

9-27-2012 Advanced Lesson: Memories

Your **memory** is your ability to remember things. *He had a good memory for faces.*
A **memory** is something that you remember about the past. *He had happy memories of his father.*

I have a cousin who writes poetry; her name is Wilda. Wilda often rocked her first grandchild, Florrie, in a gold recliner. Florrie died shortly before her seventh birthday. For Wilda, the chair brings back memories of Florrie. In the poem, the chair has human qualities. Underline the words in the poem that give the chair human qualities. (Lucas is one of Wilda's other grandchildren.)

The Gold Recliner

Does this gold recliner remember
how many times Florrie rested
her head on my shoulder,
how she giggled at funny sounds,
how I sang "Don't Fence Me In"
and "You Are My Sunshine"
as we rocked and fell into slumber?
Does the recliner know
she'd have been twenty
this year had she lived?
Now Lucas climbs between
the recliner's enfolding arms,
five-year-old hands grasping
this week's favorite superhero,
curls his tired body
into the golden lap to rest.
Only a couple years ago
Lucas let me hold him
as we read the same books
each afternoon, and finally one day
I could sing "You Are My Sunshine"
to this other grandchild,
after all those years
it had turned to dust in my throat.

~ Wilda Morris

What would it be like to have dust in your throat?
The idiom **turn to dust** means to become worthless. *Every promise they have made has turned to dust.*

There is something that Wilda could not do with her other grandchildren that she did with Florrie. What was it?

Here are the words to the song, “You Are My Sunshine”:

You are my sunshine, my only sunshine.
You make me happy when skies are gray.
You’ll never know, dear, how much I love you.
Please don’t take my sunshine away.

Did Wilda ever sing the song again? What do you think Wilda meant when she wrote, “after all those years it (the song) had turned to dust in my throat?”

If you would like, read the poem again for meaning and fluency.

Wilda’s poem inspired me to write about the chair I sat in to rock my babies. My memories are not as sad as Wilda’s. Below is an excerpt of what I wrote. The original writing is longer. (The underlined words are defined below.)

The Spit-up Chair

Our first baby spit up a lot. The pediatrician suggested we keep her upright for thirty minutes after a feeding. Putting her in the infant seat didn’t help, so I would sit in the chair, holding her upright for an additional thirty minutes after she nursed. Sometimes even that didn’t work. It seemed like I was always changing my clothes and wiping down the chair. It went on for months. We chose to sacrifice one chair in order to protect the rest of our furniture. Hence the name.

...Sitting in the chair, I daydreamed. I solved the problems of the world. I nodded off. I smelled sweet baby smells. I smelled spit-up. I felt baby heartbeats. I perfected my burping technique. I sang lullabies. I watched TV – sometimes watching history unfold.

The most memorable for me was January 28, 1986, when the Challenger Space shuttle broke apart after lift off. All day and all night the footage repeated on the television as I nursed, held, and rocked my two-month-old baby. ... It was a sad day to be sitting in the spit-up chair.

Spit-up: a small amount of vomit from a baby

Nurse: breastfeed

Sacrifice: the act of giving up something that you want to keep, especially in order to get or do something else or to help someone

Hence: for the reason just mentioned; for this reason

Daydream: pleasant thoughts about your life or future that you have while you are awake

Burp: to help (a baby) let out air from the stomach, especially by patting or rubbing the baby's back

Unfold: to happen as time passes; to be told or made known

Footage: scenes or action recorded on film or video

Many people find that a certain smell brings back a childhood memory (such as the smell of a food that your mother often cooked when you were young). Do certain smells remind you of someone or an event in your past?

What music brings back memories for you? Describe the memory.

Do you have a good memory or a bad memory? What kinds of things do you often forget?

Finish this sentence: I will never forget the day that I heard the news of _____.

Write about a piece of furniture or an object that holds memories for you. Share with the class.