

## (99?) Exercises in Style

### Original

It was a windy day at the beach. You could only see umbrellas for as far as you looked. The little kid's ball rolled across the blanket and down the sand into the water. The little kid chased after it until their mother caught them. It was a small sea turtle that brought it ashore, many hours later.

### Double Entry (Draft)

On a beach and on a sandy plain that was on the Manhattan Beach and the beach on the end of Brooklyn, as far as you could see and down to the horizon, there were colorful and vibrant umbrellas and canopies against the sun. A young boy and an older toddler who was quite awkward and very uncoordinated was running and stumbling along at a quick rate. He ran across a rug and a blanket and draped along the sand and the glistening soil as he set off to pursue and chase the sphere of striped colors and a beach ball. The farther he went and the closer he got to the water, the ball rolled quicker and faster as gravity sucked it down and it rolled downhill. An older version of the boy and his mother ran with easy and lazy strides to catch and restrain him. He quickly gave up and left his pursuit to return to his sand castle and pile up sand. When the moon came up and night dawned, five-and-a-half hours and three-hundred-thirty minutes later, a helpful sea turtle and a green monster of the ocean playfully and unassumingly pushed the ball onto shore and back onto the sand.

### Official Letter (Final-ish Draft)

Dear Mr. Smith,

The scene I witnessed today was quite a confusing one. As of 16:42EST on Monday, May thirtieth, 2016, at Manhattan Beach in Brooklyn, New York City, NY, while I was enjoying my copy of the novel *1984*, the adjacent beach was quite windy and crowded. There were colorful umbrellas of all the common colors-- red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet-- spread out evenly throughout the scene, and all the way down the enormous beach. There was a boy, about two years in age and wearing little swim-trunks and unevenly-smearred sunblock lotion on his back, who chased a poorly inflated beach ball with eight stripes of the alternating colors red and white. He chased this ball, which accelerated quickly from its beginning state on the sand dune, and towards the water.

At this time, a young lady — presumably the boy's mother — rushed swiftly to intercept the boy's path and stopped him. The ball, meanwhile, tumbled, still accelerating, into the water, where the tides carried it away a few moments later.

The boy, however, appeared to quickly lose interest, returning to his previous interests playing in the sand. It appears that he was attempting to build a sand castle, but the unfinished shape makes it difficult to distinguish.

But the following is the reason behind this superficially insignificant and ordinary account:

I was still perusing the book five hours later, at 22:31EST, when an interesting circumstance. I had looked up to glance towards the glistening waters when I saw a disturbance on the shore. It sparkled in the light, and I assumed it was some large fish that had gotten beached as the tide was lowering. But the object approached inland quite rapidly, and I was soon able to distinguish its shape quite clearly, even in the twilight lighting: it was a little sea turtle — and, in her jaws, a limp piece of colorful plastic. In fact, it was *the* beach ball, albeit in a deflated and depressing form. The turtle thence rushed back to shore and disappeared in the waves.

I then looked to examine the beach ball, which had, by some miracle, returned to its inflated and lustrous form as it had been with the toddler. I checked for holes or sea debris — I found none. Amazed and mystified, I quickly wrote up this strange account to tell you. And I really hope you really believe this account and do not pass me off as a deranged, hallucinatory, conspiracy theorist as I'm sure many others would — my word, it happened!

Thus I call upon you, you with the best scientific knowledge I know of, to answer my questions. Do you have explanation for this strange and wondrous event?

Sincerely,  
Mr. Roberts

Hexadecimal (Draft) (<http://www.swingnote.com/tools/texttohex.php>)

49742077617320612077696e647920646179206174207468652062656163682e  
20596f7520636f756c64206f6e6c792073656520756d6272656c6c617320666f  
722061732066617220617320796f75206c6f6f6b65642e20546865206c697474  
6c65206b6964732062616c6c20726f6c6c6564206163726f7373207468652062  
6c616e6b657420616e6420646f776e207468652073616e6420696e746f207468  
652077617465722e20546865206c6974746c65206b6964206368617365642061  
6674657220697420756e74696c207468656972206d6f74686572206361756768  
74207468656d2e20497420776173206120736d616c6c2073656120747572746c  
6520746861742062726f75676874206974206173686f72652c206d616e792068  
6f757273206c617465722e

Haiku (Draft)

Umbrellas throughout  
Boy on sand chasing striped ball  
Lost and found later

## Code (Draft)

A simple `for` loop generated a multidimensional array of colorful `Umbrella` objects, randomly placed and randomly colored throughout. This was quickly appended to the `Collection` stored in the ambiguous `Beach` object that had rapidly been filling up with arrays of other objects: `Sand`, `People`, `BeachBalls`. There was even a `breeze()` method to stimulate a wild wind going across the sand, affecting everything along the beach. The visual simulation worked beautifully, acting as a wonderful screensaver.

