

Amy Krouse Rosenthal's *Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life* is the inspiration for the next section in your writer's notebook. In her book, Rosenthal adapted the format of the encyclopedia to record her memoir. Using mostly short entries organized from A to Z, Rosenthal captured moments, observations and emotions that make up her life.

In the same way, you will record your memoir moments. Below are examples from Amy Rosenthal, Kelly Gallagher and some of Mr. Gallagher's students.

Amy Rosenthal

My father-in-law informed me that my married name could produce two anagrams: Hearty Salmon. Nasty Armhole. I cannot tell you how much I love that. (Rosenthal, 37)

Anxious, Things That Make Me

Vending Machines. I have to double-, triple-check. Okay, it's A5 for the Bugles, right? Is that right? A5? I don't want to read the codes wrong and end up with the Flaming Hot Cheetos. But then, what a relief when the Bugles come tumbling down. Yes! I knew it was A5! (Rosenthal, 37)

Birthmark

I have a birthmark on my left arm. As a child I thought it looked like a bear, or Africa, depending on the angle. I would often draw an eye and a mouth on it; sometimes I would allow a friend to do so. To look at my birthmark was to remind myself that I am me. (Rosenthal, 41)

Head, My

I have a big head. Not metaphorically. Literally. Size 8. One-size-fits-all baseball caps do not fit me. You know your head is big when you go into a hat shop and they do not have a single hat that fits you. This has happened to me. I was once told that many leading actors have large heads, so maybe it's not a terrible feature. I Googled "actors with large heads," and the following celebrities allegedly have huge noggins:

Mel Gibson
Kirk Douglas
Kevin Costner
Warren Beatty
Philip Seymour Hoffman
Clive Owen

So, I am in good company (with the exception, perhaps, of Mel Gibson). (Gallagher, 27)

Parking Spot Greed

I am at the mall, and I want to park close to the entrance. I see that there are no available spots up front, but I don't let that deter me. I begin the slow creep forward in my car, hoping for that one shopper who is finished and on the way home to miraculously appear and make my day. It doesn't happen, of course, so I circle around and try again. After the third lap, I realize that if I had just parked in the back of the lot (where there were available spaces to begin with) I would be in the mall and halfway finished with my shopping by now. Once again, I am victimized by parking lot greed.

Addiction

Some people become addicted to alcohol or drugs. My favorite game, *Modern Warfare 2*, is my addiction. Once I start playing it I cannot stop. There is a surprising twist at the end, and then the whole cycle starts again. I need to stop the madness! (Yadira)

Arm, Dead

Taking turns with my brother, Anthony. He takes a punch. I take a punch. Having a chance to back out after his punch, I refuse. We are equal in strength and size. My arm will be sore in the morning. (Stephanie)

Bigfoot

“I think it was you who left the footprints in the forest,” my brother says. Okay, I have big feet. So what? So does Taylor Swift. It is hard to find a cute shoe that fits. Why can’t I have normal-sized feet? I wish they would stop growing! (Alondra)

Sweeping

It is pretty much the hardest method of guitar playing known. Practicing it is a hassle, and I never seem to get better. I practice every day – it’s the only way – but I wish it wasn’t. (Alan)

Gallagher, Kelly. *Write Like This*. Portland: Stenhouse Publishers, 2011.

Rosenthal, Amy Krouse. *Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life*. New York: Broadway Books, 2005.