

Tightening, tightening. An example of what was drafted to clarify things for the writer, but not needed for the reader.

Ashley moved close again, and I thought she was going to hug me again, but she stuck out her hand and showed me a ring with three glittering chips. She laughed and hugged Elton's waist. "He's my big ole huggy bear husband now!" Accent a little Southern, not Spanish.

Ashley stuck out her hand and showed me a ring with three glittering chips. She threw her arm around Elton's waist. "He's my big ole huggy bear husband now!" Accent a little Southern, not Spanish.

Version I just has too many words for most twentieth century readers. And what do they add anyhow?

Version I

The trees in the gorge were had begun to turn rusty orange, having passed their brightest colors earlier up there in town, but in the late afternoon light, they were still pretty spectacular. Three hawks were circling at about eye level. Merlee filled up her lungs before going inside.

Version II

The trees in the gorge were rusty orange in the late afternoon light. Three hawks circled at eye level. Merlee filled up her lungs and went inside.

When a mild joke just isn't worth the space it takes up.

Version I

"How about some soup?" said Shelley. "What we all need is some old fashioned tomato soup and grilled cheese sandwiches."

Blair said, "Homemade tomato soup?"

"Are you serious? Campbell's!"

Version II

"How about some soup?" said Shelley. "What we all need is some old fashioned Campbell's tomato soup and grilled cheese sandwiches."

Another example of over-writing to get material then cutting

Aside from the spice and the wafting scent of cooked meat, the kitchen was entirely orderly. The potato and carrot cuttings were neatly disposed in the black plastic garbage bin which was nestled under the sink. **To the left of the sink was the stove, an old but hearty gas Frigidaire oven that she has insisted on before her husband Marty passed away, God bless his soul. To the right of the sink was the bread box, which she cleaned incessantly, and the black 16-cup coffee maker.** The kitchen walls were a dark maroon color bereft of decoration except for a realistically painted Jesus on a cross.

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For whom are the feet described as “long?” Certainly not part of the character’s thinking about himself.

He lay there in the silence in the grayness and knew she was dead long before he put his long feet in his slippers.

He lay there in the silence in the grayness and knew she was dead long before he put his feet in his slippers.
