



Multiple-Sentence Openings

1. It is a bright summer day in 1947. My father, a fat, funny man with beautiful eyes and a subversive wit, is trying to decide which of his eight children he will take with him to the county fair. (“Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self,” Alice Walker 1993, 675)
2. I sometimes think of what it means that in their heyday—in 1830, say—the Kiowas owned more horses *per capita* than any other tribe on the Great Plains, that the Plains Indian culture, the last culture to evolve in North America, is also known as “the horse culture” and the “the centaur culture,” that the Kiowas tell the story of a horse that died of shame after its owner committed an act of cowardice, that I am a Kiowa, that therefore there is in me, as there is in the Tartars, an old, sacred notion of the horse. I believe that at some point in my racial life, this notion must needs be expressed in order that I may be true to my nature. (“My Horse and I,” N. Scott Momaday 1993, 427)
3. It is now theoretically possible to recreate an identical creature from any animal or plant, from the DNA contained in the nucleus of any somatic cell. A single plant root-tip cell can be teased and seduced into conceiving a perfect copy of the whole plant; a frog’s intestinal epithelial cell possesses the complete instructions needed for a new, same frog. If the technology were further advanced, you could do this with a human being, and there are now startled predictions all over the place that this will in fact be done, someday, in order to provide a version of immortality for carefully selected, especially valuable people. (“On Cloning a Human Being,” Lewis Thomas 1993, 589)
4. The first thing people remember about failing at math is that it felt like sudden death. Whether the incident occurred while learning “word problems” in sixth grade, copying with equations in high school, or first confronting calculus and statistics in college, failure came suddenly and in a very frightening way. (“Who’s Afraid of Math, and Why?” Sheila Tobias 1982, 343)
5. “The greatest contribution to civilization in this century may well be air conditioning—and America leads the way.” So wrote British Scholar-Politician S. F. Markham 32 years ago when a modern cooling system was still an exotic luxury. In a century that has yielded such treasures as the electric knife, spray-on deodorant and disposable diapers, anybody might question whether air conditioning is the supreme gift. There is not a whiff of doubt, however, that America is far out front in its use. (“The Great American Cooling Machine,” Frank Trippett 1982, 123)