



ATTENTION AND WRITING (with guest Jeff Dolven) 3 April 2026

2026-04-03 14:19:43 From Ingrid Jacobsen to Everyone:
<https://www.schoolofattention.org/art-programs>

2026-04-03 14:19:53 From Ingrid Jacobsen to Everyone:
<https://www.schoolofattention.org/events>

2026-04-03 14:21:55 From Ingrid Jacobsen to Everyone:
<https://www.schoolofattention.org/study-corps>

2026-04-03 14:24:30 From Ingrid Jacobsen to Everyone:
We also got a nod from Austin Kleon on his newsletter (steal like an artist guy)

2026-04-03 14:24:45 From Donica to Everyone:
Replying to "We also got a nod from Austin Kleon on his newslet...":
very cool!

2026-04-03 14:25:51 From Phillip Bimstein to Everyone:
Wonderful! could you send us a link (or the doc itself) for the Digital Sanctuary Guidelines?

2026-04-03 14:27:36 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AVkvyffUuoRO1CXigjpn3_Xi_HT8AygIJnvRHxCUxo0/edit?usp=sharing

2026-04-03 14:28:52 From David Landes to Everyone:
we should add something about the impeccable, humane pacing of these meetings

2026-04-03 14:38:27 From Jennifer Zaccara to Everyone:
I am in my Querencia here in Cohasset, MA, and I feel grateful

2026-04-03 14:38:40 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:
"The light through the hydrangea's leaves makes green stained glass."
>
"Many faces of the flower catch the day's glow — a verdant cathedral."

How to replace “leaves”?? I loved attending to my room as if to a cathedral...

2026-04-03 14:38:47 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

I felt, in the final phase, a strong sense that my re-written sentence amounted to a kind of “overtopping” or “rejoinder” to the first one...

2026-04-03 14:38:49 From Alex Davis (He/Him) to Everyone:

My perception of time shifted as the tasks developed.

2026-04-03 14:39:06 From Raphaële Jeune to Everyone:

1/ The desk is an accumulation of layers of possible developments - 2/ There is an ocean of words, images, threads of thoughts that flows before my eyes that I can just pick in to broaden my world

2026-04-03 14:39:06 From Jonathan Gershberg to Everyone:

My first sentence captured what I saw. The second sentence captured what I smelled/tasted. I'm curious why it wasn't the other way around!

2026-04-03 14:39:10 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

(Which was not at all my intention....)

2026-04-03 14:39:14 From Molly Zapp to Everyone:

Thank you for this beautiful practice. I'm in a room under renovations, which has felt stressful and chaotic. In attending more closely, I was able to notice how I am surrounded by objects connected to people I love, and to accept the changing nature, spaces of peace, and beauty amidst the messiness.

2026-04-03 14:39:15 From Molly E Vasich to Everyone:

I noticed that my first sentence was conceptual/grounded in invitation and my second sentence was physical/sensory and grounded in an action!

2026-04-03 14:39:20 From MaKshya (muh-kay-shuh -- all pronouns) to Everyone:

“Life in here seems to lean to the east. I see which way wind goes- light forces so much toward the light.” Going to quietly slip out to catch a train but I will see you all next month 😊

2026-04-03 14:39:33 From Phillip Bimstein to Everyone:

attention and interest captured by sky and sunshine convergence right above me here in my room. :-)

2026-04-03 14:39:42 From David Landes to Everyone:

both sentences were differently audacious

2026-04-03 14:39:45 From Ren to Everyone:

the second sentence made the first one look like it took place in a fantasy novel

2026-04-03 14:39:47 From Jessica Basile to Everyone:

I am surprised by how much I like the space I am in, but also surprised at that surprise. My body knows how much I like it.

2026-04-03 14:39:58 From Larry Berger to Everyone:

She once sat with open arms in this black arm chair .
Learning to set her sitting down down.

(Even the same words, displaced thirty seconds, were changed. Changing the words seemed just a continuation of that.)

2026-04-03 14:40:02 From Eleanor (she/her) to Everyone:

First I noticed bright yellow, and that quickly became the focus of my attention - I noticed more pops of this brightness in the space, which quickly re/shaped form, dis/order, line... rewording it and then re-attending allowed me to then notice more the words in the space. I tried to even do away with the word "and" in the second sentence, which ultimately changed what I was originally aiming to convey, but captured something else wonderful and beautiful

2026-04-03 14:40:06 From Yves Citton to Everyone:

This protocol allowed me to look at plants around me as open books, and to books as budding plants ready to blossom -- all leaves and pages (feuilles) in different stages of their life...

