The Noticing Journal

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In October 2001, a month after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center in the United States, a British journalist sat in his hotel room at two o'clock in the morning watching the television. The program was, or had been, a BBC report on the second night of bombings of Kabul in Afghanistan by British and US forces. But the journalist was just watching the television *itself*: the image had frozen, the reporter's head stilled in mid-sentence for more than ten minutes, reasons unknown (Smith, *Frozen War*).

After what we take must have been a few flummoxed minutes, the journalist, John Smith, starts filming his frozen television, speculating on why the TV had frozen and then following aloud the train of his thoughts: who is this newscaster? What must he be thinking about, there in the BBC studios on the eve of war? What happened at the BBC? If this image is frozen, how do we know this man is still

alive? What are the people in Kabul experiencing right now? What violence might have sent the BBC offline, and how do we begin to imagine that potential violence in comparison to the massacre certainly happening in Afghanistan? What unimaginable costs of war hide behind this implacable image, this unreadable expression, this frozen face?

As he talks and records—the little film is about 11 minutes long—he lets the camera drift around the room. Released by the technical glitch (or index of catastrophe) from the narrative arc of the broadcast, the promise of sensational revelations, or even of learning anything new at all, Smith starts to look at his hotel room. We see him stare at the illuminated gap under his door, the dim undecorated walls, the plug that connects the television to its electrical outlet, and, again and again, the folding stand meant to hold a suitcase at roughly waist height and keep one's belongings off of the floor.

As he watches the frozen television, and sometimes the luggage rack, John Smith considers the brutality of the strikes on Kabul, the privilege and moral outrage of watching war unfold through a television screen, the unreadable face of the newscaster standing in as a figure for overseas violence (remote, mediated, curated), and the banal and terrible co-incidence of wondering idly why the TV is frozen, how long it will be frozen, and whether or not the newscaster on the screen is dead.

But he also can't leave that piece of furniture alone. It bothers him. "What a useless fucking bit of furniture," he says over and over again in the same unsettlingly muted tone he's used throughout. "What a waste of time," he says.

"Haven't they got anything better to do?"

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There is much to say about this 11-minute film, most of which will fall beyond the scope of this essay. It is an essay film; it is ekphrastic: these are two things that interest me a great deal in my current work.[1] As an ersatz and ironized "portrait essay film," it does not offer us the cinematic biopic of a heroic individual in which, as André Bazin writes, "biography is literally identical with History and shares the absoluteness of History," but instead forces us to confront the problem of the face of war, the face of suffering that cannot be represented *except* as catachresis (104). This is the face, as Judith Butler suggests, as a "series of displacements": a face that is a tensed shoulder that is an arched back that is an agonized cry that is, finally, agony itself—offscreen (133). As an essay film it also puts pressure, as Tim Corrigan writes, on our "assumptions about documentary objectivity, narrative epistemology, and authorial expressivity," as well as the possibility of self-articulation in a public sphere: the talking head is frozen; the bombs are dropping; the filmmaker wonders if the only thing behind that face at 1:41 a.m. on October 8, 2001, is war itself (6). This eleven-minute film

sustains all of those things, and they are worth discussing.

But not right now. I'm interested in something else this film does, which is to dramatize a mode of attention, a way of noticing, a way, we might say, of reading. I'm interested in John Smith's interest in that bit of furniture: the mote in his eye as he tries to understand the face of war, disaster, sanitized media environments, 24-hour news cycles, British newscasters describing the mass murder of people thousands of miles away. I started noticing his noticing during the long academic year of 2020 and 2021—during Covid. I was still teaching remotely, the vaccine not yet available to most of us. My students and I looked at each other in our little boxes while the pandemic stalked terribly and capriciously around us; sometimes we had to look away.

We talked about that periodically, in a kind of shared wry self-consciousness that was probably actually grief and fear: we watched weird stuff. We noticed little things. We looked around our own rooms a lot because we needed to look away from our screens. We stared at each other's faces and wondered, and then gazed off at a potted plant for a while. Sometimes we looked at each other's backgrounds, trying not to be invasive or impertinent, but noticing details from week to week—a string of lights, a new wrinkle in the cloth hung for privacy, the roommate or the cat who sometimes drifted through. The students turned off their videos and so I looked at the spots on my laptop screen, studied the lines and curves of the letters in their names. John Smith watched the diffident square of his television two decades ago, but in 2020 so many of us had those little squares: the world outside of our screens so full of suffering and loss and there we were looking with mild contempt at our luggage stands.

