

Words and Images to Remember When Times Feel Overwhelming

**This writing prompt would work well for secondary level students (6-12) and adults, but it could be modified for younger learners.*

Free-write: Make a list of four things you have seen, touched, or felt today. These could be small things like: the doorknob as you walk in and out of a room, the feel of the wood floor under your feet, or it could be something bigger, like the smell of rain or your favorite song.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Next, look back at your list and expand some of your favorite things to remember with as many sensory details as you can. Imagine that you are breaking down all the elements of your memory: How does it feel? What does it look like? How does it sound, smell, or taste?

Memory:			
Details:			

Take some time to read this example poem, and let it spur your curiosity and inspire your creativity.

Remember, by Joy Harjo – [Watch on Youtube](#)

Remember the sky that you were born under,
know each of the star's stories.

Remember the moon, know who she is.

Remember the sun's birth at dawn, that is the
strongest point of time. Remember sundown
and the giving away to night.

Remember your birth, how your mother struggled
to give you form and breath. You are evidence of
her life, and her mother's, and hers.

Remember your father. He is your life, also.

Remember the earth whose skin you are:
red earth, black earth, yellow earth, white earth
brown earth, we are earth.

Remember the plants, trees, animal life who all have their
tribes, their families, their histories, too. Talk to them,
listen to them. They are alive poems.

Remember the wind. Remember her voice. She knows the
origin of this universe.

Remember you are all people and all people
are you.

Remember you are this universe and this
universe is you.

Remember all is in motion, is growing, is you.

Remember language comes from this.

Remember the dance language is, that life is.

Remember.

Writing Prompt: Take your list of all the things you want to remember when you feel overwhelmed or anxious. You could think about places, people, ideas, languages, memories, thoughts. Don't be afraid to start small, maybe you want a particular meal to be remembered, or a feeling like a sip of hot cocoa in December, maybe you could start with a word that is important to you, or a sound like a friend's laugh. Use your pre-writing to guide you. Write a poem, song, or list of all the things you want to be remembered. Try to expand your ideas with images from the first writing you did and think about repeating a key word like Harjo does in the poem *Remember*.

- Notice sensory details (all the things you see, smell, touch, hear) and think of how to expand them in your poem.
- Notice the way that sounds and words repeat in your writing.
- Notice the shape of your writing on the page.

Feel free to create a final draft and decorate it as you like. Save this poem somewhere to help you stay centered when you feel overwhelmed. If you like, share your draft on social media, and connect with others using the hashtag **#SALMoment**.