"Summer Day Dreams"

The Student:
Senior in regular English class at Glasgow High School.

The Teacher:
Bonnie Meyer, English teacher grades 9-12, Glasgow High School. This year I'm teaching two levels of seniors (AP and regular) and two levels of sophomores (regular and at-risk). Writing Project 12, 1997.

The Assignment:
Students and I go through a relaxation exercise. Then with lights out and eyes closed, they listen as I prompt them to consider various memories, including specific prompts to recall each of the senses. Next, they record as many recollections as possible in brainstorming. Then we look at models of poems with various structures, including a couple I have written. Then we all draft, and finally Revise, Revise, Revise. This includes peer and teacher conferences with special emphasis on strategies of poetry–precise language and line breaks.

The Text:

Summer Day Dreams
Childhood friendships rekindle
When my swing set pal and I
Sit dangling our feet over our old swimming hole,
Laughing at memories of running, jumping, and rolling through
Open pastures and meadows,
Engulfed in wild flowers.
Sitting here now,
I see my nephew's smile illuminate his face as
The warm summer breeze passes through his silk blond hair.
After a moment's pause I think to the future,
Hoping for family-filled picnics,
Sitting in the sunflower-scented air,
Making fairy tale creatures in the clouds.
Coming back to the present,
I realize my future is an unopened gift,
My present is a winding road,
My past is a summer's daydream.

Student Commentary: What about this assignment helped me learn to write.
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It helped me learn to write more with the way that we started writing. We started out by relaxing and thinking about what has happened in our life. That helped out because you get more details and information out of your thoughts.

Teacher Commentary: What I do to help students learn writing.
Use models to help students see possibilities and that there is not one "right way" to write. I write with them and share my problems, sometimes taking guidance from them. I try to value their successes and help them see weaknesses to make work more effective.