

Writing prompts from *susanlawson.net*

2009 WRITING PROMPTS

SEPTEMBER: I know I left it right here!

JULY/AUGUST: Tell me how to be perfect.

JUNE: ...the lake was still...

MAY: A couple goes into a [symphony, movie, play, etc.—you choose]. Afterward, without having spoken a word, they know their relationship is over. What happened during the performance?

APRIL: Write about having too little or too much.

MARCH: Write about a fateful turn in your life, or one you observed in someone else's life.

FEBRUARY: Write about a sound—a baby breathing, a teakettle, a hammer.

JANUARY: What have you lost?

2008 WRITING PROMPTS

DECEMBER: Choose the name of a Christmas carol.

Now, write a story with that title that has nothing to do with the religious holiday.

NOVEMBER: Write about an unfair punishment you endured.

OCTOBER: Write about something gentle—a sweet night, someone who forgives, a safe place.

SEPTEMBER: Jot down at least five things you fear. Then use those words to write about what you *love*.

AUGUST: Write about your first-ever day of school.

JULY: Remember a moment in your life that felt enchanted, like in a fairytale, and describe it. What enchanted you? How did the enchantment make you vulnerable? How were you freed?

JUNE: There was something I needed to ask of you...

MAY: Write either about getting a child to go to sleep or about waking a child up.

FEBRUARY: Write about a memory of camp or camping.

JANUARY: Write about some sort of reflection you remember—in a mirror, in someone's eyes, in water, etc.

2007 WRITING PROMPTS

NOVEMBER: You've done it again!

OCTOBER: The poet Muriel Rukeyser said, "For in what we cannot say to anyone, in our most secret conflicts, lie curled our inescapable poems." Write such a poem.

SEPTEMBER: In his poem Berkeley Eclogue, Robert

Hass wrote, "You gather sadness / from a childhood to make a gift of it." What is the sadness gathered from your childhood, to whom will you give it, and why?

AUGUST: Envision a small town and its inhabitants—your own "Lake Wobegon." Now describe the eccentric mailman who lives there and delivers everyone's mail.

JUNE: "I've always hated hospitals, dentists offices and jails." (from a New Yorker cartoon)

APRIL: Write about a good deed that backfired.

MARCH: I know I left it right here...

JANUARY: "And the body...What about the body?" (Jane Kenyon, in *Cages*)

2006 WRITING PROMPTS

DECEMBER: A mother and her adult daughter [or son] wash dishes together after the holiday meal. In the middle of scrubbing a pot, the mother turns to the child and says, "There's something I always wanted from you." Finish the story.

NOVEMBER: Write about pockets—something surprising you find in someone's, emptying pockets or filling them.

OCTOBER: What you will miss when you die?

SEPTEMBER: If you go deeply into one thing, you come to know everything else through it. What do you "go deeply into"—golf, music, cooking, painting? Write about what it has taught you about life in general, or about writing in particular.

AUGUST: Write about the one who got away.

JULY: What about you embarrasses your [kids, partner or parents]? OR, What about your [kids, partner or parents] embarrasses you?

JUNE: Remember back to your "first love." Write about what you learned, what you still carry with you from that person.

MAY: Ah, mama! You never told me...

FEBRUARY: What used to live under your bed?