

Prompt: From the Author: Identify one aspect of form or writerly craft put to good use in this essay. How so? And to what ends?

---

The part of the structure of this piece I immediately noticed was the repeated use of short, one line paragraphs. Paragraphs such as “Like magic,” “I need a gun,” and “It isn’t funny either” all feel as though they were cut from the same cloth. They feel short and staccato coming from a reader’s mouth, and that “mouth feel” of the words is very pleasant. Beyond that though, they seem to serve a narrative structure. My understanding of paragraph breaks is that they are used to group a single thought into a visually identifiable segment within a piece of writing. By making paragraphs that are made up of only a single sentence, it signals to the reader that the idea contained within is a complete thought. This lends the phrases punch and makes gives them a power that would be difficult to construct by further explaining the ideas. Furthermore, since the phrases are so short, it can feel as though it is placed to directly refute or contradict a previously laid claim. I consider the phrase “It isn’t funny, either.” Paradoxically, this made me chuckle. The paragraph before this phrase was talking about a child’s idea for a prison break, an idea that could very easily be humorous, but we are told doesn’t contain any humor. Using more words to push this idea would lessen its power, I think.