But bug report was filed when multiple clients reported a rogue little boy that seemed to defy the program logic and proceed to chase the ball, not succeeding. Over a dozen people reported the same glitch in the program, and the bug was marked as “Confirmed” on Github.

Frantically, the programmers at `screensaver.com` could not find the cause of this unintended behavior, and could not fix the problem. They did, however, create a patch of the program that showed a turtle returning with the beach ball that was “lost” in the sea. Their clients gladly accepted it, happy at the interesting twist on the simple program.

## Polysyndeton (Draft)

It was an ordinary Monday afternoon on an ordinary beach and there was a wind blowing and there were umbrellas as far as the eye could see and the umbrellas were of all colors and shapes and there was a hot and blinding sun and there was a boy and the boy was a toddler and the toddler was running and there was a beach ball and the beach ball was striped and there were eight stripes and the colors of the stripes were red and white and the ball spun quickly and the ball rolled down a sand dune and away from the boy and the boy chased the ball and the ball ran away quicker than the boy and the boy's mother stopped the boy and the ball rolled into the water and the water pulled the ball into the sea and the boy looked at it only for a second and then the boy returned to building his sand castle and the boy forgot all about the beach ball and the mother also forgot about the beach ball until they had to go home and the mother shrugged her shoulders and left without the beach balls and four hours passed and forty-nine minutes passed and out of the water came a turtle and in the turtle's mouth was a beach ball and the beach ball was the boys' from earlier that day and the turtle dropped the ball and the turtle returned to the sea and the moon came up and the moon went down and the sun came up.

## Child (Draft)

*Sun! Umbrellas—rainbow umbrellas!*

*Mommy, let's go build a sand castle!*

*Oh no, my ball is running away. I'll go save it.*

*Mommy, why can't I save my ball? Bad Mommy!*

*Mommy, let's go build a sand castle!*

## Parent (Draft)

*It's a warm day today*, I think to myself. *A wonderful day at the beach*. Sure enough, many other like-minded mothers surrounded me, relaxing as I was under the protection of the shade of a sun umbrella, lying on the comfort of a beach towel, sipping a cold soda from the restaurant we had just visited.

"Hello, Barbara. It's a fine day we're having, isn't it? What a beautiful day for an outing to the beach?" I say, willing to strike up a conversation.

"Yes, it is quite the day—" Mrs. Green replies, only to be cut off by her nagging child. "Sorry, I have to go," she apologizes, an exasperated look in her eyes.

But it wasn't the same for me. Josh was no ordinary kid — he always had bright eyes and was never ceased to be amazed.

So when he stopped me, pointing at Mrs. Green's son's sandcastle, I was not surprised. "Mommy, let's go build a sand castle!" he cries, jumping up and down.

And my heart melts like always and I give in. "Yes, Josh. Let's go build a sand castle!"

But a few moments in, the high winds begin to blow away our beach ball. It was Josh's favorite, and he turned to it immediately, leaving the preliminary pile of sand for the pursuit of the ball.

But he clearly isn't going to catch up to the ball, which rolls faster and faster down the hill. And — oh, watch out! — he's heading straight towards the water! I take a few quick strides to catch him before he stumbled into the tumultuous water, watching his task too intensely to watch his step.

"Don't worry, I'll fetch it later," I say, watching the waves. And then, Josh looks back at the sandcastle and says, "Mommy, let's go build our sandcastle!"

And we go to build our sandcastle.

