Words' Worth Project: *A Virtual Writer's Workshop*
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HOMECOMING

You can go home again. In fact, you should. Revisiting the past connects you to events and places that helped define you. These vignettes also provide story ideas that hold meaning. But first you have to remember them.

Memory is a magical tool. It may not always be accurate or immediately accessible. And recollections won't all be pleasant. The journey back can be therapeutic but for some it may best be made in the company of a counsellor. So travel into your past with caution. But do make the journey.

So where do you start? In your childhood neighbourhood. It was there you formed friendships, knew loss, fell in love, found purpose. Revisit the neighbourhood and you revisit your early life. Find that place and the memories will find you.

Not all things remembered need be recorded. Keep the gems, those moments that brought you laughter or a lesson. These resonate with readers of all ages because they're real. We relate to shared experiences. And we learn from them.

Must you stay true to your memories? No. When you write, choose what you use. Take a character, experience or feeling from your past and fit them into a memoir, short story or poem. When writing for children, your childhood will prove a great resource. Be bold. Let your life inspire you to write great things.

WORDS' WORTH PROJECT #6: MAP YOUR CHILDHOOD

Materials Needed: old photos from childhood; Internet access; sketch pad, writing paper & pen.

- Study photos from your childhood, paying particular attention to the old neighbourhood.
- Make a list of landmarks, the location of friends' homes, the direction to favourite haunts.
- Sketch images that come to you- rough drawings will do.
- Using the street view of a web-based map, locate the same neighbourhood & travel through it, visiting places you knew as a child.
- Note changes to the neighborhood.
- .Record your memories - include events, local characters, places that frightened you.
- .Now write a memoir entitled Neighbourhood Travels, detailing your daily childhood routine.

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