

*** Writing Exercise: "I looked up": moving from the generic to the specific**

This is an exercise adapted from Daniel Scott Tysdal's book "The Writing Moment," with some influence from John Gardner's "The Art of Fiction".

Start here:

"I looked up from where I was and saw this thing and it gave me, like, this really strong feeling or something"

Take these lines, which are very generic, and add specificity -- where were you? Where did you look (out a window, in the park, at a screen, across the church aisle? How did that feeling manifest in the body? Tickle? Itch? cough? Burn like hot stones in your throat? Turn your head into a the lightest of pastries that threatened to float away on the wind?

Try to communicate strong feeling or mood without explicitly naming the mood or feeling. Remember, as always, to avoid filtering . . .

Rinse and repeat