2026-04-03 14:40:14 From Brian Rosen to Everyone:

The world gets crystalized into a thought expressed in language. And in step 4 future perception is imbued with that idea.

2026-04-03 14:40:15 From Jac Mullen to Everyone:

I had trouble leaving latent space, as it were

the game is the thing

fan's breeze on my arm

blade-spinner's routing of air to exposed appendages

rotary-cutter's de-perspiring flow upon limb

motorized knife-rotator routes cool gusts whither shirt doesn't extend

2026-04-03 14:40:22 From Henry Kramer to Everyone:

Green, but also blue below the green, and then more green below the blue, and too HOT

2026-04-03 14:40:27 From Ingrid Jacobsen to Everyone:

Sentences - stuff in piles —> things arranged through use —> utility for experience, past & present

(I've been sick all week, space shows that, but I felt a shift in perspective due to the shift in language and now am charmed by all the implications of little bits and bobs in disarray)

2026-04-03 14:40:28 From Donica to Everyone:

A beautiful exercise! I'm about to move and my relationship to what's around me shifted from anxiety and evaluation to a simplified "choosing what to keep". Wow.

2026-04-03 14:40:31 From Melissa (she/her) to Everyone:

I loved the exercise of re-writing the same sentence using different words. I had to think about not just synonyms but a different meaning to the experience that still emanated from the original noticing

2026-04-03 14:40:37 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

Replying to "'Life in here seems to lean to the east. I see whi...":

See you in May!

2026-04-03 14:40:57 From Ingrid Jacobsen to Everyone:

<https://friendsofattention.org/>

2026-04-03 14:41:03 From Sanjay Varma (Seattle) to Everyone:

My first sentence was descriptive, my second was poetic. When I looked around my room afterwards, I was able to let the objects influence me more deeply.

2026-04-03 14:41:05 From Elisa Tamarkin to Everyone:

Staring at the light on the balcony dilated my eyes, so now I'm seeing green spots, and a fly came in, interposing between the light and me, which is a Dickinson poem

2026-04-03 14:41:11 From Jac Mullen to Everyone:

Thanks Eleanor!

2026-04-03 14:42:48 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

Bakhtin: <https://www.schoolofattention.org/sidewalk-study-archive/bakhtin-in-crown-heights>

Audre Lorde: <https://www.schoolofattention.org/sidewalk-study-archive/lorde-in-bushwick>



2026-04-03 14:49:24 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

Jac's Substack: <https://jacmullen.substack.com/> !

2026-04-03 14:50:53 From Jeff Dolven to Everyone:

The still explosions on the rocks,
the lichens, grow
by spreading, gray, concentric shocks.

2026-04-03 14:58:14 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

How did your writing change your seeing, and how did your seeing change your writing?

2026-04-03 14:59:17 From Jac Mullen to Everyone:

Thank you Jeff! That was lovely

2026-04-03 14:59:31 From Eleanor (she/her) to Everyone:

Thank you so much Jeff that was fantastic, so much to loop back to!

2026-04-03 15:00:09 From David Landes to Everyone:

where can I get the 60min pre-sleep version of Jeff talking?

2026-04-03 15:00:20 From David Landes to Everyone:

dream-inducing...

2026-04-03 15:11:24 From Larry A Berger to Everyone:

Yves: plants in room, books, saw continuity as books a plants, and plants as books that open, words similar in French. Then saw book as plant in the way I saw things.

Ondra. Like Whitman and leaves of grass. Was chaotic, son was playing. So couldn't do exercise.

Ren – saw envelope for birthday. The relation changed after writing the sentence

2026-04-03 15:11:56 From Ingrid Jacobsen to Everyone:

Eleanor: Exercise was a helpful reframe

Alyssa - takes a second to parse the second part...first sentence recorded an emotional relationship, between the two she changed her appraisal of the fan and reflected on her relationship to the objects

Writing forced me to acknowledge what I was feeling was not a fact

Jac: How far can you rephrase something like a fan to still be able to communicate it in different languages?

Looping of attention - applying more and it resolves or refracts

Eleanor: The color yellow drew in line, shape, order - color as an organizing principle of the space.