There is something to learn from John Smith's fascination with the luggage stand, something about reading I suddenly needed urgently to teach my students so that none of us let the world disappear while we were in isolation, locked down, quarantined. That is what I want to consider here: the

pedagogy, we might call it, of the luggage rack. My students and I needed to think about reading, watching, and listening differently, or rather, we needed to capture something about the modes of attention we cultivated—by accident, in desperation, just to get by—in the pandemic and hold onto it. It feels paltry and ridiculous to say that *noticing a luggage stand* is the best way we can protest a futile war, survive a pandemic, attend to the suffering of others, or heal after a catastrophe, but it has been said before. And I think what I learned during those years was that it needed to be said again, to my students, right then.

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Viktor Shklovsky's 1917 "Art as Device," a foundational document in the Russian Formalist movement and the opening chapter to his 1925 *Theory of Prose*, argues that one of the things literature, and in particular novels, can do, is mobilize a set of devices that force the reader out of their habituated reading practices to look at the world differently (1-14). Too much of reading, Shklovsky suggests, has assumed we can look *through* literary images to the familiar cluster of meanings they index and organize. But certain literary devices unsettle those reading habits and force us to take another look *at* the world, to stare directly at the bits of the world we've buried so deep in our habits of perception that we can't see them anymore. Tucked handily away, those unnoticed bits of the world can carry on with whatever harmless or insidious work they were at and we can ignore them. Some literary devices refuse that easy dismissal and say "no, no—read that again and pay attention to it." A horse in Tolstoy, for example, talks. And when that horse tells us that he cannot understand why everyone around him refers to horses in the possessive—my horse, his horse, their horses—when horses are themselves agential beings, Shklovsky points out that the *horse* (or Tolstoy, depending on your perspective) is showing us we've taken some things about our reading for granted: pronouns,

for example, possessives, the apostrophe *s* (7). Looking again at how we use pronouns returns us to what we should be asking about private property, ownership, and mastery: if we call something ours—pens, candy bars, lovers, workers—is it no longer its own? These devices, to quote Sara Ahmed, allow us to see literature, language, and the world again "as if for the first time," to see it "as having been made," and, accordingly, as able to be made differently (180).

Habituated reading habits, is Shklovsky's point, are dangerous. "And so," he writes, "held accountable for nothing, life fades into nothingness. Automatization eats away at things, at clothes, at furniture, at our wives, and at our fear of war" (5). If what Shklovsky says is true, that there is an unbroken line between no longer noticing our socks or our coffee tables and no longer noticing the unceasing acts of violence we carry on in the name of patriotism or possession, maybe it isn't too much to say that John Smith's obsession with the luggage rack is not an eccentricity but instead a vital act of noticing, of reading the room, or rather *re*reading the room.

Perhaps, I thought, in January of 2021 as we started our third semester of zoom school, there was also an unbroken line to be traced between the quirks of our noticing habits in the pandemic and a renewed attention to the urgency of reading, or at least a chance to impress upon my students the relationship between the foreshortened and artificial perspective of lockdown and the reading practices they might cultivate in response. Although he never says as much, John Smith's seemingly-perverse dilation on the luggage stand forces us to read it along with him, to consider the relationship between floors, vermin, hygiene, mass produced furniture, hotel rooms, travel, and easy movement between locations, between the excesses and conveniences of capital and the neo-Imperial wars playing out in the Middle East. So, in my syllabus for the seminar on the essay, The Essay as Resistance, that I was co-teaching with a colleague, I created

an assignment for something I called a "noticing journal" and shared it with her; she agreed to try it. I asked our students to write in these virtual journals weekly and post their entries on our LMS discussion board.

