason whatsoever, a thick black snake that had just swallowed a mid-sized sunfish when I was ten and curious, things

that wouldn't last anyway.

To conclude: consider what you have destroyed. Consider that what you have lost is in great part your own doing. In the next few minutes, think about your own role in the losses of your life. Jot down some notes: "Here are some thing I've destroyed without sufficient reason." And think about the possibilities—in what you've written here today—for a larger essay.

I'll give you a few minutes to write and think about this, and then I'd like to talk about the process ...

—what did you learn (if anything)?

—what surprised you?

—volunteer to read aloud?

—fragmentation (as topic)

(Discussion)