## Metric (Draft)

In the high-pressure, 770torr air at 358K, there was a steady 10m/s wind that swayed the colorful umbrellas that ranged from 1 to 3m in height and 2 to 5 meters in diameter. Suddenly, from a standstill at 52.4m in altitude, a colorful ball 30.5cm in diameter began to accelerate at  $1.52\text{m/s}^2$  down the sand dune, traveling for 5s. Behind it, a little man of 762mm chased the ball, but, traveling at a constant rate of only 2.03m/s, was unable to capture the spinning ball. The ball, with an average density of  $10.32\text{kg/m}^3$ , as opposed to the  $1.03\text{Mg/m}^3$  of the salty ocean water that was a 1.22M NaCl solution, was easily buoyant enough to stay afloat in the rolling turf. As he looked back at his 0.24m sandcastle on the hill, the little man took 0.55s to return to his previous occupation, and the older later to hers. 17.4ks later, a 130kg turtle pushed the ball, now not so round nor so bright, 15m inland, and then quickly departed at 5m/s.

## Statistical (Draft)

Latitude: 40.576077

Longitude: -73.944066

Altitude (ft): 172

Umbrellas: 154

UV index: 7.3

Wind speed (mph): 22.4

People: 523

Adults (>18 yo): 42

Toddlers: 83

Toddlers chasing ball: 3

Toddlers chasing ball and building sand castle: 1

Sea turtles: 7332913

Sea turtles at a beach: 52

Sea turtles at a beach and returning beach ball: 1

## Bath (Draft)

The rush of the showerhead produced a fine spray and a powerful wind that blew around the rubber duckling on the inflated plastic island. The other ducklings, large and small, tanned in the blinding light of the newly-installed LEDs while the little rubber duckling began to play with the bubbles, putting them together to form a soap castle. But then, the duckling's favorite soap bar, a worn and rounded one that was striped and vanilla-and-strawberry scented, began to slide off the little island. The duckling began to slide downwards as well, but the soap evaded him, sliding off the island and into the bathwater. The duckling bumped into a bigger duck and bounced back to his job building soap castles. Only a long time later, after the duck had left the island and the island had left the water and the water had left the tub, did the long-lost soap, now somewhat less lustrous and slippery, get recovered by a slippery, god-like hand from the depths of the sea.

## Apathetic (Final-ish Draft)

SMITH: Please describe the scene you saw yesterday, Mr. Brown.

BROWN: There were, I dunno some umbrellas. Like, all the way down the beach. And it was windy, too — I think I saw one of them umbrellas flipping over in the wind.

SMITH: And what of the boy?

BROWN: What boy? [*grins maniacally, shows dirty teeth*]

SMITH: You know which boy. And you know that the longer you take to give us the information, the longer it is until you get to return to your miserable life.

BROWN: And ya know the longer you take to give me a meal, the longer it'll take to tell ya the info' you ask of me.

SMITH: And you should know we're serious.

*[long pause]*

BROWN: 'Righty then. There was a boy 'mongst this madness, a boy yea tall *[gestures with hand approx. three feet in the air]* who's piling up some sand with his mama. And a moment later, the poor boy's ball goes rolling off into the sea. The boy goes off to catch it, but he can't, and his mama stops him from going too far.

SMITH: And what next? What happened to the ball?

BROWN: Well, it just went off into the sea. The little boy forgot about it real quick, 'cause he and his mama went right back to them sandcastle. It was a funny little sandcastle. It killed me. It reminded me so much of those fun days back when I was a li'l child. *[pauses, as if deep in thought]* Boy, I'm hungry. Mind if any y'all lend me a sandwich?

SMITH: Stop avoiding the question! What happened then? Why did you run away?

BROWN: Whoa there. Fine. I'll tell ya. So here I was, walking by the same spot a few hours later when I's coming back from my trip to my friend's house, you know? But then there was a funny li'l sound in the water and I turn and look, and there's a, I dunno, some kinda sea monster. A slimy little creature, probably five feet tall 'n ten feet wide. Anyways, I's scared so badly I ran right back to my house, before you call'd me here sayin' I looked real "suspicious." So yeah. Go catch that sea monster. And lemme go home and eat. I'm still starving.