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The prompt, and the premise, were simple: we were all far apart, confined to our small zoom boxes, to our rooms and homes, and so we were already in a position to experience what Shklovsky calls *ostranit*, translated by Benjamin Sher to "enstrangement," a positive form of its more familiar cognate, *otstranit* in the Russian, estrangement in English. *En*strangement captures, for Sher, Shklovsky's sense that we want to enter into this uneasy and revealing relationship with art and language, rather than being forced out and experiencing the defamiliarization he seeks from a position of alienation and distance. "Defamiliarization is dead wrong!" exclaims Sher: this is not a transition from the known to the unknown but from, Sher underscores, the "economy" of ease in our "cognitive knowing" to the thicker, more "complicated" knowing that expands our perceptual processes (Shklovsky xix). I would add here that Sher's translational precision is not insignificant for how we teach our students to experience this—as readers and writers, yes, but also as new college students, a diverse group of writers who may or may not have felt variously alienated from the codes they are expected to master. I say that partly as an aside, but I think it really matters for us as teachers, and especially teachers of writing: pushing students to experience their own language as alien and strange is the wrong way to think about this. Rather, I want students to *see*, to feel, to touch, to experience and re-experience the languages they gather around themselves.

But to pick up the thread again: I wanted this kind of noticing for my students: the attention that comes from being brought close to something but at unexpected angles or for unexpected reasons. In their Noticing Journals students

did two things. First, they had to pay attention to the world around them—not TV, not social media, and not the class itself, but the physical, material world in which they moved and lived—and notice something about it. Then, they had to write about that thing with as much attention and care as they could summon. Anything, I suggested: an insect, or the hum of the fluorescent lights; the gentle snoring of a dog; the hapless California Towhee fighting himself—again—in the car's side mirror; the fourth time I started a sentence in class with *right?* or *indeed…*, or a piece of broken planter on the pavement just outside the sliding glass doors.

After they wrote this paragraph, I asked them to write a second paragraph on something that they noticed about the *reading* for that week. Not an interpretation, or a question, or an analysis. Just something they noticed. The wager was that we would all learn to read differently if we learned to notice differently: in effect, that filming our frozen televisions would allow us first to notice and think about our luggage stands, and then to return to the text—the wartime broadcast, the BBC news—and read it differently.

This wasn't a study I was doing so I can't now say that I was that deliberate about it. My colleague and co-teacher for that first seminar is an anthropologist and filmmaker, so she was game for anything that would prompt our students to think about the overlap in noticing, reading, and writing practices of our fields: we introduced the noticing journals partly to set up reading the written essays, partly to help them write at the intersection of our disciplines, and partly to set up what we would do when we taught them to make essay films using their phone cameras. I gave them a careful reading list at the beginning of class designed to introduce them to the ways of knowing in each of our fields, but we kept coming back to this word "noticing."

By way of results, and as a way of reflecting on how this particular kind of reading and noticing during that pandemic year made certain ways of thinking and attending

and writing possible, I offer some examples of what students in their bedrooms and zoom rooms—like John Smith in his hotel room—came up with. This early experiment in noticing was inconclusive, perhaps, for data-driven research purposes. But the experience in noticing as a way we could read together during our individual and isolated experiences of the pandemic, our own unevenly felt frozen wars, was not. Nor, I should add, was it inconclusive how *noticing* enlivened and enriched the writing that came in every week. I did not cherry-pick these early examples; something was *happening*. My students noticed something every week, and then they started to notice each other noticing. They took time to write about what they read in the world; they let themselves be distracted by their luggage racks, trusting—I think—that if Shklovsky is right about habituation eating away first at our furniture, then at our lovers, and finally at our fear of war, he might also be right in reverse: if we notice our furniture, we might again notice our lovers, our bodies, the connections between us, the pandemic dividing us. We might be able to talk *to* each other, write *for* each other, again.

> "I just moved into a small apartment in downtown Athens," my student writes, "The balcony next to mine is drowning in dead brown plants. I don't know what to make of this. At night when the wind blows, I hear the dead branches moving around."
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> And: "As I look out my window right now I see heavy snow flakes flying horizontally…riding the currents of wind. As the wind changes, they shift, and at brief moments it seems almost as if time has stopped, as snowflakes suspend momentarily in air, as if waiting for the wind to guide them along."
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> And: "On the subject of my roommate's cat, I noticed just how different the eyes of cats are…the pupils are thin, and when you look at the eyes from the side rather than from the front, they look like the marble eyeballs of a toy that seem on the edge of falling away from the body. And cats have five toes on their front paws, but I think that depending on how you look at it, they may or may not have thumbs."

