Notebook Exercises from “Writing Your Life” by Lou Willett Stanek, PhD

Make a list of—

1. Words that make you laugh.
2. Words that make you cry.
3. Words like rush or rumble whose sound implies action.
4. Sad words.
5. Frightening words.
6. Words that suggest elegance.
7. Words that suggest beauty.
8. The most memorable people you have known.
9. Song titles popular when you were young.
10. Movies or stars that were your favorites as a teenager.
11. All the automobile accidents you have endured.
12. Shades of nail polish and lipstick you’ve worn.
13. Products you only wish you could still buy.
14. Vacations—the best and the worst.
15. Your annual salaries that you remember.
16. Things that still shock you.
17. Ways your ancestors earned a living.

Describe—

1. The different places your mail has been delivered.
2. The best real estate investment you ever made.
3. The most magnificent maneuver you’ve ever seen made on a playing field.
4. A friend or family member’s unusual habits or gestures.
5. A strange costume a friend or family member wears.
6. The screwiest defense anyone ever offered you for bad behavior.
7. Your case of unrequited love.

Write down interesting, character-revealing, or wacky conversations you’ve overheard.

What would be an interesting comparison for the following?

1. Your hungry cat
2. Your closet
3. Your son’s closet
4. Your stockbroker’s sales pitch
5. The basement in your house
6. The sound of your boss’s angry voice
7. Telemarketing a dinnertime
8. The lonely woman in the park.
9. The cousin you can’t stand
10. The man/woman you didn’t marry.
11. A backache
12. Breaking waves
13. An asthma or allergy attack