

Writing Exercise: One event 5 ways

From John Gardner's Art of Fiction.

This one allows us to see how looking at the same event from different ways shapes voice.

2. Take a simple event: A man gets off a bus, trips, looks around in embarrassment, and sees a woman smiling. (Compare Raymond Queneau, *Exercices du Style*.) Describe this event, using the same characters and elements of setting, in *five* completely different ways (changes of style, tone, sentence structure, voice, psychic distance, etc.). Make sure the styles are *radically* different; otherwise, the exercise is wasted.

Don't take short-cuts – don't write it three ways and stop. Five ways!!!