Rhetorical (Final-ish Draft)

A dainty and dry day<sup>1</sup> in the depths of May<sup>2</sup> saw<sup>3</sup> a beautiful day on the beach. And on that beautiful day on the beach came many people. And with many people came many umbrellas<sup>4</sup>. There was soon a plethora of colorful umbrellas. A sea of colorful umbrellas. Ten trillion<sup>5</sup> colorful umbrellas<sup>6</sup>. Umbrellas that opened wide like<sup>7</sup> an adolescent's ignorant mind, obdurate against the bright influence and opening up to the comforting smiles of their familiars underneath. They provided a bright shade<sup>8</sup> to shield any and all, a fairy godmother to the princesses<sup>9</sup> reclining underneath.

But there weren't just umbrellas at the beach— there were children playing on the sand. There were mothers catching up on their busy lives. There were teenagers playing volleyball. There were seniors reliving their youth days<sup>10</sup>. There were<sup>11</sup> frisbees thrown, sandcastles built, waves tossed<sup>12</sup>. And there was a toddler who did all these things and one more: he chased a ball down the slope and was caught by his mother and the ball was caught by the water and he returned to his sandcastle<sup>13</sup>. And in those few moments, the little boy dealt with sandcastles, a beach ball, running waves, and a memory to hold onto forever<sup>14</sup>.

1. *alliteration* 2. *rhyme* 3. *personification* 4. *anadiplosis* 5. *hyperbole* 6. *epistrophe* 7. *simile* 8. *oxymoron* 9. *allusion* 10. *parallelism* 11. *anaphora* 12. *asyndeton* 13. *polysyndeton* 14. *zeugma*

## Other possibilities

- ~~Code~~
- ~~Polysyndeton~~, Asyndeton
- English Class
- Fear
- Wonder
- Earthlings
- Video game
- Colors
- Illogical
- Sonnet, ~~Haiku~~
- Permutations and Combinations of letters
- Cats / Dogs
- Typing
- Expected
- Digital
- Lost and Found
- Recording
- News update
- Breaking news report
- Photography
- Sounds
- Altered Reality
- Laziness
- Excitement
- Fear
- Scientific
- Historical
- Literary
- Foreign
- Alien
- ~~Child / Parent~~

## What does style do for you? (talking points)

- **KEY WORDS: context: connotation/presentiment/expectations, reader's focus** (see below)
- Really just for fun — in “Apathetic,” I really just had fun writing and it came out in such a different and interesting way — more fluidity for the author (and perhaps the reader)



- Each gives its little bit of detail, a little extra viewpoint — physical or mental perspective
- Perhaps to appeal to a wider audience?
- Kind of similar to gathering evidence for a court case, looking at all possible perspectives to get a greater “truth”
- Quantity → quality? The more the better (in terms of information)?
- Changing the style, more than anything else, sets a **context** — it creates the backdrop from which the perspective arises, it allows the reader to visualize it themselves
  - In “Official Letter,” the last few sentences give the “context” of a horror or mystery novel — suddenly there’s something mysterious, something unknown, and the author suddenly has a frightful **connotation** with the text
  - In “Hexadecimal” and “Code,” there is the reminder that this is the modern age and this is just a story — it gives a third-person account of a third-person account, or “telling a story in a story”
  - In “Child” and “Parent,” the story is told from a “normal” perspective from within the story, something that gives the reader somewhat of the **presentiment** that it would be a normal story
  - In “Metric” and “Statistical,” there’s reminders that this is an age of science and it gives the impression that a scientist or statistician is telling it from his boring but unadulterated and true point of view
  - In “Bath,” I used imagery similar to many of Queneau’s originals, which gives the impression of an alternate reality, in which the objects may just be symbols (the people for the ducklings, or vice versa — which is the correct story?)
  - In “Apathetic,” which was staged like an investigative interview, again gives the idea of a mystery novel, but the tone of the investigated Brown gives the sense that he is an apathetic, Caulfield-like character, which sets the mood and **expectations** of the reader, in a way
  - In “Rhetorical” and “Polysyndeton,” it brings it back to reality with a English student’s writing, written very much in English class, for English class — changes the author’s **focus** to the language and rhetoric



## Annotated Bibliography Semester 2

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Purple Hibiscus*.