2026-04-03 15:12:23 From Molly E Vasich to Everyone:

"the longer that you sit with something, the more it can change, because you are sitting still..."

"-I am a slow writer, there's an interrelationship between feeling/experiencing and naming. there is a looping."

"-making the effort to write something, immediately changes the experience"

"-rewrite was more spiritual, lighting of heart."

2026-04-03 15:12:26 From Larry A Berger to Everyone:

book: Linguistic bodies, shows deep relation between language and the body, which in turn affects attention

2026-04-03 15:12:28 From Sanjay Varma (Seattle) to Everyone:

Sanjay:

something extraordinary is always happening around me. writing forces me to pick out details. The second sentence was more like poetry. Afterwards, I felt open to be influenced by the objects

Carolyn:

Tends to write cerebrally, from the interiority of consciousness. Being forced to write starting from observation was different.

The path by which objects come into her space. Move from materiality of description (literal) towards the essence of what she is seeing (figurative).

Brian:

Noticed which objects are designed to stay the same, versus those which are designed to change or be moved and altered. Greater awareness of whether an object is static, or changeable.

Jennifer:

Looking out 2 kitchen windows. Seeing the sea, and a craggy rock. Remembering her children who sat on the rocks, rabbits, garden statues. Always in the moment and surrounded by a cape of vibrant memories which can be drawn around her in peace.

2026-04-03 15:12:37 From Elisa Tamarkin to Everyone:

Concentric shocks

2026-04-03 15:12:56 From Donica to Everyone:

Jonathan: change in perception between thinking and writing — realized there was more information/stimulus on second attending vs. the "flatness" of initial perception

Melissa: rewiring with different words was so expansive, asking more of the brain. On her experience of teaching writing: students hate revision! But it can be so generative.

Donica: the power of the revision — the LOOPS — to interrogate: is that really what I think, how I want to express it?

Henry: noticed that when seeing, he's noticing things that are physically hard to describe — not knowing the right word. Reaching for technical descriptions...but is that the writing he wants to be doing?

Lane: how often in revisions are we asking what made us write that in the first place? Feeling bound by the text on the page. As opposed to reattending, finding more to work with...

Melissa: revision as attending to own mind: what did I mean when I wrote that?

2026-04-03 15:14:54 From Molly E Vasich to Everyone:

Elisa Tamarkin:

Trying to focus on the writing while revising was challenging because elisa was distracted by what she was observing
change can come when we are staying still. change grows and evolves.

Molly Vasich:

-I am a slow writer, there's an interrelationship between feeling/experiencing and naming. there is a looping.

Philip Bimstein:

-making the effort to write something, immediately changes the experience
-looking again, the colors opened up differently dimensionally.

Molly Zapp:

-rewrite was more spiritual, lighting of heart.
-the attending first helped me to see objects connected to people I love and things that are useful amid the mess

Elisa:

-first interval was too short- i was already thinking about clauses and syntax.

Molly Z:

-rewrite was more spiritual, lighting of heart.

Philip:

-songwriter, the happy and sad of version- two different things of saying musically the same things.

2026-04-03 15:15:05 From David Landes to Everyone:

"I don't know what I'm thinking until I write to find what it was I was THINKING BEFORE I KNEW WHAT I WAS THINKING"

2026-04-03 15:15:29 From David Landes to Everyone:

Seeing involves the HAPTIC aspect of writing: seeing is haptic, resonance between senses shapes seeing cross-modally.

Thoughts are PHYSICALLY FELT.

But it's never fulfilled fully as touch as much as words and vision creates its forms of "contact"

Sergio is a songwriter, where words are operating differently than just "writing" and more joyously

Writing as rational analysis tends to de-corporealize, de-temporalize

2026-04-03 15:18:32 From Donica to Everyone:

Thank you SO much Jeff, Eleanor, and all

2026-04-03 15:18:46 From Eleanor (she/her) to Everyone:

Thank you everyone so much!!

2026-04-03 15:18:46 From Jonathan Gershberg to Everyone:

Thank you, Jeff!

2026-04-03 15:18:47 From Lindsey Tramuta to Everyone:

Thank you, Jeff!

2026-04-03 15:18:51 From Eleanor (she/her) to Everyone:

Thank you Jeff!!!

2026-04-03 15:18:58 From Yves Citton to Everyone:
Thank you, Jeff!