

Inserting the Internal Journey: Mix comments with actions.

Take a close look at the internal reflections and comments throughout your memoir. Here are two different ways to move from event to internal reflection and back quickly.

Kelle James, from *Smile for the Camera*

Four Paragraphs (1 longer, 3 short)

I push my sneakered toes into the concrete. I'm pretty fast. I'm a runner now. I hurl myself into his arms. He nearly falls over backward. I press my wet cheek against his. His eyes shine.

I feel all filled up. Like I don't have any empty spots.

Now I know how the little girl at the boat felt.

I hear a series of soft clicks. I turn toward the sound. A flash of light hits my eyes. It's a photographer.

Five Paragraphs (1 short, 2 long, 1 really short, 1 short)

If Muffet survived that, I can survive this.

I get up off the couch and change into my favorite nightgown. The one that makes me feel like a princess. I light the little lavender candle I keep in my bathroom. The flickering light multiplies in the mirror. I look at my face. My brown eyes look back. I'm so far away from the girl in the mirror. A tear falls from my eye. I follow it with my finger.

This isn't good enough. Avoiding pain isn't good enough. If it worked, I'd keep doing it. But it doesn't work. No matter how hard I try, it still finds me. I was wrong about Lloyd. He took advantage of me. He used me.

I let him.

I thought it was safe. Serving him. Making his life better. Mistaking criticism for love.

Your Turn: Find a passage of the internal journey in your memoir. Use Kelle James' approach of mixing actions and comments with short and long paragraphs.

Annotate your draft to identify the internal and external details. These details should explore or reveal the idea of the event, and expose your discoveries about yourself and the world you live in.

Notice that James uses short and long sentences, as well as fragments. Try both approaches. Write your revisions in your writer's notebook.