*Purple Hibiscus* is a novel about a Nigerian girl Kambili's struggle to survive with the love of her family and the turmoil of her father and her country. It explores that the idea of **love** towards a person in excess actually leads to a **fear** and then a **hatred**— such is the case of Papa's overly-strict "regime" for his children. Although his morals and the rectitude in many of his actions made him "seem immortal" (287), Kambili mentioned that she and her brother were motivated around their father only because "[they] were terrified [they] couldn't" (226) — Papa's fear creates a reign of terror for their children. Amaka, Kambili's cousin, is similar to Frankenstein's monster, who views well-off human beings with **hate** and a bitter **jealousy**; the both change near the end of their respective novels to realize that their **hatred** was unfounded and that their spiteful revenge would give no benefit.

Benson, Stacy. "Typography Self Portrait."

Making the phrase "a picture is worth a thousand words" literal, Benson creates an image of herself out of words, a **self-portrait** conveyed not only through the physical aspect but also the meaning of the words. Like any story, certain **words** are emphasized, such as "daughter," "twin," "Chicago" — effectively building a story with bits and pieces of her fragmented, **word**-oriented life. Contrary to Siddhartha's beliefs, Benson uses **words** to portray a complete story by adding the shape and size of the words, showing the audience that it is not only the meaning of words that matter, but sheer numbers and placement that can give it another dimension, another level towards reality. Similar to "Hole," Benson appears to be depressed, looking down in a reflective manner, perhaps ashamed at herself for the mistakes in her past; unlike "Hole," however, this provides a visual idea of her sadness.

Cisneros, Sandra. "Abuelito Who."

"Abuelito Who" is a poem that illustrates the speaker's changing emotions towards her grandfather: a man first of "dough and feathers ... [and] watch and glass of water" that becomes "is sick ... is tired ... is the rain." The poem has a very unique **style**, using very **concrete words** such as "fur," "watch," "dough," "feathers," and "glass of water" to describe an object that is so much more and very much different than those objects: a living person. She is forming a unique **identity**, a multifaceted and **abstract** portrait created from many different **concrete** and lesser items, as well as forging her **love** in the beginning and her **fear** at the end of his degradation. Mihaly's TED Talk is similar to this poem because there is a correlation between **love** and concern for a person for a person that is similar to his diagram of challenge and skill — with just the beginning of the poem with Cisneros' adoration of Abuelito, or just the ending with her **fear** of his disappearance, the poem was incomplete; only with both elements combined in this

poem did Cisneros' true love for her grandfather show, just as "flow" would need both challenge and skill.

Csikszentmihaly, Mihaly. "What Makes a Life Worth Living? FLOW: The Secret to Happiness!"

In this TED Talk, Mihaly explores the conclusion of his own research to discover what gives people the most enjoyment: what many of his interviewees called "**flow**." Not success or money, but the feeling of the constant **search** for **knowledge** in a state "so intense it fe[els] like you don't even exist" — a spontaneous moment of clarity, of epiphany. This all overshadows the central idea of **balance** that spurs the whole idea: he demonstrates in a chart that a slight change in either skill or challenge level can greatly affect mood, and any movement from the center of his diagram could give birth to the entire plethora of emotions. This is described by Victor Frankenstein, who loses himself in a state of **flow** as he builds the monster, "engaged, heart and soul, in the pursuit of the discoveries [he] had hoped to make" (51); unfortunately, the satisfaction that he gains is very temporary, and it shows that Csikszentmihaly's theory can backfire.

Hesse, Hermann. *Siddhartha*.

On the ultimate quest for **knowledge**, young and ambitious Siddhartha leaves his home to seek Nirvana, ultimately finding it in **nature**, the "**unity** of all things" (137). He repeatedly notices that **words** and teachers cannot provide the most complete experiences, because "he did not think it would teach him anything new" (28): that all ideas have to be learned and are two-sided, a spectrum and a **balance**, "everything, together without distinction, forming Om" (136), but **words** and teachings are "one-sided" (142) for practicality's sake. This is similar to Victor Frankenstein in one way: Siddhartha seeks **enlightenment** and Nirvana, a **search** for **knowledge**; Victor, however, searches to get away from the **enlightenment** philosophy because it is what leads to his dreadful experience with the monster.

Porter, Andrew. "Hole."

