**Objective**

To say more with less. To push your language down to its essentials. To say only the best of what you mean.

**Assignment**

This week's story is the same as last week's... but you’re going to cut out half the words. Begin with the text you had for last week’s piece and start cutting words out. Do your best to cover the same material in half the words. You may add words here and there, but the idea is to build the same house on half the yard. The more work you put into last week’s assignment, the harder this is going to be.

Remember what to cut out:

* the wordy, the meandering, the unduly analytical
* the parts of speech that aren’t nouns and verbs—unnecessary modifiers, redundant prepositions, and so on
* throat-clearing or mealy-mouth words or phrases: “just,” “like,” “sort of,” “kind of,” “almost,” “very” . . .
* the teach-y, the explain-y, the crying out, the condescending

**Original version:**

Audre grew up in Nnewi, Nigeria. Unlike the general assumption that Africans are poor, people in Nnewi are not. The villagers owned huge acres of land and exported the produce to foreign countries. Money was never a problem at Audre's family. She was the youngest in her family. She had 4 brothers and 3 sisters. Her dad was a merchant and her mom took care of the ranch. They would have lived a happy life in the beautiful African landscape if her mom and dad had loved each other. But, no. They fought constantly. Audre did not feel connected with her siblings either.

As years rolled, Audre grew up to become a beautiful young woman. Her brothers took care of her father's business. Her sisters went abroad and graduated from reputed colleges. Audre never felt drawn towards anything. She liked putting on makeup and collecting cute, beautiful objects. She dropped out of school and stayed at home, trying on different kinds of makeup. Now and then, she went on trips to her sister's place and shopped lavishly. Audre’s siblings eventually got married and settled in different countries across the globe.

Other than her family, Audre hardly interacted with anyone. She had no boyfriends or even friends for that matter. Her mom was worried that Audre might end up alone and set Audre up on a blind date with her friend’s son, John, who was a doctor. The date went well. Audre, as usual, neither hated nor liked John. Since Audre had no reason as to why she did not like John, Audre's mother insisted that they should go on another date. One date happened after another. Under the insistence of their parents, John and Audre got married.

After a couple of years, for no obvious reason, John divorced Audre and married a farm girl. Audre was unfaced. She took all happenings in stride and marched her life ahead in confidence. She lived on the huge mansion that her dad had gifted during the wedding, all by herself. She frequently visited her sisters. She never read any books or watched any movies, she went about doing her regular activities.

It is human to want to be loved. Audre of all people on earth wanted to be loved as well. But she did not realize or accept that at all. She thought she had it all, and that there was nothing that she wanted. After a few years, when her parents died of old age, she felt out of place in Africa. She sold her mansion and bought a bungalow at Beverley Hills, close to her elder sister's home. She bought it not because she loved her sister but rather than she enjoyed life at the Hills.

At 55 years, little did she know that her life was soon going to change. She carried on her life at Beverley Hills doing nothing unusual, but her regular day to day chores. Her sister's daughter, Amber visited her occasionally. She was born and brought up in America and was 12 years old. Having never been to Africa, she was so fascinated by Audre. She asked Audre to tell more and more about Africa. Every night, Amber visited Audre after dinner and asked Audre to say something about Africa. Soon, this became a ritual.

Without realizing, Audre slowly fell in love with Amber. Amber’s curiosity, fresh perspective on the world, her love and care softened Audre's heart that had hardened with time. Audre lived till the ripe age of 72 and died at sleep, on a cold November morning. Like many on earth, Audre was immensely loved.

**Shorter version:**

Audre grew up in Nnewi, Nigeria. She was the youngest child in a wealthy family. Her mom and dad fought often with each other.

Audre grew up to become a beautiful young woman. Few of her siblings took care of her father's business while few others graduated from reputed colleges. Audre never felt drawn towards anything. She liked putting on makeup and collecting art. She dropped out of school and stayed at home, trying different kinds of makeup. She visited her siblings and collected art from different places.

Audre had no boyfriends or even friends. Her mom was worried and set her up on a blind date with her friend’s son, Jafari. The date went well. Audre neither hated nor liked Jafari. Since Audre had no reason to dislike Jafari, Audre's mother insisted that they go on another date. After multiple dates and insistence from their parents, Jafari and Audre got married.

Soon into their marriage, Jafari divorced Audre and married a farm girl. Audre was cool with it. She lived all by herself on a huge mansion, that was her dad's wedding gift. She continued frequently visiting her siblings and carried on her regular activities.

When her parents died of old age, she felt out of place in Africa. She sold her mansion and bought a bungalow at Beverley Hills, close to her elder sister's home. Amber, her niece visited her often. Amber was 12 years old and was raised in America. She was so fascinated by Audre. Every night after dinner, Amber visited Audre and asked Audre to say something about Africa.

Amber’s curiosity, love, and care, gave a fresh perspective to Audre. She lived happily ever after.