> "Something I noticed yesterday was a crow choking on something. Maybe?"
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> "The melody of Bill Withers' 'Grandma's Hands' is in the beginning of 'No Diggity' by Blackstreet. Why do we only clear the roads and wait til individuals decide to shovel the sidewalks?"
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> "There is a bug in my bathroom. I don't kill bugs or transport them to the outside because I don't want to touch them, even when that touch is deferred through toilet paper. I don't want to feel the shapes of their bodies because I don't want that much detail. This is how the bugs in my bathroom and I coexist: I avoid their legs and movement until they stop being immediately visible to me. Eventually, the bug gets absorbed into the bathroomness of the bathroom. This is a kind of pretending."
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> "Earlier this week, someone in a Zoom class commented on another class member's setting, saying how nice and joyful it was that, in India, at one o'clock in the morning, it was warm enough to have a window open. I noticed her notice this, and I loved it—the 1 a.m. sultry breeze that blows through the window while you attend school on another continent.
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> But I didn't notice it myself."

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When I teach Roland Barthes' short divagation from *S/Z: An Essay* titled "How Many Readings?," my students almost invariably land on the second parenthetical in this provocative sentence:

> Rereading, an operation contrary to the commercial and ideological habits of our society, which would have us 'throw away' the story once it has been consumed…so that we can move onto another story, buy another book, and which is tolerated only in certain marginal categories of readers (children, old people, and professors), rereading is here suggested at the outset, for it alone saves the text from repetition (those who fail are obliged to read the same story everywhere)… (15-16)

The observation that rereading is "tolerated" in professors never passes without comment (students rightly remind me that undergraduates seldom have enough time to read, let alone *reread*) but we get a different kind of traction when I ask them what it means that those who read only once "are obliged to read the same story everywhere." As we talk about the prejudice and structural oppression, racism and classism, misgendering, stereotyping, consent and conflict that shape our expectations and our ingrained ways of understanding and encountering language, story, history, we return again and again to how we're conditioned to perceive, to read, to structure our perceptions and our personal and intellectual habits according to the narratives in which we're trained and acculturated. Re-reading demands more of us. So also, I think, re-noticing, which is a version of re-reading. Looking, and looking again. Revising, I tell them, is an aliveness to the world.

I decided to keep the noticing journal assignment when we returned to campus for the 2021-2022 academic year and assigned it in my Spring 2022 seminar "Essay and Experiment." I was interested in what my students would have to say in these journals once they were back on campus and meeting each other face-to-face. The prompt, now crystallized (if still brief), is here:

> *Noticing Journals*: One of our goals in this class is to train your attention, to return you to the fine-grained detail of the world, to get you to notice the particulars that refuse to be absorbed into abstractions and categories. Your NOTICING JOURNAL, as we're calling it, will take the form of Sakai posts due **every Sunday evening by 6 pm Pacific.** In these Sakai posts you'll do two things: 1) write about something you *notice* in the readings or viewing for Monday and reflect on what you notice. And 2) write about something you've *noticed* during the previous week in the world. That can be as big as the patterns of climate disruption in Southern California, or as small as the mosquito you smushed last summer, whose body still clings to the wall of your bedroom. We encourage you to focus on noticing things you have not, in the past, paid close

> attention to, which are often the small, the maligned, or the habitual. **Can be short.**

The term "categories" here is partly a reference to Theodor Adorno's "The Essay as Form." For Adorno, the critical force of the essay, and essayistic writing, is that it takes the particular, the transient, the eccentric aspects of the world as inherently valuable *as* particulars, as transient—not because those evanescent aspects "exemplify universal categories" (29). "The person who writes essayistically," Adorno writes, "is the one who composes as he experiments, who turns his object around, questions it, feels it, tests it, reflects on it, who attacks it from different sides and assembles what he sees in his mind's eye" (41).

What's interesting to me about this description of the essayist is that it also serves to describe a particular kind of *reader*, a reader whose experience of reading is immersive and haptic, a reader whose noticing is not solely predetermined by given ways of reading and categories of knowing, but also by a sense of discovery, of play, and even of receptive patience. Reading as noticing, here, means making space for perceiving divergent particularities—which, during the supercharged sensory experience of COVID-19 (isolation commingled with an ongoing diagnostic mandate—do I have it? Do you?)—seemed particularly important.

