

3. This piece is a bit more vicious, not the fiery language (volcano, monster, erupting, warrior, etc.) used to set the undertone throughout the piece. You want to use the vernacular. I mean this in a different sense to the traditional – you want to make sure that the vocab used connects with the kind of communal tone of the piece. This will greatly help the flow and heighten the impact of your work. Also, take note of the descriptiveness. This piece was written a while back but it still offers some useful tips to anybody who's willing to pluck them from it.

"His eyes stung with the familiar invasion of sweat, teaming from his hairline in streams. Resting upon his nose, bulbous and malevolent, was a lump which showed no signs of halting its growth. His eyes were swollen so that each one almost looked like a bird's eye view of a volcano: a small, bright fiery centre surrounded by large bumpy rings. These rings were taking dominance too, ever so quickly pressing in on that bright centre, like a pack of wolves domineering over a single prey. Lips: puffed to the levels of a cartoon blowfish – bruised, split open, and puckered slightly with the help of his mouth guard.

Yet still, beneath the plane of destruction that was this man's face burned an inexplicable fire, one which didn't seem to die out no matter how much his opponent's fists mangled its fleshy armour. The fire stood tall and its flames licked at the sweet promise of victory. This is why, when the less bloody man made one small mistake and dropped his guard – for a mere split second – the fire guided a powerful left fist to a cleanly shaven jaw line.

Before the opponent could even make out what this lightning fast monster erupting into his peripheral vision was, it had knocked his jaw loose from its joints and returned to its station by the other man's left ear. The next thing he knew, he had woken up to the sight of a brutally beaten warrior, his arm held high in the air and a bloody grin spread across his face.

Patience is everything. Appearances are deceptive. One punch can end it all."

4. This next piece is probably the one you can take the most from, and since this is the first set of notes I'm putting up I'll leave it at that. This is an extract from my published horror story 'Melissa's Hobby'. Note how I'm building the character up to be near-divine. This is put in stark contrast to the ending, since she gets possessed and her small child sticks a knife in her back before she kills Daddy. If you want to be a writer you can't avoid the extremes. Don't be afraid of hurting people's feelings or offending anyone – it is the hard-hitting emotion and the shock invoked – especially in horror, you MUST go to the extremes – that really gets you where you want to be with the readers. Here I'm demonstrating how to be illustrious with your words, and how to turn a woman into an angel – how to really put her on a pedestal. Take from it what you will.

"My wife was a great woman. When all of this mess happened she was two years younger than me, thirty-three. It is twenty years later now, and I can still remember that particular feeling I got every time I looked at her. Her skin was creamy, and smooth to the touch, as if God had mixed silk into the blend at birth. Her hair was like a brunette waterfall; cascading down past her neck in waves to break upon a surface no water ever had the pleasure—her