Veterans’ Writing Group  
November 2011 Writing Prompts

1) Remembering

You Reading This, Be Ready

Starting here, what do you want to remember?  
How sunlight creeps along a shining floor?  
What scent of old wood hovers, what softened  
sound from outside fills the air?

Will you ever bring a better gift for the world  
than the breathing respect that you carry  
wherever you go right now? Are you waiting  
for time to show you some better thoughts?

When you turn around, starting here, lift this  
new glimpse that you found; carry into evening  
all that you want from this day. This interval you spent  
reading or hearing this, keep it for life -

What can anyone give you greater than now,  
starting here, right in this room, when you turn around?

~ William Stafford ~

Using this poem as a prompt, think about what you want to remember and what you don’t  
want to remember or what you feel you can’t remember. Use Stafford’s opening lines  
to get yourself going by taking up one or more of these questions.

Starting here, what do I want to remember?  
Starting here, what do I not want to remember?  
Starting here, what do I feel I cannot remember?

Write for thirty minutes in response to these questions. See where this takes you.

2) Ivy will share with us a piece she wrote about military personnel going AWOL and  
facing charges. When you became part of the military, what thoughts and associations  
did you have about going AWOL? What stories do you have to share about you or those  
you know going AWOL for any length of time?