



# Games for Creative Writing

## The Embarrassment Game

Writers may use their experience and observations in two ways: they may either write **about** them or they may write **from** them. **Writing about** is autobiographical and factual; it chronicles or describes experiences and observations. **Writing from** transforms the experiences and memories that are its base, reshaping and selecting them so as to create an imaginative experience rather than a factual record. *There is an imaginative truth accessible only through writing from in its freedom from the "facts."*

### The Game

Recall as intensely as you can the most embarrassing thing you ever did. Do **not** identify or describe the thing itself. The point of this game is not a literal account.

1. What physical sensations accompany your recollection? What is the overall feeling of your body? What is the quality of your breathing? What sensations are on your skin? What looseness or tension do you experience in recollection?
2. Make a list of these sensations. Then match each sensation with a color or texture. The matching should be done by free association: that is, do not try to decide which color would be most appropriate; instead, recall the sensation, then switch your attention to color (or texture) and use the first one that occurs to you.

You may want to use metaphor or simile in listing the colors and textures: for example, "a pale brown eggshell," or "crumpled aluminum foil."

3. Finally, associate the whole experience you are recalling with a specific piece of music (not a **type** of music, but an actual composition, ideally, a particular performance of that composition).
4. At this point you have assembled the material for a poem. Using your notes and anything else that may occur to you, draft a short poem. Your poem **should not** identify or describe the embarrassing incident; instead, the poem should express the feelings accompanying the experience in concrete and vivid imagery.