The narrator recalls the traumatic childhood memory of the **death** of his best **friend** and the unexpected circumstances from which it arose — the narrator was "listening to the Top 40 countdown on the radio, already wearing [his bathing suit, waiting ... [to] go swimming at the Bradshaws' pool" (1). Throughout the narration, there is a sense of distance from the memory that happened "mid-July, twelve summers ago" (1), something that allows one to "remember events that occurred years before more vividly than you could even a day or two after you experienced them" (2), something that removes the initial sense of shock and allows one to consider the story from multiple perspectives. Similar to *Catcher in the Rye* and *Frankenstein*, this story is written as a memory from an older self, a memory written in vivid detail and a commentary that adds an invaluable amount of meaning to the story.

Salinger, J. D. *Catcher in the Rye*.

This is a book about Holden-Caulfield, a do-no-gooder teenager who reflects on his life, with past experiences of boredom and failures in a very negative light — around him, life is “depressed,” “lousy,” “stinking,” “crooked,” “crumby,” “phony.” Throughout the novel, he struggles to settle down peacefully and with some satisfaction in his life, without the **uncertainty** that he always experiences in his meaningless wandering — so much that he reassured himself with “don’t let me disappear” (193) — and at the very end he discovers the happiness he receives going back to his **family**, to his roots, to where he began, where he “felt so damn happy” (213). This is very similar to Siddhartha in his **search** for **truth**, but instead of finding the greatest contentment in his own experiences, he finds what he originally took for granted — his family — as the ultimate source of happiness.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*.

This is a horror story about Victor Frankenstein, an ambitious boy who creates with science a “wretch” (58), a being who is born benevolent but is turned into a terrible monster when he attempts in vain to avenge his horrible stature on the humans who rejected him. Throughout the book, Victor was a battleground of the ideals of **Enlightenment** — such as the science behind the monster that put him into a “nervous fever ... for several months” (61) — and **Romanticism** — such as the **love** for his **family** and the “serene joy” (62) he felt in his friend Clerval — that left him always in a state of **uncertainty** between his loyalties. Victor was in many ways similar to Holden from *Catcher in the Rye*, both of them having unintentionally created the problems for themselves: Victor who was “deeply smitten with the thirst for knowledge” (38) who created the monster and Holden who did the opposite who created a dull, boring, underachieving life for himself.

Shortliffe, Del. “As of May 2002.”

“As of May 2002” is a poem consisting of the author’s beliefs, a list of random thoughts connected by anaphora and occasional anadiplosis. It involves both the **abstract** and the **concrete** as Shortliffe **questions** the world around him, defining death as “silence and no thinking, no remembrance, no concern” and saying his “bank account is too slim.” Although it is difficult to pinpoint a general meaning, there is the central theme of a general clinging to **life**, a hopeful pessimism similar to that of Victor Frankenstein when he hopelessly pursues the monster with the inkling of apprehension of actually killing it. There is also the theme of **words** being insignificant, similar to Siddhartha’s belief, that “**words** are too small for life” and his “beliefs are no great matter” — instead, he believes that **words** are a decoration, a little treat, “sea glass on [his] tongue and a lovely crackling to [his] ears.” In other words, the **words** are not significant for their meaning per se, but it is the wonderful effect that word combinations have that can greatly influence a person.

## Quotes from Purple Hibiscus

“It was what Aunty Ifeoma did to my cousins, I realized then, setting higher and higher jumps for them in the way she talked to them, in what she expected of them. She did it all the time believing they would scale the rod. And they did. It was different for Jaja and me. We did not scale the rod because we believed we could, we scaled it because we were terrified that we couldn’t” (226)

“I had never considered the possibility that Papa would die, that Papa could die. He was different from Ade Coker from all the other people they had killed. He had seemed immortal” (287)

“ ... that I want [to see Papa] so much I sometimes make my own dreams, when I am neither awake nor asleep: I see Papa, he reaches out to hug me, I reach out, too, but our bodies never touch before something jerks me up and I realize that I cannot control even the dreams that I have made. There is so much that is still silent between Jaja and me. Perhaps we will talk more with time, or perhaps we never will be able to say it all, to clothe things in words, things that have long been naked” (306)

“[Aunty Ifeoma] seemed so happy, so at peace, and I wondered how anybody around me could feel that way when liquid fire was raging around me, when fear was mingling with hope and clutching itself around my ankles” (174)

“The educated ones leave, the ones with the potential to right the wrongs. They leave the weak behind. The tyrants continue to reign because the weak cannot resist. Do you see that it is a cycle? Who will break that cycle?” (245)