

What's in a Writer's Notebook?

Every vivid moment holds some essential truth about your vision of the world.

--Kim Stafford

Life . . . yours

Lists—stuff you need to buy, people you need to talk to, projects to complete

Notes to yourself

Emotions . . . anger, sadness, excitement, wonder

Memories

Fragments of life that strike you (“that’s weird . . .”; “why did that happen?”)

Drawings—especially when you can’t write any more about something but still are thinking about it

Photographs, postcards, receipts, messages, notes from friends, ticket stubs

Questions

Quotations that make you think and respond, “Yes, that’s exactly how I feel.”

Song Lyrics

Secrets

Doodling

Responses to quick writes or other writing exercises (a place to experiment)

Scratchouts, crossouts, messy writing, notes in the margin of a page, sideways writing

Attempts at poetry; playful language

Writing pieces that you might abandon because you lose interest or have no confidence in the piece

Detailed sketches of people and places to practice descriptive writing

Things you don’t want to forget

Things that other people say that strike you as important or stupid or that you don’t understand

Poems you love

ANYTHING that makes you examine your life more carefully.