It remained true in Spring 2022 that students read differently, and wrote differently, when we asked them to think of their reading as noticing. Sometimes the shift was slight, but as I look back on the journals I can see students freed from the constraints of arguing, or being right, or even "close reading" according to a prescriptive method. They're playful, speculative. "Semi-colons are curious forms of punctuation," writes one student. "They exist in the liminal space between the 'keep going' of a comma and the 'please stop' of a period." Seneca, the student observes, uses them a lot in his letter about being at once part of a crowd and turning away from the crowd—as if, the student writes, to

"embody" his own message: practical stoics "must be like semi-colons: straddling in-betweens."

I want to linger for a moment here on this observation: the semi-colon as a "curious" piece of punctuation. One of my favorite essays out there is Adorno's "Punctuation Marks," in which he writes "visually, the semi-colon looks like a drooping mustache; I am even more aware of its gamey taste" (106). The semi-colon *is* a curious piece of punctuation, but what strikes me about this observation is not its Adornian adorableness. What I want to emphasize here is that this is a student—not an English major, I might add, and not someone who thought of herself as a "creative writer"—turning the practice of noticing to writing itself. "The word is not a shadow," writes Shklovsky, "the word is a thing" (vii). As such, it, like the semi-colon, is a thing we can notice: for its droopiness, its gamey taste, its curiosity. Teaching noticing is a way back to teaching writing: neither tedious nor paradisciplinary, this teaching shows students how to hold their own words, punctuation marks, turns of phrase, structures of argumentation, like pieces of shivered glass, iridescent bugs, perfectly smoothed dumplings.

Noticing in the world led sometimes organically to noticing in the assigned reading: "I noticed the quality of the light today," writes one student, "how there was no one direct source of illumination." It makes me tired, they write, "but almost exclusively in grocery parking lots." The reading noticing they compose after that observation, then, is this: "I notice how many of these photographs in the selection of [Teju] Cole we read for this week are taken *through* something…intersections of metal supports and panes of glass. These concealments, distortions, and redirections emphasize to me the contingency of photography on light."

I noticed that in asking them to notice—not to read, or to analyze, or to examine, or to evaluate, or any of the other verbs that energize so many of our writing prompts—that they seemed more willing to dwell on the apparently

insignificant and let it speak to them, not—seemingly—to worry about performing insight. They found different ways to think and talk about how they saw writing at work. "Teju Cole's captions move *past* the images they accompany," one student wrote, and left it at that. "Danny Lavery's piece [on rapture and the trans experience] left me wondering about reverse raptures, fallen angels, maybe. Also, I noticed one of the only things I like anymore is cooking, but I like it *a lot*." I don't know if there is a one-to-one relationship I can map between the exquisite, shimmering details the students recorded in their small spaces and the way they read the texts we were looking at, the ways their writing changed—became more detailed, purposeful, vital—but I do notice that in the language they use to write about the texts they stayed true to the noticing:[2] "I noticed that this sentence was shockingly intimate compared to what came before." "I noticed all of the books lying around in the background of Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*." "I noticed the last line of the excerpt from Theodor Adorno's *Minima Moralia* is sadder than all of the other lines." "I noticed the line 'Your fathers staked their lives…' from Frederick Douglass's *What to the Slave is the Fourth of July* because the word 'staked,' like a stake, points in two directions at once…"

They're willing to dwell on the apparently insignificant; they're precise; they form their sentences more carefully… they are sometimes also sad. One thing I noticed, and that the noticing journals allowed me to read in my students, was sadness. Time played some part in that, as if by asking students to notice things small and potentially perishable, they also saw *time* itself. "I noticed I have only 100 days left in college" one student writes, "so I could not bring myself pick to out a board game for game night this week." The pandemic also, played a part in the sadness—a private sadness I'm not sure would have been set in such relief for me had I not read these journals. Sometimes it was quiet, subtle, a student noticing a light flashing intermittently outside her

window, new to her because the window opened out from her isolation dorm, her quarantine. Other times, not so quiet: "I don't recall life on campus being quite so dreadful prior to the pandemic," a student writes of noticing his own solitude and loneliness. Now, "1,700 students feels like 22." And mingled with other disaster: "The other day I noticed someone standing in the middle of a walkway without a mask on. There were fallen branches, leaves, and dirt all around him from the windstorm the night before."

