

Cultural Daily

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Writing Prompt: Family Photograph

Charity Hume · Wednesday, February 26th, 2014

Think of the photographs that have been taken of your family. Make a mental catalogue of these images in your mind, maybe a collection carefully pasted into a scrap book, an ancestor in a frame in the house, a Thanksgiving family photograph with everyone round the table, or a First Communion snapshot, or the images of your parents' wedding. Describe a few of these with a little nametag so that you can identify them. For example: Family group shot on Thanksgiving when Clare hurt her elbow, and wasn't smiling, but everyone else is saying "cheese." Or: "Mother's wedding portrait."



The Monet family in their garden at Argenteuil, (1864) by Claude Monet

For today, choose the one picture that most intrigues you. Write for twenty minutes about all the details that surround it: family stories, context, memories of the person it portrays, or the reason you never knew or met someone in the photograph. See where this journey takes you, by following tangents or associations in detail. Let the picture give you a way to focus. You will end up with another kind of portrait, one that explores the "back story" behind that photograph.

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