Taking a Creative Approach

It can be hard to imagine that creativity and academic writing can coexist in one paper. There are those times, however, when your professor might suggest you take a creative approach, or an autobiographical approach. And sometimes writers block happens and a creative approach can break that block.

1. Look at the prompt again. Ask yourself a couple questions.
   a. How can you personally relate to the question being asked?
   b. Is there a memory of a moment that comes to mind that could launch your discussion?

2. Remember that moment.
   a. Use ‘I’ statements. First person will help your reader feel as though she is experiencing that moment. What are you feeling in this moment?
   b. Setting.
      i. Help your reader locate herself. How old are you? Where are you?

3. Show us. Don’t tell us.
   a. Sight
      i. What can you see in that moment? What can’t you see? Who sees you?
   b. Hearing
      i. What kind of noises can you hear? Can you hear cars? Do they sound close or far away?
   c. Touch
      i. What is happening to your body? What are your hands touching? Water? Gravel? How does that feel?
   d. Taste
      i. Are you eating something?
   e. Smell
      i. What can you smell in that moment? Does it smell like your dad’s cooking? Do you smell trash? Do smell cleaning chemicals?

4. Transition out of ‘I’ statements. Go ‘big’ picture. What impact did this moment have on you and how is it relative to the theme being discussed in your paper?

Tips:

- Keep these creative intros to no more than a page long. You don’t want to get too caught up in the small details (even though they’re super cool and interesting to think about).
- Don’t describe EVERYTHING. Go back and edit. Pick out details that are not relative to your theme. If taste is not going to add anything, take it out.
- For the most part professors are cool with creative intros but maybe run the idea by your professor if you’re not very sure.