

An example of an autobiographical essay/personal narrative

[Written by a student in the Labour Studies program, used with permission]

My name is Carlo, and I was born in June, 1958, in Italy. Our family, made up of my mother, father, and a brother, emigrated to Noranda, Quebec, when I was five years old. I encountered my first, but not last, taste of racism when kids in the neighbourhood laughed at my poor command of English. As fast as I could I learned not only English, but French as well. I became trilingual, speaking fluent French and English, as well as Italian. In the process, I made new friends from a lot of different cultural backgrounds.

We then moved to Toronto, Ontario, where my Dad got work in a rubber factory. From my earliest days, I knew our family had to struggle for every penny. My Mom baked pizza which my brother sold by the slice, door to door. I caddied at the local golf courses and brought home all the money that I made. I hated it when other kids made fun of working people, like garbage collectors, who cleaned up trash for a living.

When I was in grade six, I was ill in hospital for two months with a kidney infection, and it changed my whole life. I seriously took up playing guitar. I began to do photography, and joined the audiovisual club. I discovered I was artistic with an interest in graphic art, although I didn't always agree with the kind of art assignments the teacher gave us. However, I had no idea what to do after high school graduation. Thinking electronics was the wave of the future, I enrolled in and graduated with a diploma from George Brown College in Instrumentation Technology. I was hired on by Ontario Hydro as an apprentice.

Life was magical for a single guy in Toronto at this time. I made quite a bit of money. I enjoyed meeting and socializing with many new friends from a variety of different cultures. During this time, I met and married my wife, Valerie, a Registered Nurses' Assistant, and soon we had two wonderful children, a daughter, Carla and a son, Nicholas. With new family responsibilities, I felt there was not enough opportunity for advancement at work. My wife and I thought of places we would like to live such as the east coast. But there were no jobs there. We finally decided to move to northern B.C. when I was offered a job with a forestry company.

Because of the children's activities, I soon became involved in the community coaching children's hockey and soccer, and being a scout leader. At work, I joined the Pulp Mill Recreation Club, eventually becoming president. There were a lot of things that needed changing. I decided I wanted our company to start a wellness program and researched to prove to them that healthy employees tremendously reduced absenteeism and health costs to the company. I wanted the company to reward those who kept themselves fit and began to lobby for this through our union.

I soon became elected as union safety captain, then later became a shop steward. I began to run for executive positions rising through the ranks from financial secretary to environmental vice president, chief shop steward, first vice president, and finally becoming president, a position I held for two years.

In my trade, I constantly must upgrade my skills, so I took advantage of many learning opportunities to do so through the company. This helped our union come into the 21st century, because I insisted we buy computers and subscribe to e-mail, connecting our members to other locals throughout the province. I also edited the union newsletter, keeping the members informed of all aspects of the local's business. I used desktop publishing to produce our newsletter before anyone in Head Office knew what it was. Using my background in art and photography, I brought our publication from a crude photocopied rag to a sophisticated communication tool. For my efforts, I won two Canadian Association of Labour Media Awards, one for the best cartoon in

Autobiography And Essays

James Olney



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New Essays on Life Writing and the Body Christopher Stuart, Stephanie Todd, 2009-03-26 In light of materialist revisions of the Cartesian dual self and the increased recognition of memoir and autobiography as a crucial cultural index the physical body has emerged in the last twenty five years as an increasingly inescapable object of inquiry speculation and theory that intersects all of the various subgenres of life writing New Essays on Life Writing and the Body thus offers a timely original focused and yet appropriately interdisciplinary study of life writing This collection brings together new work by established authorities in autobiography such as Timothy Dow Adams G Thomas Couser Cynthia Huff and others along with essays by emerging scholars in the field Subjects range from new interpretations of well known autobiographies by Edith Wharton Gertrude Stein and Lucy Grealy as well as scholarly surveys of more recently defined subgenres such as the numerous New Woman autobiographies of the late 19th century adoption narratives and sibling memoirs of the mentally impaired Due to their wide interdisciplinary focus these essays will prove valuable not only to more traditional literary scholars interested in the classic literary autobiography but also to those in Women's Studies Ethnic and African American Studies as well as in emerging fields such as Disability Studies and Cognitive Studies

Writing the Self Kerstin W. Shands, Giulia Grillo Mikrut, Dipti R. Pattanaik, 2015-09-24 Recent discussions of autobiographical writing have led to a new terminology autographies autre biographies nouvelle autobiographie autofiction faction egolitterature circonfession and current approaches to autobiography and autofiction suggest that this literary field offers a renewal and even a revolution of life writing Exploring autobiographical expression from different perspectives the thirty essays in this book were presented at an international conference held at Sodertorn University in 2014 As the essays in this anthology suggest literary critics and authors alike are rethinking autobiographical writing and its definitions Through the variety of papers this anthology offers a thought provoking overview of different approaches to autobiography and autofiction

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