



WELCOME — READ THIS FIRST

The First Day

A field guide to our year of attention

Welcome. For one year, you and I are going to do a single, quiet thing together — pay attention. We'll read slowly, notice what lingers, and let two great works teach us how to attend to a book, and to the world it opens.

“Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.”

— Simone Weil

1 WHAT THIS CLASS IS

This is not a book-report class. We are not racing to the end or hunting for the one right answer. We are here to read like it matters — to notice, to follow an idea wherever it leads, and to trust what you saw.

You do not need to be an expert, and you do not need the right answer. You need three things: **attention, a pencil, and the willingness to trust what you noticed.**

2 THE QUESTION WE CARRY

All year, one question travels with us:

OUR CARRY-QUESTION

What does it mean to **truly pay attention** — to a poem, to a person, to your own life?

Don't answer it yet. We'll take your first guess at the start, and hold it up again at the very end.

3 HOW A WEEK WORKS

Every week has the same shape. Once you know it, you can lean into the reading instead of the format.

1

The Habit of Attention. A line worth keeping and one small practice — a night sky, a piece of music, three minutes of stillness. Each week you add a brief **observation entry** to your **commonplace book** — a note on what your practice showed you (the class website prompts it and shows a few examples). About once a month the practice takes you outdoors, and the entry becomes a **nature drawing** in your commonplace book, tied to the reading.

- 2 **We read — aloud, once, all the way through.** Before we say a word about it. First we let it land.
- 3 **The Writing Lesson.** One move from *The Lively Art of Writing* — a small craft you practice that day.
- 4 **Find It → Follow It → Frame It.** The three moves, together. Soon you'll be writing the questions yourself.
- 5 **Words Worth Knowing.** A few words to hold — not just what they mean, but why the writer chose them.
- 6 **The Relation Study.** You make something beside the reading — a poem of your own, a sailor's knot, a small piece of the world the book lives in.
- 7 **A little homework.** Never more than a couple of hours across the week. A little each day beats a sprint at the end.

4 THE THREE MOVES

Everything we do with a text comes down to three moves. You'll learn to make them yourself.

Find It

What is actually there?
Diction, images, a turn of phrase — a Find It answer you can point to on the page.

"What word does the poet repeat?"

Follow It

What does it suggest? You move from what the text says to what it implies — always anchored: *what makes you say that?*

"Why might he have chosen that word twice?"

Frame It

What does it mean for us? You step back and say what the whole thing is worth — the question you carry out the door.

"Where in your own life have you seen this?"

5 YOUR COMMONPLACE BOOK

Keep one all year.

Whenever a line stops you — in a poem, in the novel, in your own head — copy it into your **commonplace book**. A word, a phrase, a whole stanza. This is where the year adds up. It is yours; it is never graded for being tidy.

Returning students: keep going in the commonplace book you already started — it's meant to grow with you across the years.

6 THE TUTOR

You're never stuck alone.

On our class website there is a reading companion called the **Tutor**. When a poem won't open for you, ask it. It won't hand you the answer — it will ask you a question, then another, until you find your own way in. That is exactly the skill we're building.

7 FOLLOW THE THREAD

One project runs beneath the whole term — the heart of the course.

All term you follow a single thread — through poems that teach you to listen and a novel that teaches you to endure. Near the end, you gather it into one argument and give it four shapes: **a letter, a speech, an essay, and a small visual square**. By the last class you'll have something entirely your own.

*“You can only feel it. Now listen — if ever you find
yourself in any danger, lay your finger upon the thread,
and follow the thread wherever it leads you.”*

— George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin*

8 WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Your books come with the class — I'll hand you your copies. You bring a binder and a pencil.

- A **1.5-INCH THREE-RING BINDER** with **FIVE DIVIDERS** — we set it up together the first day (sections below).
- **YOUR BOOKS** — *The Old Man and the Sea* and *The Lively Art of Writing*. Provided in class, so we all read the same edition.
- Your **BOOK OF MOTTOS** (commonplace book) — **PROVIDED IN CLASS**. One book holds it all: your mottos, your weekly observations, drawn narrations, and the monthly nature drawings. *Returning students: bring the one you've been keeping.*
- A pencil (and colored pencils, if you like, for the drawn entries). Mark your margins; that's where the reading happens.
- Your **CLASS CODE** (**attention2627**) and the class website — **margin.delightandsavor.com**. (Poems are provided there; nothing to buy.)
- Our **GOOGLE CLASSROOM** (join code **dy3hr3l2**) — where you'll turn in digital work.

Your binder has five labeled sections: 1. Syllabus & Reference 2. Weekly Handouts 3. Narrations & Compositions (reading notes, narrations & essays) 4. Follow the Thread 5. The Riches (relation study, recitation & presentations).

9 BEFORE OUR FIRST CLASS

A few small steps:

- Sign in at margin.delightandsavor.com with your class code **attention2627**, and look around.
- **SAVE THE SITE TO YOUR DEVICE** — on your phone or tablet, open it in your browser and choose *Share* → *Add to Home Screen*. It will open like an app all year, and you'll use it every week.
- Read the very first poem slowly, twice — once for the whole, once out loud.

◆ **A GENTLE WORD**

Read slowly. **Slow is not a fault here** — it is the whole practice. Some days you'll sit with a single line for a while; that is the work, not a delay.

If you want to go further, there is an **Honors path** woven through every week — not more busywork, but the same questions asked deeper. And whatever you need to do your best reading — more time, a different way in — is welcome here. Just ask.



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