Qualities of Memoirs

* The voice is first person singular: I, not we, one, or you.
* The memoirist is the main character, the someone for readers to be with in the story.
* The writer's thoughts and feelings, reactions, and reflections are revealed.
* There's enough context - background information –context is woven in.
* A reader can envision (see) the story.
* A reader can imagine the setting - where and when the event is taking place.
* A reader can imagine the relationships among the characters.
* The dialogue sounds like these people talking, both what they say and how they say it: "Boy, you're gonna be sorry," versus, "You will be sorry."
* There isn't unnecessary information. The writer leaves out what the reader doesn't need to know.
* The lead (introduction) invites the reader into the world of the memory.
* The pace is slowed down so readers can enter the story and live it, moment to moment.
* The conclusion is deliberate: it represents a writer's decision about how to leave his or her readers.
* The writer is telling the truth.
* The writer tells details that fit with the memory and the theme.
* The memoir sounds and feels like literature, not reporting.
* A reader learns something about LIFE by reading about a life.
* There is a reason for the memoir. A discovery of some significance in the memory.
* Use similes and metaphors! Use vivid verbs and descriptive adjectives!