



Resolution to try and write a few lines every day," the painter Gwen...

Resolution to try and write a few lines every day," the painter Gwen John (1876-1939) recorded on a loose sheet of paper in the early autumn of 1911. She didn't have in mind a diary, exactly. Rather, she instructed herself to "Give a survey of your mind from time to time - its current and rhythm." In her notebooks, John had long been in the habit of writing things down: impressions of colours seen while walking in Paris; notes on technique for paintings; extracts from the books, often religious or philosophical, she was reading; drafts of letters she might never send. But that winter, she began to make notes of a different texture. In ink or unsharpened pencil, her hand loosening, she addressed herself.

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Diaristic, self-reflective, mysterious, these notes...

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