

Albert Bender  
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### Technique Analysis

As we have <sup>learned</sup> thus far in our workshop, a writer's use of sentence structuring can be an organic component in creating a story's atmosphere. No story better illustrates this concept than "The Colonel," by Carolyn Forché. Although she utilizes only one paragraph (twenty-nine sentences) for the entire story, Forché creates a wonderful tension the reader can feel mounting around the narrator, the friend, and the colonel. Structuring here is the key. Of the twenty-nine sentences, none are complex, only one is compound, and the rest are simple, delivering nothing more than cold, hard facts:

I was in his house...His wife carried a tray of coffee and sugar...His daughter filed her nails, his son went out for the night.

The staccato-like effect reminds one of the sound of a firing squad, something the colonel, who dumps a bag of human ears before the narrator, probably has used indiscriminently. In addition, the repetition of sentences (twenty-five) beginning with subject and verb halts the flow of language, creating so stifling an atmosphere in the room that the friend says, through his eyes, to the narrator: say nothing. The tension ends only when it is shattered by the colonel's dumping of the ears and his proclaiming to the narrator that people who expect rights can "go fuck themselves." Forché then ends the story with three sentences beginning with the repetitive "Something-Some-Some," rendering a monotony suggesting things will go on--no hope in sight, human parts scattered on the floor.