But perhaps most striking is the noticing that seemed to lead inexorably to feeling helpless, where small indignities and minor feelings index forces that exceed them by orders of magnitude. The drought in California: "There's a broken water spigot out behind my apartment. I noticed its slow flood trickling out onto the walkway on my way back from the library today. I don't know how to fix it." Or dispossession and displacement: "I forget [out in the suburbs] who actually lived here and why Latinos are all over the place. As I walked by Dodgers Stadium, I couldn't help but feel at home. The brown faces and the sweet tongue of rolling Rs." Or habitat loss and human encroachment, vulnerability and death: a list of the wildlife the student saw that week. A terrified squirrel, its "little squirrel ribcage expanding rapidly with each breath," just hit by a bicycle. A "baby hummingbird on the ground," "two dead possums," "two dead squirrels, a ladybug, a rabbit, some chickens, and some ridiculously large bees."

This noticing of the small and humble, the particular and the transient, the luggage stand we've stopped seeing but that haunts the corner of our vision and asks, *what else do you fail to notice…?* emerged, in part out of the densely contracted world of the pandemic, lockdown, the little Zoom square. But it might also have come into focus as something we should have known about reading all along. As Paulo Freire reminds us (not in his perhaps most famous pedagogical text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, but in a much later piece, "The Importance of the Act of Reading,") there is something about

this noticing that makes possible the act of reading itself, or at least underscores the vital, life-giving importance of reading. "Reading the world precedes reading the word," he writes, "and the subsequent reading of the word cannot dispense with continually reading the world" (5). But there is more to it than that. It is a political act, for Freire, to teach a literacy in which the words people learn come to them "pregnant with the world," with their world. And that is small, particular, transient:

> The texts, words, letters of that context were incarnated as well in the whistle of the wind, the clouds of the sky, the sky's color, its movement; in the color of foliage, the shape of leaves, the fragrance of flowers—roses, jasmine; in tree trunks, in fruit rinds: the varying color tones of the same fruit at different times—the green of a mango when the fruit is first forming, the green of a mango fully formed, the greenish yellow of the same mango ripening, the black spots of an overripe mango—the relationship among these colors, the developing fruit, its resistance to our manipulation, and its taste. (6)

Freire's noticing journal, we might say, where reading is an act of enworlding and in that act, a resistance to forces that would diminish, dismiss, forget.

"Pay Attention to the Obvious," the teacher, writer, and educational theorist Mike Rose enjoins his students; "make it strange" (221). The nuances of that are perhaps the trickiest part of what Shklovsky means by *ostrañit*, or "*en*strangement": it doesn't mean casting out, estranging, making something or someone a stranger to you. It means bringing someone or something or even—maybe especially—the possibilities immanent in your own writing—grocery lists to public policy memos—into the circle of your attention, the small pool of light that illuminates things so you can really see them, and in seeing them, give them the care—or the fear, or the anger, or the desire—they deserve. Noticing is an ethic of care, an ethic of writing, an ethic of reading, and the Noticing Journal asks students to practice this in reading and in the world as if—no, *because* these are one and the same. Read, notice, reread,

write, revise, re-see, love, we might say.

Or in the words of one of my students:

> While writing this, I was sitting outside drinking a black buckwheat tea. I look the lid off the tea to let it cool a little and noticed how the steam quickly flumed and danced with the light breeze. It reminded me of how flames of fire curl and flicker as if teased by the wind. Just as mesmerizing but with a silence and gentle harmlessness unknown to fire. Like all shows, this one was ephemeral…so just as soon as they had made themselves visible the aromatic waves of steam, having somewhere else to be, evaporated into the atmosphere.

"Out of sight," the journal ends, "but still in mind."

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End Notes

1. Some of this work on *Frozen War* is forthcoming in "On Human Suffering: The Essay and Ekphrasis" in the *Cambridge History of the British Essay* (2024).

2. All of these students—each line quoted from the noticing jour-

nals—are quoted with permission. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my colleagues Joanne Nucho and Evan Kindley, who supported my trying this experiment, and to the Pomona College students in the Spring 2021 section of "The Essay as Resistance" (with Joanne Nucho), the students in the Spring 2022 section of "Essay and Experiment," (with Evan Kindley), and the students in my own "An Art of Noticing: the Essay and the Things We Do Not See," offered at in Spring 2023. I gave this assignment again at the University of California, Berkeley, in my lecture class "The Essay" in Spring 2024; I would include some of them here if I had the space and time, as the journals were surprising and beautiful in new ways.